

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes March 27, 2007

Glenn Bailey chaired. Also attending were voting members Sharon Ford, Steve Hartman, Dexter Kelly, Muriel Kotin and Melanie Winter, as well as alternates, non-voting members and guests Pat Aceves (Park Rangers), Carvel Bass (USACE), Sharon Brewer, Tessa Charnofsky of the Mayor's Office, Richard Godino (Aquatics), Sean Hall (OPS), Sean Hennessy (OPS), Janet LaFrance (R&P), Joyce MacKinnon, Jaime Morales (Park Rangers), Abel Perez (R&P), Michael Shanto (Aquatics), Albert Torres (Park Rangers), and Michael Tou (Rep. Sherman).

Minutes: After self-introductions, minutes of the 2/27/07 meeting were approved as distributed.

Public Comments: Sharon Brewer thanked the Office of Public Safety for ticketing illegally parked cars last weekend at Lake Balboa. There is still a problem with people feeding the birds there.

Tessa Charnofsky, Mayor's West Valley Area Director: The Chair thanked Tessa for touring the Wildlife Reserve and attending this meeting. Her direct phone # is 818.778- 4982, e-mail tessa.charnofsky@lacity.org. She is the person to contact to get things done for things in the West Valley. Note: she should become the person to receive Mayor's office copy of minutes.

There will be a major volunteer event "Big Sunday" on 4/28 and 4/29. It will include schools planting trees.

Wildlife and Other Issues at Lake Balboa: Glenn explained that Park Rangers, Aquatics and Public Safety representatives all were invited to attend this meeting to discuss these issues.

Park Rangers: Chief Ranger Albert Torres, Pat Aceves and Jaime Morales explained that Sepulveda Basin is one of the 10 LA City regional parks that the rangers patrol. They partner with Public Safety, LAPD, Animal Regulations. Cleanup of encampments after posting is a major task. They protect protected species and try to control lewd conduct and littering. They are funded for 41 park rangers but are not fully deployed. They are recruiting. Sepulveda, Hansen Dam and O'Melveny parks share 3 officers, more on weekends. Dispatch # is 213.978-

4670 (old 323.913-7390 is forwarded here) and Park Rangers Station staffed 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. is 323.644-6661.

Pat Aceves starts each morning clearing the goose forage area of off-leash dogs, then heads for Lake Balboa. Public impact on Lake Balboa is a major problem; they close the park briefly when it is too crowded if they can. Then on to other parks, returning to Sepulveda Basin in late afternoon. Phone calls to them about problems are very important and they respond as they can. They do occasionally patrol the south reserve. We should let Albert Torrez know of any homeless encampments we find. Rec & Park Maintenance is involved with many of the rangers' operations.

Aquatics Division: Richard Godino and Michael Shanto said the lifeguards are at Lake Balboa every day. Their first responsibility is safety. They overlap OPS and rangers in enforcement of rules and responding to medical issues. They have no authority however, and rely on advisement and explaining the reasons for the rules. They are trying to enforce the no feeding of the animals, going out to people and explaining the public and animal health issues. They understand the problems of bird overpopulation due to feeding. They call OPS and other agencies as needed. They are aware of the fishermen and fishing line and hooks but don't have much time to attend to those. They are planning to post something larger about not feeding the birds and would like assistance with information from the Audubon Society. Michael is the supervisor at Lake Balboa.

Office of Public Safety: Sean Hall and Sean Hennesy explained that they chase the radio all day. They deal with many other city facilities, not just parks. In Sepulveda Basin, they deal mainly with speeding. Some enforcement at parks is targeted at gang activity. They get social services involved where homeless encampments are found. They suggested replanting areas where homeless encampments are removed to discourage their return. They and rangers can cite for dogs off leash. Issues of bikes on walk paths might be reduced if the bike concession weren't renewed. They have not had many calls to Sep Basin. Mostly parking problems. There are two officers for the entire valley.

Muriel commented on the needs for education about littering, not feeding the ducks, considerate behavior in parks. Tessa suggested a letter writing campaign.
Creation of a Lake Balboa Oversight Group: Glenn spoke to Monica Resendez, the

Volunteer Coordinator for all of Rec & Parks. The main issue is getting enough public interest. Carvel was concerned about duplication and whether one park can have multiple Park Advisory Boards. Glenn referred to the example of the Balboa Sports Center and Sepulveda Basin Dog Park PABs. Dexter commented that there are many discrete parks within SB, and that the issues at Lake Balboa are complex and involve issues that aren't part of our expertise such as public safety. Steve H countered that we will be much more involved with urban problems and areas near L. Balboa as the Bull Creek and LA River (LAR) improvements proceed. This topic should be carried over to the next meeting.

Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan deadline was 5 PM. Carvel said that his comments for the ACOE suggested that they should look at the various channels within the Sepulveda Basin.

Planting of Trees and/or Bushes Along Woodley Avenue: Huge tractor-trailer trucks have been parking along the east shoulder of Woodley, north of Burbank Blvd. Ticketing by Park Rangers was ineffective. It was unanimously **Moved, Seconded and Passed** that we recommend to the City that we plant native trees along the east side of Woodley from Burbank Blvd. to the driveway at the north edge of the Wildlife reserve at intervals such that 2 or 3 cars can park between them but too closely for huge truck-trailers to park. Steve H will coordinate with Abel Perez on getting it done.

A UCLA Landscape Class will be at the Wildlife Reserve for the bird walk May 6 and would like a guide to provide information about the reserve history and design. Neither Glenn nor Steve H are available that day. Muriel will try to help out.

Agencies and Reports:

USACOE: Carvel reported the Corps are doing a Least Bells Vireo and Willow Flycatcher survey at SB, Hansen Dam and Lopez Canyon.

The South-Bound 405-101 Connector Project Draft EIR may be coming out in a month or two.

The Sepulveda Sports Complex west of Balboa project environmental documentation has been completed.

LAR Revitalization: The ACOE suggested the various tributary channels be

restored.

They are working on an environmental assessment on regaining more river channel capacity in SB and Glendale Narrows.

Recreation & Parks: Abel reported that a memo went out to their employees to avoid driving through L. Balboa unless absolutely necessary. He's still working on stop signs and/or speed bumps and will coordinate with Ranger Torres.

Steve H commented that the longest undone project here is a street sign saying Wildlife Way. Ranger Torres will try to get two, one for at the intersection with Woodley Ave and another at the fork into Tillman.

Committee members should make lists of things that are supposed to be in the works that Abel may not be aware of. Steve H commented that this committee serves as the institutional memory. (Pending projects should be on the next agenda.)

Abel will e-mail the events list to us. Glenn spoke w/ Louie Loomis today. Glenn will e-mail a copy the permit for the Persian New Year event Sunday for our information when he gets it from Louie.

Committee Members:

California Native Plant Society: Steve H. noted how pretty the native plants along the busway look in the SB. He distributed copies of *Care & Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens* and left a box of copies for R&P.

LA Audubon Society: Dexter reported they sent in comments on LAR Revitalization Project.

Resource Conservation District: Glenn announced May 24 is the tentative date for an Open House, 5-8 at their new location, Peter Strauss Ranch. Restoration projects at Malibu Lagoon SP and Topanga SP may result in relocating some field trip programs to the Wildlife Reserve.

River Project: They are in the middle of moving. Their comments submitted on LAR Revitalization included disappointment that Sepulveda Basin was not a higher priority and that there is great opportunity to improve river aesthetics within SB. The Rio de Los Angeles SP (former Taylor Yard) is opening 4/20 and 4/21.

SFV Audubon Society: Muriel gave an update on the trash cleanup along Haskell Creek planned for Saturday April 14, 8:30 - noon.

TreePeople: Glenn said this organization is looking into maybe reactivating participation in this committee.

Next meeting will be April 24. Please get agenda items to Glenn by April 10.

Submitted by

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

Note: the Mayor's office recipient of minutes should be updated to be Tessa Charnofsky.