

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
January 27, 2009

The meeting was chaired by Steve Hartman. Other voting members attending were Glenn Bailey, Sharon Ford, Muriel Kotin, Bob Munsey and Rosemarie White. Non-voting members, alternates and guests were Ranger Pat Aceves, Sharon Brewer, Snowdy Dodson, Kathleen Hanover, Ron Kosinski, Joyce MacKinnon, Bill Neill and Mark Osokow. A quorum was established and self-introductions were made.

Project to Replace the Connector from the Southbound 405 to the Northbound 101: Ron Kosinski, Deputy District Director of Caltrans, described the role of his office. Because of the funding situation, the project is currently in limbo. When the project revives, a number of nuances will need to be addressed.

Regarding flexibility in the project, Mr. Kosinski said we have an approved environmental document. The engineering plans are only 30% complete, so there is flexibility in the 70% that is not yet complete. The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) still has some concerns and has not yet approved the project. The City of LA still has access concerns, so Caltrans will be working with them as well.

Currently Caltrans is focusing on projects they can ready quickly for the economic stimulus. Once that work is complete and they are ready to revive this project, Mr. Kosinski can arrange, per Rosemarie's suggestion, a picnic in the WR with the Caltrans engineers. Design will take a year or two after work on it resumes.

There is no particular mitigation formula. Caltrans works with Calif. Fish and Game (F&G) and other agencies to estimate the value of the habitat the project will impact. On a \$150M project, perhaps up to \$15M for all mitigation on the project. Short term impacts can be considered as well.

They will need to do more detailed biological studies south of the Sepulveda Dam in order to get permits from the other agencies. Mark emphasized that that area should be assessed for its total biological value, not just for whatever trees are removed. Mr. Kosinski requested Mark to send findings from his biological studies to Caltrans biologist Paul Caron. Mark also requested compensation for taking away the potential for that land to be a future mitigation project. Mr. Kosinski said the ACOE has a similar concern.

Rosemarie requested that Caltrans run possibilities for mitigation through this Steering Committee as an advisory committee before they are adopted.

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For possible mitigation areas, Glenn suggested Haskell Creek north of "Wildlife Way" park road and Bill Neill suggested Encino Creek.

Mr. Kosinski said we can count on Caltrans not doing any building within the Wildlife Reserve. He suggested we work with the ACOE on a priority list of mitigation projects we would like to see. Also, Caltrans gives Environmental Enhancement Mitigation grants (EEM), max \$300K. That might be added to whatever mitigation project is adopted. For more information on such grants, see the Resource Agency's website. The Caltrans grants person is Barbara Marquez, 213.897-0791. Biologist Paul Caron's phone is 213.897-0610.

Generally Caltrans biologists do 50% of the biological studies, consulting out to specialists where needed.

Mr. Kosinski said the construction staging area will be on the outside of the dam, but the exact location and its size have not been selected. He will try to be sure its impact is as small as possible, and that it is as well sited as possible.

What standard/definition do we as a citizen's advisory board understand for proper mitigation? We advise the agencies what we think appropriate. What requires mitigation is what experts have identified as habitat and its value as habitat. Based on that, the amount of appropriate mitigation is determined. This committee can ensure that the biological studies are appropriate.

How can we get appropriate native vegetation for the landscaping of this project? Landscapers are a separate department; Mr. Kosinski doesn't control them. The environmental department and landscaping personnel often argue. The landscaping people have been sensitized that they're not to put in exotics in this area. **We should send a letter to Mr. Kosinski or Paul Caron emphasizing this issue.**

Glenn pointed out that formation of this committee was required by Cal F&G, although we advise the City of LA. How was Caltrans able to submit this project for publication in the Federal Register without the signoff of the ACOE? The Federal Highway Administration is the agency that files for the Register. However Caltrans will be working with the ACOE who want the freeway elements as far away from the dam as possible.

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Steve asked that Mr. Kosinski provide us with the notice as in the Federal Register - or notify us if it hasn't been filed.

Signage Update and Ranger Issues: Ranger Pat said Office of Public Safety will be taking over the main job in the Wildlife Reserve. Felix Rivera and Evelyn Solano will be the Safety Rangers here. Chief Ranger Albert Torres is aware of the problems in the WR, but Ranger Pat is no longer assigned here, but anchored to Griffith Park. We should continue to phone Albert Torres regarding problems and phone 213.644-6661 when there are problems. (We can still also call Ranger Pat with problems at his current cell phone 626.235-4401.)

There are no-parking signs for Woodley Avenue in Abel's office. Pat gave Abel 12 "trail closed for rehabilitation" signs today. Pat and Abel will go out with R&P staff and decide where to post the signs. Pat will try to get the Safety Rangers to attend our meetings.

Draft Proposal for Weed Control Project: Bill Neill and Steve H discussed the proposal that was attached to tonight's meeting announcement and agenda. Bill is resuming part time work for R&P with some funding from the city. It now appears that some of what is in the written proposal will be handled by city funding. Bill has been spraying arundo in SB. He has not done much in the WR for quite a while except for spraying a fan palm. He wants to rent a small flail brush mower when he can coordinate with another project. He and Steve want to hit the tumbleweed in the SB in a major way.

Glenn objected to the Consortium funding weed eradication outside of the WR. He feels that the ACOE, City or other agencies should be taking care of this. Steve feels that the arundo, Russian thistle and castor bean outside the WR very much impact and spread into the WR. Mark suggested we should both fund this project and approach the other agencies. Bill and Steve will update the proposal for the February meeting.

There will be a Consortium meeting next month. There is around \$35K in the Consortium account.

Bull Creek Project: Steve passed out a schedule provided by Carvel Bass. The project should be done by the beginning of March if all goes well.

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Dodger Dream Field: Glenn announced he never received the environmental documentation despite writing to City's David Attaway last October. The deadline has been extended to Feb. 12.

Parking Restriction Signs for Woodley: Kathleen said R&P received signs today, but they read "no parking at any time." Muriel wants to restrict overnight parking, perhaps between 10pm and 6am. Also, there's no municipal code on them. Rosemarie prefers no parking at all. The committee is undecided. Muriel would like to revisit planting trees or rocks to block huge trucks from parking on the shoulder of Woodley. There was discussion of vehicles of homeless people parking there.

Floodplain Management Plan Steering Committee: Steve received a letter from City Public Affairs Office regarding an LA Floodplain Management Plan Steering Committee. He distributed copies. Let Steve know if you want to serve on the committee.

Wildlife Reserve Cleanup: Muriel announced the cleanup will be Saturday April 18, 8:00 - noon. She will send details to the committee members. Rosemarie said the Encino Neighborhood Council parks and open space committee is planning an open space event on a Saturday afternoon. Perhaps the events can be coordinated.

Minutes of Nov 2008 Meeting will be reviewed at the February meeting.

Rotation of Chair: Steve Hartman will prepare the agenda for the February meeting and chair it. The Canada Goose Project (Rosemarie) will start in March.

Submitted by

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