

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes July 25, 2006

Melanie Winter chaired the meeting which began with introductions. Attending were other voting members Glenn Bailey, Sharon Ford, Steven Hartman, John Holmes, Dexter Kelly, Muriel Kotin, and Rosemarie White and non-voting members, alternates and guests Carvel Bass, Sharon Brewer, Gene Greene, Lynda Levitan, Joyce MacKinnon, Ken Novak, Jenny Price, Eileen Russell and Stefanie Smith. Minutes of the June 2006 meeting were approved as submitted.

Announcements: There are lots of Recreation and Parks staffing changes. Ken Novak introduced Acting Senior Park Maintenance Supervisor Stefanie Smith, who will replace him as our Recreation and Parks Department representative. Patty Stutts is again local maintenance secretary. Ramon Barajas replaces Jesse Medina as Principal Grounds Maintenance Supervisor II. Ron Berkowitz remains the Superintendent. Janet LaFrance will be Acting Park Maintenance Supervisor for Sepulveda Basin. (Barbara Pleasant is new senior for Hansen Dam area.) The Users Group will be disbanded until at least next year. Patty Stutts is working on an updated roster of this committee.

Public Comment: Jenny Price, a writer who gives many tours of the LAR said the area next to the LA River just south of Burbank Blvd. has become inaccessible and a site of homeless encampments. Ken said deferred maintenance there is expected soon, including widening of paths, now that an equipment problem is being resolved. Sharon Brewer is quoted extensively in the Encino Sun and Studio City Sun. Glenn said the Brown Pelican referred to in those articles was rescued over the weekend.

Wildlife Reserve as Mitigation Project: Steve Hartman read from "The Public Recreational Use Plan, Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area," 1985, (# WCB86-727862) in compliance with the agreement between the State of California Department of Fish & Game, Wildlife Conservation Board (which helped fund the wildlife management area), and the City of LA, designating this area as a wildlife management area in the public use plan. Steve feels that Caltrans would have to take formal action to cancel that to take or harm any part of the wildlife reserve. Glenn was the only person who reviewed the original documentation for constructing the Tillman Plant. It is his recollection that there were two beneficial water uses in conjunction with TWRP: the Wildlife Lake and Lake Balboa. So we need the final Tillman Plant environmental documentation. Ken and Stefanie will check with Steve Moe to see if he has that documentation.

Environmental Assessment Comment Letter for Sports Complex Project: Deadline

for comments is a week from Monday, 8/7. Glenn feels this committee should focus on the impacts to the LAR and the wildlife, to leave comments on traffic to the neighbors and other groups. Rosemarie is concerned about the Canada geese that might use the sod field area, as is Fish and Game. She believes mitigation for loss of habitat is necessary. She would like to see the area proposed for a polo field as mitigation. Dexter likes that idea. The sod field is not used by the geese, as they are frightened off whenever they land there. Muriel would like to see an adequate (150') buffer along the LAR and (as already seems to be R&P's intent) generous planting of native riparian and other native trees and plants. Melanie would like to focus on riparian and river values as part of the joint city and corps planning - including a natural stretch of river, that this would best serve the greatest number of species of birds and other creatures. She would like the river restoration to be part of this project, using Prop O money and making the project more sustainable. The project is being funded by Prop K and Prop 40. Steve H thinks the best interest of wildlife would be served by river restoration and linkages and plantings. (Lynda suggested that Grieg Smith's office should have been invited to our discussions of this project, since the project is in his district. We should send our comment letters to the relevant politicians: Grieg Smith, Tony Cardenas, the Mayor.)

Moved, Seconded and Passed (MSP) To endorse the use of Proposition O moneys to incorporate restoration of the Los Angeles River bank as part of the Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex project (7 yes, 1 no). Muriel is to draft a letter and send it to Melanie who will send it to the city and ACOE.

MSP To support a full Los Angeles River buffer of at least 150 feet on the southern border of this Sports Complex Project (7 yes, 1 no), To support adequate mitigation (e.g., land) for any loss of wildlife habitat from this project (8,0), And to oppose organized sports or large events in the open multipurpose fields (8,0).

Kawana Pavilion and Educational Component: Gene described the proposed building. It will have a 160 occupancy multipurpose and meeting room, a 32 person conference room, plus a sub-level for education about water reclamation, flood control and wildlife. They are trying to get the funding in place. Gene will be meeting with the council office soon. The Pavilion will replace Gene's office trailer. **MSP** that we support the proposed Kawana Pavilion including the educational component (8,0). (Muriel will send a letter from SFVAS to Lynda and draft one for SBWASC and send to Melanie.)

Next chair: Dexter Kelly will chair for 6 months, beginning in August.

Army Corps of Engineers: Carvel said that the ACOE expressed objections to the Caltrans 405/101 connector project in a letter. The Corps is working on a program to remove shopping carts and palm trees from the LAR.

Recreation & Parks Department: Ken distributed a tentative roster to check. Lake Balboa water has a very low dissolved oxygen level. They expect a fish kill. The smell is sulphur from anaerobic decomposition. They're going to extend the "No Fishing" area to include the areas where the walkway is near the lake. He briefly discussed the anticipated \$1 M for the Wildlife Reserve and \$1 M for bike paths: signage, drainage improvements, special sweeping machine, etc.

Japanese Garden: Gene said the native plant berm has just been weeded. We are invited to see it by reservation. They're working with Time-Warner cable to get public service announcements about the garden. Our committee might publicize the Wildlife Reserve with their help.

Council District 6: Lynda said Tony Cardenas' office doesn't want the basin encroached on. She does not know of any elected officials who support Caltrans going into the basin. Sept. 30 there will be deaf and hard of hearing festival in Woodley Park. Oct. 21, a senior event at the Japanese Garden. CD 6 will be working to fund Kawana Pavilion.

Committee Members: Rosemarie is planning a wildlife corridor conference for October. The committee gives sincere thanks to Ken for his work with us and wishes him well in his new assignment.

Submitted by

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