

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes July 26, 2005

The meeting was chaired by Steve Hartman and attended by voting members Glenn Bailey, Steve Hartman, Muriel Kotin, Rosemarie White and Melanie Winter, as well as non-voting members, alternates and visitors Sharon Brewer, Sharon Ford, Gene Greene, Lynda Levitan, Joyce MacKinnon, Dam Operator Louie Munoz (louis.f.minoz@usace.army.mil), Ken Novak, and Michael Tou.

The issue of active members and quorum came up because at 7:00 p.m. only California Native Plant Society, Canada Goose Project, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mts., and San Fernando Valley Audubon were present. (The River Project was shortly present.) Los Angeles Audubon, Sierra Club and Southwestern Herpetologists Society were not represented. TreePeople need to be notified that they are no longer active members. John Holmes is unable to attend for SW Herps until he recovers from his broken femur.

After self introductions, minutes of the June 2005 meeting were approved after the meeting date was corrected to 6/28/05 and on Page 3, paragraph 1, the word "pre-treated" removed regarding the buried storage tank. Also "Enc CC" should be changed to "Enc NC" for Encino Neighborhood Council. (It should be noted that the storage tank will be used only in emergencies.)

Public Comment: Sharon Brewer is still finding fishing hooks and line at Lake Balboa. The condition of that lake has improved. There is a new sign with a picture of a duck entangled in fishing line that might be confusing and also a sign requesting that people throw away their fishing line properly. Joyce thinks the picture on a sign is more appropriate than words in our multi cultural society. Sharon wants a don't feed sign because she feels that the geese are too tame.

Louis Munoz, Operator of the Sepulveda Dam attended. He described the winter storms at the dam and what his duties are. The gates of the dam were never closed this past winter. The previous winter they were shut twice. He mows the downstream area of the dam, where the plants are just whatever weeds volunteer. The mowing is a safety matter because of rodents. Why is this different from Hansen Dam with its unmowed native plants? Louie starts noticing the migratory Canada geese when the farmer mows his cornfield. He recently saw 100's of geese

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upstream of the dam in the river. There are lots of swallows and occasional bats and some red-tailed hawks. In late spring they removed silt upstream of the dam as they couldn't do it in the fall since rains started so early. The silt was mounded on land just downstream of the dam. He does not know why Hansen Dam vegetation is allowed to grow up to 4 feet tall whereas Sepulveda is mowed low. The native vegetation at Hansen developed over the years. Should we be trying to get native perennial grasses planted here? Is the clearing we observed last month in the WA just upstream of the dam typical of annual operations? That area is defined in the masterplan as ACOE operations area. How high might the water go at Burbank and Woodley (NW corner) in a rainy year? 14-15 feet or so. Glenn will communicate the 15-foot flood height to Verizon.

Next Chair and Next Meeting: John Holmes is unavailable due to a major injury to his femur at his hip. Muriel Kotin is willing to remain as minutes taker. Rosemarie White will be the next chair. Several people will be away in August - should we meet? We should check with our alternates as to whether they can attend if we cannot in case the Bull Creek report becomes available. Rosemarie will postpone California Wildlife Center and Jon Mukri's visits to our committee. There is a question about the Sierra Club's continuing membership in this committee. Glenn suggested that the chair rotate among the organizations, not by their representatives, after the two W's (White and Winter) have their turns. He also feels the TreePeople need to be notified their membership is lapsing. He phoned them around 2/05. Rosemarie feels we should reach out to organizations like TreePeople and the Herp Society.

Proposed Fire Roads: Steve Hartman met with his CNPS chapter. They felt strongly that it was unclear that the proposal would do any good while destroying habitat and providing more access for the homeless. If there must be a road they would prefer it to be curving rather than straight. Glenn is somewhat amenable to a meandering road along the existing pathways. Louie said the ACOE wants to help the fire dept. He would like to have a view of the area near the tunnel under Burbank since there are several hangouts there. He patrols that area some. He would be OK with a curving roadway so long as the area just south of the tunnel is cleared somewhat. Joyce is concerned that the rangers warn that it is dangerous

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to go south of Burbank Blvd. Muriel can go along with a single fire road/path that follows the existing informal path. **Moved, Seconded and Passed 4 - 0** That this committee would support one additional multipurpose path that meets the needs of the fire dept, meanders, does not disturb any significant habitat, minimizes loss of trees, and ends at the tunnel. We expect to participate in designing the location of the path/fire road.

Naval Facility: Its closure is quite a bit in the future. They are aware of the R&P's interest in acquiring the site as a staffed recreation facility and community meeting place. Lynda says Council Dist 6 supports this use. Michael Tou said the US armed forces may still need it. Glenn proposed that at our next meeting we should discuss the possibility of some space there for environmental organizations.

New Development Proposed at Sod Farm: Glenn reported that revised plans were submitted at a meeting several weeks ago. Wednesday August 31 is the next meeting on the Sod Farm. The revised plan reflects some of Melanie's suggestions, but still is quite divergent from them in many respects, including how the river is treated. Parking has been expanded greatly for major league events. Prop O and 5 funds will not be used unless R&P are ordered to do so by the city council or mayor's office.

Recreation & Parks Department: Ken Novak. They have work orders and are working on safety problems at Lake Balboa. Dissolved oxygen there continues to drop, normal for the season. There was a homeless cleanup south of Burbank on 7/12. 8/2 ACOE & R&P will be filming about the basin. Glenn asked about the event calendar, which we are not getting. Ken will start bringing a condensed calendar to our meetings as the calendar is updated.

Japanese Garden: Gene Greene. They also have had algae problems in their lake. They have major community events coming up. He'll bring a schedule so our organizations can get flyers there. He suggests a joint event with R&P and us - a day in the basin. The Kawana Pavilion project has met several roadblocks, but Gene will be trying to get it moving again.

Council District 6: Lynda Levitan. She would love to organize a cleanup. She will get together with Muriel to see if there can be a joint cleanup. Ken commented that car shows are huge; R&P is now requiring special event permits for many of them. There is an issue that Encino NC has not been invited to meetings about special events in the basin, only Lake Balboa-West Van Nuys NC. It was pointed out by the committee that the 2 NC's have joint jurisdiction in the basin.

Congressman Brad Sherman's Office: Michael Tou. Glenn requested that the congressman's office find out what is going on to cause the delays on the Bull Creek project. Michael will try to find out the status of the Bull Creek report.

San Fernando Valley Audubon: Muriel is concerned that the RCD find a new education coordinator quickly. She offered to let members view a CD video taken by a participating teacher of a field trip to the Wildlife Area.

California Native Plant Society: Steve Hartman recommended J. Orsi's Hazardous Metropolis.

Resource Conservation District: Glenn. DWP's water management plan is due out August 23.

The River Project: Melanie concerned about re-sprouting of a lot of castorbean and arundo along the river in the basin and also non-native trees. September 17 is Coastal Cleanup Day, including the LA River in the Sepulveda Basin.

Our next meeting will be August 23. August 4 is the deadline for agenda items.

Submitted by

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