

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee

January 25, 2005

Glenn Bailey chaired the meeting which was also attended by voting members Steve Hartman, John Holmes, Dexter Kelley, Muriel Kotin, Rosemarie White, Melanie Winter; and non-voting members, alternates and guests Gene Arias, John Bwarie (Mayor Hahn's office), Snowy Dodson, Gene Greene, Lynda Levitan (Councilman Cardenas' office), Joyce MacKinnon, Jesse Medina (RAP), Jon Kirk Mukri, Kevin Regan, Kristin Sabo, and James Ward. After self introductions, it was announced that Snowy Dodson is now the CNPS alternate.

Minutes of the November 2004 meeting were approved after correcting the spelling on page 4 of "Herpetologists" in the name of the society.

Jon Kirk Mukri, new general manager of the Department of Recreation and Parks (R&P), introduced himself. He hopes to balance active and passive recreation while reinvigorating the department and to stay in this job for the long haul. He wants us to keep him and the city council informed.

Melanie Winter brought up the balance of active and passive recreation for the Taylor Yard, Sepulveda Basin and Hansen Dam and the desirability of continuing the policy of increasingly using a native plant palate in parks. Like Melanie, Jon wants to use modern synthetic turf for soccer fields.

Rosemarie White stressed the importance of education. Jon said that Prop O will likely result in cisterns under parklands. Glenn Bailey brought up the challenge of protecting the wildlife and dedicated wildlife areas. Steve Hartman recommended controlling weeds the first 3 years of a project and getting a weed eradication expert to control weeds at headwaters in all SFV parks, using herbicides as needed. Melanie said that Bill Neill of Riparian Repairs told her that post flooding is a great opportunity to control weeds within Sepulveda Basin; Bill needs herbicides from R&P. Melanie brought up the need for timely support on grant applications for restoration of waterways.

Muriel Kotin mentioned the great need for ranger presence and for education. Jon will look at this issue, but he is limited to 30 rangers. He may try to increase ranger presence somewhat in the larger parks, including Sepulveda Basin. Joyce MacKinnon suggested that if there aren't enough rangers, perhaps some of the other park personnel could help deter inappropriate behavior. Gene Arias mentioned that many dog walkers in the Wildlife Area (WA) say they go there because the dog park is not properly supervised. He also said the new "no parking" signs on Burbank Blvd. are helping considerably.

Jon had mentioned that the Sepulveda Basin is much nicer than 20 years ago. Melanie said this is largely thanks to R&P staff and their working with us. She suggested that a similar committee to ours is needed in Hansen Dam. Jon agreed and mentioned other tasks that need to be done there. He also is considering trying to work with LAUSD. Jkmukri@RAP.lacity.org.

Public Comment. Kristin Sabo complained that a park maintenance gardener did not know the phone number of the park rangers when a mountain lion was sighted in Griffith Park.

Proposed Transfer of Rangers to General Services: James Ward pointed out that Jon said any transfer will not happen until July and that Sepulveda Basin will probably get a resident ranger. Kristin said that a number of neighborhood councils had passed 6 points. These will be e-mailed to us.

Proposed Firebreaks: Glenn got a message from Carvel Bass of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) that the US Fish and Wildlife Service has some concerns on this, so nothing is imminent. James said that there is still discussion in the city, but nothing would be done until dry weather. Lynda will give Glenn the name and phone of the contact person in the fire department person on this issue.

Bull Creek Restoration Project: James said the ACOE hasn't assigned anyone to the project since Lois Goodman's retirement. The separate project to build a turn-around, roadway and drainage west of Bull Creek and moving benches at Lake Balboa away from the walkway is under construction. Steve H said James should complain as all the work to remove all the arundo nearby in the LA River (LAR) will be wasted if arundo remains in the creek. James will bring it up at the next monthly meeting with the corps and find out who has taken over Lois Goodman's responsibilities.

Update on Fishing Issues at Lake Balboa: They're re-stenciling "no fishing" on the walkways where the walkways are near the lake. It's part of the bench relocation project. Joyce MacKinnon suggested a universal sign with a line through a picture of a fish. Glenn asked what kind of training staff has about injured birds. Occasionally staff will assist in the rescue of a bird, but they have no training. Do they know who to phone? They phone their supervisor. The full time staff is sensitive to the situation but not trained. It's better to contact the lifeguard staff rather than maintenance staff if we see a problem. Let James know if they're not helpful. Sharon described rescuing a cormorant with the help of other park users with the lifeguard interfering with the rescue. Gene A said he understands that the cormorant getting away was not the lifeguard's fault, that

the lifeguards had been trying to rescue the cormorant. James said "do not feed signs" are being made. Muriel suggested a few additions to the Lake Balboa flyer about teaching kids to respect wildlife and removing fishing line. Snowy Dodson suggested short multi-lingual versions of the flyer should be made.

MTA Busway: Steve H received a notice that they will adhere to native plants in the Sepulveda Basin with the exception of Boston Ivy on a wall.

New Garden Center Building: The building is not quite ready for programming, but we could look at it. We'll hold our next meeting there. Patty Jones, senior gardener, has her office there, but there's no copying machine.

Standing Rules: Glenn will e-mail some suggestions as a starting point for later discussion.

Ratification of Wildlife Areas Steering Committee's Support of The River Project Receiving Streambank Restoration Grant: It was **Moved, Seconded and Passed** to approve the letter of support.

Sepulveda Basin Event Calendar was distributed.

Wildlife Impacts of Proposed New Sports Complex: This will be on the west side of Balboa, north of LAR and will include artificial turf soccer fields and a baseball field. Melanie asked if this committee can have any impact on this. She wants to have input in the planning given that it's adjacent to the LAR and she wants to be sure BMP's (Best Management Practices) are used in the project from early in the planning stage. There has been one VNOC (Volunteer Neighborhood Oversight Committee) meeting. James will be sure we are notified of meetings.

Tony Cardenas' Office, Lynda Levitan: Back after breaking her ankle she is impressed with how the Basin fared in the rain and is pleased the no parking signs on Burbank Blvd. are in. She will get us information on how to contact the fire battalion chief about the firebreaks.

Recreation & Parks, James: There was no major flooding in the recent major rains, with little silt. There was a dead body in the Wildlife Lake on 1/6/05, a 36-year old. Joyce had learned he was an alcoholic homeless man. TreePeople's plan to plant cluster of oaks in the overflow parking lot of the administration building needs to be implemented soon, while it's still wintertime. Melanie said Tom Persons isn't able to attend these meetings but wants to continue TreePeople's projects in the Basin

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee

January 25, 2005

Page 4

like this project. Muriel asked whether the traffic cones along the roadway to the WA and at the end of the road just before the terminal turn around are necessary. James will look into it.

Japanese Garden, Gene Greene: Their new cultural programs will held every other month, hopefully bringing more new people to the garden. They will hold one of these events in Woodley Park in a year and a half. Construction in Tillman continues with one stage finishing up before another is about to begin. There should be no impact on the Basin. The garden got rated the 10th best Japanese garden in the nation. They are weeding the native plant berm. If we want a tour, phone Patrick.

Organization Reports: California Native Plant Society, Steve H is giving a talk on native plants. He will be very busy the next 6 months but is willing to chair this committee. Canada Goose Project, Rosemarie said the migratory geese are beginning to leave. Steve Moe and Lynn Kennedy have been very helpful to her with wounded geese. The conference she organized on wildlife corridors was very successful. Los Angeles Audubon, Dexter Kelly had no items. San Fernando Valley Audubon, Muriel reported behavior problems in the WA on a recent Saturday afternoon. She requested that SFV and LA Audubons be listed separately on agendas and communications. The River Project, Melanie said, has been working on arundo removal from LAR area near Balboa Blvd. with students. The Sierra Club was not represented tonight; Rosemarie will follow through on finding a new representative to this committee. Southwestern Herpetology Society, John Holmes said Paul who will do the herp study has been in touch with Steve Moe.

Consortium: Next time we will discuss how SFVAS should invest the Consortium's funds after they are received from LAAS. Meanwhile SFVAS should put the funds in a bank account upon receipt.

Park Rangers, Anne Waisgerber stopped by to announce she is taking over as the lead ranger for the valley. Her voice mail phone is 323.913-4688 ext. 1502.

A copy of the letter of support for The River Project's Streambank Project is included in these minutes. Steve Hartman will chair this committee beginning at our February meeting.

Submitted by

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