

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes July 29, 2008

Mike Vensky chaired. The other voting members present were Glenn Bailey, Steve Hartman, Muriel Kotin, and Bob Munsey, with Sharon Ford arriving at 8:30. Non-voting members, alternates and guests at the meeting were Ranger Pat Aceves, Sharon Brewer, Joyce MacKinnon, Mark Osokow, Abel Perez.

After self introductions, the June 2008 Minutes were approved with corrections: On page 1, Lake Balboa User Group and Flyer Section, add to last sentence "and Lake Balboa User Group". Page 3, RCD report, change "huge tanks" to "a huge tank."

Public Comments:

Joyce was bitten by insects during some recent weekend visits to Wildlife Reserve. She observed a moon bounce with overly loud music in meadow near amphitheater. She observed misbehavior including cars racing across the meadow, a family on the path on the WR trail on a motorcycle. A visitor complained to her about fishing in the Wildlife Lake and fishermen drinking. There is inadequate ranger presence.

Mark Osokow spoke regarding the selection of Alternative 1. He prefers No Build. He believes Caltrans is improperly bypassing the EIR/EIS process. There are items in the EA he finds questionable, for example extending the Burbank Blvd. Bridge over the I-405 farther to the west. It was decided to move the rest of his comments to the Caltrans agenda topic below.

Bluebird Nest Boxes:

Muriel explained that San Fernando Valley Audubon (SFVAS) wants to place and maintain up to a dozen bluebird nest boxes in the Wildlife Area, mainly or entirely in trees in the turf grass meadow. Carolyn Oppenheimer and Mark Osokow will organize the project and enlist help from the public to maintain the boxes. There were no objections to bluebird nests. All present supported the idea.

Girl Scouts Green Saturday 12/6/08.

Muriel asked for advice about conservation projects for about 30-40 Girl Scouts on December 6. The committee suggested they plant some California Roses near pathways and water them. They should return to water the plants if it doesn't rain within a couple of weeks after the planting. Muriel committed to seeing to watering afterwards. The girls might also trim weeds away from pathway, beyond what is needed to do the planting. They may also be involved with activities involving the bluebird nest boxes.

Caltrans Selection of Alternative 1 for 405-101 Connector: Mark explained that the EA suggests rebuilding the Burbank Blvd. Bridge over the 405 as mitigation for loss of flood control capacity. They would extend and elevate the new bridge farther to the west than the current bridge. Caltrans needs many permits from regulator agencies, including 3 clean water permits, DFG streambed alteration, ACOE for easement, F&WS consultation re endangered species. The bridge could be a major issue for the Wildlife Reserve and the regulatory agencies. Other mitigation possibilities for flood capacity mentioned were demolishing homes, building a retaining Wall, and dredging. Mark suggested that there may be a 30 day comment period on the FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact), and if so it is not clear when that period starts or started. Nor is it clear what opportunities there are to comment.

Muriel asked whether there is some possible excavation to mitigate for capacity loss that we could support. She suggested the Corn Maze area between Woodley Park and the Wildlife Reserve or part of the Wildlife Reserve that is west of Woodley Ave. near the model airplane field. Glenn suggested an area that floods first, such as the area near the model airplane field or the polo field (farmed by Tapia Bros). He also suggested for mitigation restoring upper Haskell Creek from Wildlife Way north to the Orange Line, a potential project this committee has hoped to see occur.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) letter of 5/28/08 said area outside (downstream of) the dam needs to be surveyed extensively.

Bull Creek Restoration Project Update: Glenn read Carvel Bass's recent emails:

--- On Tue, 7/22/08, Bass, Carvel H SPL <Carvel.H.Bass@usace.army.mil> wrote:

The main news is that the Contractor will be setting up this week and next to begin dewatering the Creek, by bypassing the flow from upper Creek near the Busway, and paralleling the Creek in a trench which has been prepared, and then the water will be reintroduced to the Creek just upstream of the Bridge roadway used by Basin pedestrians around Lake Balboa. Once the Creek has dried out for a while, then work in the Creek will begin - in 1-2+ weeks from now. That is the big picture at this time.

Carvel

From: Bass, Carvel H SPL Carvel.H.Bass@usace.army.mil Date: Tuesday, July 29, 2008, 9:09 AM
There is really no substantial new news about Bull Creek today. The report last week as a 'look-ahead' for several weeks, although I can perhaps supply a few 'dates' today - the dewatering was

to begin yesterday and will take several days to a week or more; the removal of creekside vegetation was also to begin yesterday and will take several days to more than a week. The soundwall is now being removed. On or around 12 August, the grading within the Creek will begin and this will set the stage for eventual replanting within the creek in the fall.

More to report, next week, but as you see the stage is already set for about 2 weeks.
Carvel

Garbage Cans at Lake Balboa: Abel reported they don't have the lids or the money to pay for them. Some of the cans have been deployed. There are enough cans out at Lake Balboa. Glenn asked Abel to have Kathy Hanover email us when the lids are deployed.

Ranger Pat Aceves was welcomed back. He discussed LA River's developing homeless population, fishing, canoeing. He saw canoes on the LAR last Saturday. There seems to be a trend toward allowing these sorts of things. But there is no management. Steve H explained why canoers got a special permit to canoe the LAR: to re-establish that the LAR is a navigable river to protect the tributaries.

Russian Thistle: Steve H reported that Bill Neill has started spraying for Russian thistle throughout Sepulveda Basin. Steve recommends stopping the discing of the ruderal field north of Wildlife Way, rather planting native plants and spraying. Abel asked what about fire hazard? Steve suggests mowing rather than discing.

Ranger Report and Signage Update: Ranger Pat explained that he was working only at Hansen Dam for a while, but he is back at Sepulveda Basin now. Mike asked about ranger assignments. Rangers assigned thus: Only Pat in Valley, 3 in Harbor Area, 21 in Griffith Park. Pat said we can call him for help on his personal cell 626-319-2592. Pat.Aceves@lacity.org.

Wildlife Way signs are up. The behavioral signs are on hold indefinitely, but Pat will keep pushing. Pat will work with whoever organizes the night hike requested by Tessa Charnofsky.

Lake Balboa Advisory Committee Update: Meeting will be 8/21. Glenn suggested the announcement go out to the old User's Committee and Friends of Lake Balboa.

Website www.SepulvedaBasinWildlife.org: Steve is actively adding to it.

Brown Act: Glenn explained that the Steering Committee must follow the Brown Act, as advised by the LA City Attorney's office. We cannot have an informal meeting without proper notice. Each agenda shall be mailed at least 1 week before meeting and posted for at least 72 hours. (Glenn thinks that posting it outside the special events office as is now done is excellent.)

Standing Rules Amendment to Establish an Assistant Chairperson: Glenn introduced the following proposed amendments to the Committee's existing standing rules. The words in **BOLD** type are the proposed additions.

4.1 Each organization in good standing shall be obligated to have its representative serve as a rotating Committee chairperson for a six-month term of office **and its alternate serve as a rotating Committee assistant chairperson for the same six-month term.**

4.4 **The assistant chairperson shall be responsible for assisting the chairperson as necessary and, in the absence or unavailability of the chairperson, to conduct the monthly meeting and/or prepare the upcoming meeting agenda and submit it to the Department for distribution and posting.**

** This item is to be on the August 26 agenda for possible action.

Rotation of Committee Chair: Steve Hartman and Snowdy Dodson of the California Native Plant Society will serve as chair of this committee starting next month.

Submitted by

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