

**Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes August 23, 2005**

Rosemarie White chaired the meeting which began with self introductions. Also attending were committee members Glenn Bailey; Snowdy Dodson (alt. for Steve Hartman); John Holmes; Dexter Kelly; Muriel Kotin; and Melba Simms. Guests and non-voting members were Pat Aubuchon; Sharon Brewer; Lois Goodman, retired USACOE; Nedenia Kennedy (Chief of Environmental Policy USACOE, 213.452-3856 Nedenia.C.Kennedy@usace.army.mil); Lynda Levitan, CD6; Joyce MacKinnon; Willis Simms; Hal Sullivan; Michael Tou, Congressman Sherman's office; Alex Watt (USACOE, alexander.c.watt@usace.army.mil). Minutes of the July 26, 2005 meeting was approved after correcting that (1) the Sod Farm section on Page 3, last sentence, should have referred to Prop O and 50 funds and (2) the RCD report on Page 4 should have read that "DWP's water management plan will be presented at a meeting August 23."

Glenn will provide a summary of the Brown Act as it affects this committee.
General Manager Jon Mukri will attend 10/25/05 meeting.

Public Comment: Sharon Brewer expressed concern about fishing, feeding of wildlife and trash at Lake Balboa - and that the algae problems of Reseda Park pond not happen there. Seventy-nine waterfowl were brought to Lake Balboa from Reseda Park when birds were dying from ingesting blue-green algae blooms caused by high bird populations there in stagnant water. Signs not up yet. Ken said the sign dept is running slow; signs will go up as soon as they are available. There was discussion of how to get restrictions on fishing implemented that we had requested earlier. Muriel was requested to find in old minutes our passed motion on fishing to help a subcommittee to be formed later. Muriel commented that she hopes the fishing problem will not spill over to the Wildlife Lake in response to restrictions at L. Balboa.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Discussion of Bull Creek Draft Detailed Project Report and EA (Nedenia (Deanie) Kennedy, Alex Watt, Lois Goodman): They're doing everything they can to make the project happen. With 9/13/05 the official closing date for comments, they want our comments this month but will accept them later as well. The document is a draft. Things can be tweaked later. Nedenia

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welcomes our phone calls with questions and comments.

The committee has not taken an official choice for alternative 4, the preferred alternative, but alternative 4 is what this committee has been talking about all along, at least approximately. Its present estimated cost is \$5.4M - may go up 100K more or so. Plans & specifications may take about 6 months, then maybe a year for construction, depending on seasonality. The key is to get the project named in next year's allocation. Michael Tou is being careful to get the correct language in the authorization. \$5M is the maximum possible ACOE expenditure on the project. Hopefully \$2M will be allocated for the current year. Then once we're in construction, the project gets priority funding as a continuing project in the following year. Written comments are important! Faxes & e-mail are ok: E-mail addresses from sign-in sheet are at the beginning of these minutes. 213.452-4204 is their fax. Snowdy commented for CNPS that eliminating the arundo, castorbean and other exotics from the creek alone would be a major improvement. ACOE Operations (Carvel Bass) needs to work on the exotics in the basin on an ongoing basis. Muriel brought up that there are definitely Least Bell's Vireos in Sepulveda Basin in spring and summer. She would like to see viewing areas similar to those in the WA except lower, less obtrusive interpretive signs. Keep similar bridge design if possible. Have DG on the part of pathways where pedestrians walk around T-gates. The "grave stones" and monuments are a waste of \$. Snowdy said that CNPS is concerned that the excavated soil be used, not sent to landfill. That will be the case. CNPS warns that white alder has not done well in the WA. ACOE said that since there will be no significant unmitigated impacts, an EIS will not be required. Glenn commented that the northerly area will need to be reconfigured because of the busway that is being built currently. The bridge and pathways will need to be adjusted. ACOE's environmental coordinator will have to stay involved through construction as problems will surface and changes will be necessary. This may be a design-build project where one company does both parts. The committee will need to remain actively involved. Michael Tou would like copies of our comments too. Muriel should include a current bird list for the Basin her comments.

****** It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously that we strongly support in principle Alternative 4 as our preferred alternative.****** 9/13/05 is our comment deadline. Our organizations can send in their own comments. We will e-

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mail Rosemarie our draft comments by end of Labor Day weekend. She will review them and communicate with all of us so we can coordinate our submitted comments.

Verizon Telephone Tower: Lynda said nothing new has happened thru their office.

Wildlife Area Maintenance: Ken said the conifers overhanging the access road are already scheduled to be checked for safety. Graffiti is being removed quickly after it is reported.

Recreation & Parks: Ken said they met with aquatic biologist professor from CSUN. They will be doing a survey of aquatic life at the wildlife lake for 60 - 80 days. He has submitted a request for many Prop 0 and Prop 50 projects in the basin, including removing concrete from LA River north of Balboa Blvd and from all creeks in the basin, permeable surfaces for all basin parking lots, special trash cans, a recirculation system for Lake Balboa, and a water remediation system for Reseda Lake. He submitted activity calendar. Glenn mentioned next Wednesday is LVNOC meeting for sod field conversion to sports fields. ACOE has a program for aquatic restoration in non-corps locations; they may be able to help on a cost-share basis for Lakes Balboa and Reseda.

Japanese Garden: Gene G distributed native landscape brochures and a program of special events at the garden. They will be happy to put out information from us and our groups at the events and to have joint programs.

Council District 6: Lynda announced there is a meeting 8/30 for universally accessible playground at Beilenson Park. Deaf Awareness event 9/24. The council offices are now moving into City Hall Van Nuys, including Cardenas's office next week. Phone numbers won't change, just address.

Congressman Brad Sherman's Office: Michael Tou had nothing new to report, but he is eager to keep involved with the Corps on Bull Creek and future projects.

SFV Audubon Society: Muriel said the electric cart will be needed starting in late October for education programs. She would like to discuss later the possibility of planting some native shrubs in part of grassy area north of our parking area.

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California walnut trees were also suggested.

California Native Plant Society: Snowdy is concerned about the explosion of exotics following our very wet winter.

Canada Goose Project: Rosemarie announced training for goose counters will be held next Saturday, 8/27.

Resource Conservation District - Sta. Monica Mts.: Glenn announced that they have hired Mary Hubbard as education coordinator.

Sierra Club: Melba Simms described the new Sta. Monica Mtns. ParkLink Shuttle.

Southwest Herpetologists: John Holmes is back! He said planning for the herp study is underway. He will have more to report at our September meeting.

TreePeople are not represented again. Glenn tried to phone Tom Persons but got no reply to his message. He suggested that Rosemarie contact them, including in writing to encourage their participation.

Agenda items should be submitted to Rosemarie by end of Labor Day weekend. Rec & Parks needs minutes and agendas by 2nd Tuesdays.

Submitted by

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