

## **Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee Minutes of September 27, 2005 Meeting**

1. Introductions and Announcements: The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m by Steve Hartman and self-introductions were made.

Representatives present: Dexter Kelly (Los Angeles Audubon Society), Joyce MacKinnon (San Fernando Valley Audubon Society), Steve Hartman (California Native Plant Society), Glenn Bailey (Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains), and Melanie Winter (The River Project).

Agencies/Officials present: Ken Novak (Recreation and Parks), Carvel Bass (Corps of Engineers Operations Branch), Michael Tou (Congressman Brad Sherman), Lynda Levitan (CD 6), Alex Watt (COE), Deanie Kennedy (COE), and Richard Cotterall (L.A. Fire Department).

Also present: Sharon Ford and Kris Ohlenkamp (San Fernando Valley Audubon Society), Sharon Brewer (Encino Neighborhood Council), Ed and Ann Michalee (Sierra Pacific Flyfishers), and Hal Sullivan.

Announcements: Ken Novak reported that Ron Berkowitz will be the new region superintendent; he has 22 years experience and will start on Monday. Glenn Bailey received the week after last month's meeting a resignation letter from Melba Simms, Sierra Club San Fernando Valley Group representative, which he faxed to rotating chairperson Rosemarie White.

2. Special Meeting of the Consortium: Motion was made and seconded to authorize the Consortium to spend up to \$1,000 for additional weed work in areas the Los Angeles City contract does not allow Mr. Neill to work on. Following discussion, motion passed by a vote of 4-0-0.

3. Minutes August 23, 2005 Meeting: The minutes were approved by consensus.

4. Additions to Agenda: None.

5. Public Comment: Sharon Brewer spoke about last week's algae outbreak in the lake at Reseda Park.

6. Draft Environmental Assessment, South Fire Break, Sepulveda Basin: Carvel Bass emailed a draft to Steve Hartman three weeks ago. He said it should be instead called "fire access road." Comments were received from Steve Hartman and Muriel Kotin. The Corps is in favor of the project as it defers to local expertise. Criss-cross roads is one alternative, another is one road running north-south from the Dam to the tunnel under Burbank Boulevard. It would go around trees and through the meadow area. Endangered Species Act is applicable per a biological assessment. A copy of "Executive Summary - Proposal for Fire Road at lower SPVDA Basin" was distributed. The Environmental Assessment is out informally with this Committee and will be out for formal public review for 30 days within the next month. Captain Cotterall said he is not taking out any trees and no berms are required. Weeds could be hauled out. His department will not provide decomposed granite but would be willing to spread any provided. Discussion included following points: mitigation could include native plantings (Tillman pipeline had 3:1

mitigation for 100 foot right of way); the road must be usable (i.e. decomposed granite); use plant transect survey for analysis of impacts.

7. Bull Creek Project: Mr. Watt and Ms. Kennedy of the COE reported receiving comments on the draft document which will be responded to in the final one. Project is constrained to within their Basin authority. It is the consensus that Alternative 4 is within funding and legislative constraints. The project is close to approval due to Congressman's and community support. The River Project supports bioengineering and woody vegetation for bank stabilization rather than gabions (wire baskets full of rocks); Melanie distributed copies of her comment letter. Mr. Watt replied that at the bridges there will be drop structures for stabilization and since this is a restoration project, minimal amount of concrete will be used. The COE will respond to more comments before sending the document to San Francisco for approval. With continuing resolution funding, construction could start in Spring 2007 as a design/build project.

8. Wildlife Areas Maintenance and Enforcement Issues: There are still problems with fishing line around birds, hooks, and use of cans of corn. Discussion ensued regarding level of LAMC enforcement for non-fishing areas on walk path and the graffiti on signs.

9. Telephone Tower: Applicant is supposed to meet with Jim Dantona of CD 6. It is a 911 tower.

10. Additions to Continuing Business: None

11. Reports:

Japanese Garden (K. Novak for Gene Greene) had its first event this past weekend and it went well.

Recreation and Parks, Ken Novak: Budgeting three positions to monitor lakes and manage wildlife area. Team would be new crew citywide and go beyond water testing.

The new budget request would include a biologist charged with native land/open space/wildlife management maintenance and restoration.

Reseda Lake is horrible: not able to spray for six months; there is 15 years of copper which may be toxic; and if the lake is drained to LA River, a permit would be required. Alternatives include lake closure and a proposed wetlands habitat project from Victory to Reseda Boulevards.

He confirmed the capture of a rattlesnake along the LA River between Hayvenhurst and Bull Creek.

CD 6, Lynda Levitan: Office has moved to 14400 Sylvan Street (Van Nuys City Hall) with an open house to be held the beginning of November. City Council will meet in the building November 16. There is seating for 350 and the courtyard could be used for outdoor functions.

Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, Glenn Bailey: The office will need to move to a new location by the end of next year as a Topanga library will be constructed on the existing site.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Bailey