

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes July 27, 2004

Melanie Winter chaired the meeting which was also attended by voting members Gene Arias, Glenn Bailey, Steve Hartman, John Holmes, Muriel Kotin, Tom Persons, Rosemarie White, and Sandy Wohlgemuth and by non-voting members and alternates Sharon Brewer, Lois Goodman, Gene Greene, Joyce MacKinnon, and James Ward. Minutes of the June 22, 2004 meeting were approved after correction of John Holmes' last name under Herpetology Study. There was no public comment.

Oak Tree Project for Parking Area, James Ward: The Recreation and Parks Department is looking into planting clusters of native oaks in the overflow parking lot to the east of their valley headquarters buildings. This will happen after the contractor doing the planting in their regular parking lot is finished. They will start with 35-40 trees and plant more in later years. The young trees will be watered by water truck. Steve H. commented that the desert willows on Woodley Avenue need suckers removed, as do the young oaks on Burbank along with some re-staking. James will phone Street Maintenance to request tree care for both.

Volunteer Corps Committee, Rosemarie White: She spoke to the Users Group and City Councilmember Tony Cardenas. He is willing to provide T-shirts, etc. There wasn't much interest on the part of the Users Group. She will speak to neighborhood councils and various organizations. She and Gene Arias did a presentation to the Warner Center Rotary Club and have been invited back.

Update of Wildlife Reserve Website, Steve Hartman has been working someone who will do the update. There will be a small monthly fee, but it will mostly be a volunteer matter. It will take another month or so.

Next Chair: Gene Arias will start a six-month turn as chair next month.

Sepulveda Basin Vegetation PowerPoint Report, Steve H: Some of the points he made in the report: *East of Bull Creek at LA River are lots of weeds coming up, along with California Sycamores, etc. Bill Neill can spray the Harding Grass safely. *There is an oak grove with elderberry and other natives, south of the dam spillway, about 20 years old. This area is managed by the ACOE. *Yellow Star Thistle is a terrible problem locally and is invading the South Reserve. So is Perennial Pepperweed. Let Steve H know if we see any of this plant which looks like "alyssum on steroids." *Bill Neill has been working on the LAR near Haskell Cr. *The rare plant, Davidson's Mallow that was once common in the SF Valley, is doing great on Hummingbird Hill. *They will try to eradicate the Johnson Grass in Haskell Creek

in the Wildlife Reserve near the northerly bridge.

Constraints to Fire Management in Basin, Asst. Chief Roderick Garcia LAFD, D

Platoon: There was a fire at Woodley and Burbank a few weeks ago that was hard to fight because there was no fire hydrant. There have been a number of fires in the WA in recent months. Most of the fires have been arson fires started by the homeless. Chief Garcia said they have many options for fighting fires, but getting water from hydrants is faster. James Ward said that other than the Wildlife Lake, we will not have water below the developed part of Woodley Park until a reclaimed water line is activated. R & P has no budget to put in water mains for fire. Reclaimed water is the only likelihood. The reclaimed water line is not energized because it is tied into the 54" lines to take water to spreading grounds in the northeast valley. Given the fire and homeless problems, perhaps these lines need to be energized and adapted to fire suppression. Gene Greene expects there will soon be reclaimed water to irrigate the Woodley Avenue median. Steve H suggested that perhaps fires in the WA should be allowed to burn if property beyond the basin would not be threatened. Reply, the fire department has to extinguish fires if there is any possibility that homeless people are in there and might be harmed. Tom asked if prescribed burns are possible. Reply: the committee could submit a proposal for a prescribed burn if we decide one would be desirable. James commented that a thorough environmental document would be necessary. LAFD, R & P and ACOE would need to cooperate and decide whether prescribed burn or brush clearance would be better, cheaper, safer. The fire department carries 700 feet on each big rig. They can also shuttle water greater distances from the water source with water tenders. James mentioned that R & P has a water truck at headquarters most of the time. Gene G asked if a tank would help — it would be fabulous. Gene G suggested James ask Baker Tanks to contribute a tank to the WA.

Army Corps of Engineers, Lois Goodman: They are making some progress on the Bull Creek Project, but the person working on it (a subcontractor) passed away and they are trying to find his files. They are missing cost estimates. She brought pictures she took of the WA to see what committee members want in the way of fences and gates. We like the shorter (3 feet high), 2-rail fence. They're aiming to have plans to show us next month. The Committee members like the style of the bridges in the WA. If we get only one bridge, it should be where the more southerly one was shown in the original conceptual plan.

Recreation and Parks, James Ward: He passed out West Nile Virus info sheets.

It's everywhere in LA. R&P expects reductions in staff because of the budget problems. Melanie commented that files she needs got lost when R&P lost its own planning division and now goes through the Bureau of Engineering. R & P headquarters have moved from City Hall to downtown's Garland Building, 3rd and 7th floors.

Japanese Garden, Gene Greene: Evening garden tours are now offered on Thursdays 6 p.m. Berm tours are being offered. He is meeting with the mayor's office to discuss publicizing the berm. They may begin some tree planting on the Woodley median soon, hand watering them until the irrigation is in.

San Fernando Valley Audubon, Muriel Kotin asked about projects for student volunteers. Unless a student is working under a teacher's supervision, it should be simple projects like weeding, especially around the oak seedlings on west bank of Haskell Creek. They could possibly plant California fuchsia on Hummingbird Hill under Steve H's supervision. Tom could work with kids after school during the week. Muriel said the delay in adoption of a budget is causing planning delays.

Canada Goose Project, Gene Arias said the geese on golf course have mostly left. There were only 32 at the most recent count. Gene has started repairing the fence along Woodley and has been painting out graffiti and picking up trash.

Resource Conservation District of the Sta. Monica Mtns., Glenn Bailey is also frustrated by budget delay. They are finalizing the hiring of an interim district manager, Dan Priest. RCD is planning to resume having a fall native plant sale.

Sierra Club, Rosemarie White: They and R & P are sponsoring a conference in Griffith Park about wildlife corridors on 10/16.

TreePeople, Tom Persons: 10/16 there will be an oak tree planting in the basin, perhaps in the overflow parking area for R&P headquarters. They have about 160 oaks, recently moved into 15 gallon containers. James thinks these might be big enough for this undeveloped area. Tom will plant a few California bay laurels near the west bank of Haskell Creek, fairly close to Burbank Blvd. TreePeople's new community center will open in September, with state of the art architecture. People can use the center for community meetings, educational purposes, etc.

Southwestern Herpetology Society, John Holmes: Because of West Nile Virus, there is a delay in their survey.

Los Angeles Audubon, Sandy Wohlgemuth: No report.

The River Project, Melanie Winter: They are moving forward toward a contract to hire Bill Neill to remove exotics along the LAR between Balboa Boulevard and the bus trestle. She urged committee members and neighborhood councils to read IRP materials and comment on them. She will ask Adel Hagekhalil to attend one of these meetings to present the alternatives. We should read the materials beforehand. There are informational public meetings tomorrow in Glassell Park.

Submitted by

Muriel S. Kotin, Member Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee