

Minutes

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee Meeting

September 23, 2008

Held at Recreation and Parks Valley Region Headquarters

6335 Woodley Avenue, Van Nuys, California

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Steve Hartman.

Those present introduced themselves:

Voting representatives/alternates: Steve Hartman, California Native Plant Society; Robert Munsey, L.A. Audubon; Rosemarie White, Canada Goose Project; Michael Vensky, SW Herpetologists; Mark Osokow, SFV Audubon. Arriving late were Sharon Ford, Sierra Club; Glenn Bailey, RCD.

City Staff: Kathleen Hanover, Recreation and Parks.

Other attendees: Pat Aceves, LA Park Rangers, Joyce McKinnon, and Sharon Brewer.

Determination of quorum: Five voting organizations were present at 6:30, constituting a quorum (two additional arrived late).

Minutes of August 26, 2008 were distributed by Glenn Bailey after the meeting started; minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Announcements: CalTrans Director Ronald Kosinski will be invited to the January 27 SBWASC meeting to discuss 101-405 corridor improvement project.

Public Comments: Joyce complained about the blatant fishing in the Wildlife Reserve during weekends.

Ranger Pat Aceves requested to present a special request to the Committee early as he had to leave early. Pat noted that on August 29, 2008 there were three suspicious fires south of Burbank Blvd in the Wildlife Reserve. On September 15 there were two more fires in the same vicinity. Subsequently a variety of homeless encampments were removed. However, during the fires the Fire Dept. reported that they could not drive their fire trucks on the the main road due to lack of side and top clearance. Ranger Pat asked the Committee to express approval of a plan by the City to remove vegetation up to 3' on either side of the main road and to clear above the road. A motion and an amendment were made and seconded, but the motion was tabled when it was pointed out that unless an item appears on the agenda, the Committee cannot vote. Two years ago when the Fire Dept. requested creating a new road in the south reserve, the Committee noted that fire trucks could not fit into the existing road as it was overgrown. Hartman suggested that the Committee would encourage the City to perform regular maintenance on the road, and that vegetation clearing along the existing road as requested would be welcomed. However, the Committee reiterated that they object to widening trails or making new roads. Pat Aceves cel phone is 626-319-2592, and he offered to go with Committee members on a walk through if desired.

Continuing Business:

The discussion of the CalTrans 101-405 connector project was put off until next meeting when everyone will have copies of the original Dept of Fish and Game letter, the SFV Audubon Society's letter of August 13, 2008, and the CalTrans response.

Bull Creek project has completed much of the grading and the path along the west side of Lake Balboa was reopened.

The issue of the Los Angeles River navigability and water quality was postponed to a future meeting when the ACOE can present the current status on that issue. The City of LA will be holding public meetings about stream protection at various locations throughout the City from Sept. 23 through Oct. 15. You can also read more about it at LA Creekfreak: <http://lacreekfreak.wordpress.com/2008/09/21/public-meetings-to-protect-la-streams/>

Kathleen Hanover said she would find out more about the status of the behavioral signs.

It was reported that the recent Lake Balboa Advisory Committee meeting had a very negative tone.

Glenn Bailey proposed new standing rules, revisions of 4.1 and 4.4. This revision will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting:

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee

Proposed New Standing Rules

Date Introduced: July 29, 2008 Special Meeting
Date Revised and Re-introduced: September 23, 2008 Regular Meeting

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 as well as the rotating Committee secondary chairperson for the immediately following six-month term of office.

4.4 The secondary 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.

The issue of overnight parking on Woodley (north of Burbank) was discussed. It was suggested that no parking from 10pm to 6am would eliminate the overnight parking without impacting birdwalks that, during the winter, sometimes end after dusk. It was suggested that this proposal be voted on at the next meeting.

Reports and Updates:

Kathleen Hanover reported that water conservation is a big priority for the City, and that moisture sensor irrigation systems will be replacing timer only systems where possible, in conjunction with a grant from DWP. She also reported that new waterbrooms were recently acquired and tested and will be used to wash down the pathways along Lake Balboa to remove the bird feces. There was also a discussion of possible illegal vendors staging along the road leading to Apollo Field, perhaps impacting the natural areas of that portion of the Wildlife Reserve.

Sharon Ford of the Sierra Club announced the 5th Annual Re-Enchanting the City free conference will be held on October 18 at Friendship Auditorium at Griffith Park. The Sierra Club is a co-sponsor with the Canada Goose Project.

Rosemarie White of the Canada Goose Project reported that the Encino Neighborhood Council is getting involved with the fishing line issue at Lake Balboa. Joyce McKinnon noted that Fish & Game doesn't monitor the Lake because there are no fish being stocked.

Bob Munsey of LA Audubon noted that he made a presentation to the LA Audubon board about the Sepulveda Basin and will be getting them more involved if possible.

Steve Hartman, webmaster for www.sepulvedabasinwildlife.org reported that after sending an email notice to persons who commented (by email) on the 101-405 connector project proposal, there was a huge spike in website viewing with over 8,000 requests handled during the first three weeks of September. Steve also noted that new public documents are being added every week.

Steve proposed to give a power point presentation in an upcoming meeting to cover some of the current wildlife issues in the Basin. Steve feels that the Committee should be proposing more projects and utilize the existing Consortium funds to improve habitat (by planting, weed control, etc.). He also suggested that now is the time to create an official "Friends of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas."

Steve announced that the California Native Plant Society will be holding its annual fall native plant sale at the Sepulveda Garden Center on Oct. 11 & 12, 10am-4pm daily, with free native gardening talks. See www.lacnps.org for details.

Minutes taken and submitted by Steve Hartman.