

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes January 26, 2010

Bob Munsey chaired. A quorum was established. Self introductions followed. Attending were voting members Glenn Bailey, Snowdy Dodson, Sharon Ford, Muriel Kotin and Rosemarie White. Non-voting members, alternates and guests were Patrick Aubuchon, Kerri Barton, Kenny Ortega and Jeremy Thomas. Minutes of the December 2009 meeting were approved as submitted.

Public Comments: Kenny Ortega complained about a man who feeds animals in massive amounts at Lake Balboa and is getting media coverage. Kenny suggests that either this committee or the city address the problem as it sends a bad message to kids. Sharon Ford said there is no municipal code, so the signs are unenforceable. Rosemarie said she has communicated with the man.

Rotation of Committee Chair Position: This is Bob Munsey's last meeting as chair. Glenn Bailey is the next chair, starting with next meeting.

Starting Time: Glenn moved to change the starting time of these meetings to 6:45, compromising between 6:30 and 7:00 and giving us a better shot at ending our meetings by 9:00 than a 7:00 start. Passed 5 yes, 1 no. Our meetings will start at 6:45.

Unofficial Cricket Field: Jeremy Thomas advised that Abel Perez signed a letter addressed "To Whom It May Concern" and dated 1/25/10 on the topic. Copies were distributed. It reads "Any organized sport activity taking place at Woodley Park Section 4/Wildlife Area will require a permit issued by the City of Los Angeles Department of recreation and Parks. Any party in violation of this may be considered trespassing." Glenn will get a copy to Evelyn Solano, Muriel will scan a copy and send it to Steve H for posting on our website. The committee thanks Abel for the letter. Bob suggested that letters from our committee be signed by "Rotating Chair," to avoid confusion resulting from the fact that our chair rotates every 6 months.

Hummingbird Hill: Bob Munsey hasn't received any response to our letter. Muriel commented that there had not been as much re-growth of native plants when she looked two weeks ago as she hoped. We should observe what re-grows over the next few months.

Memorial Issues: Bob would like to see some action on memorials for Jill Swift and Sandy Wohlgemuth. Rosemarie likes the idea of an oak grove honoring both. Glenn has not yet reached Jill's family. He feels Jill's and Sandy's families should be contacted before we take final action. Snowdy said CNPS has a commemorative grove at MCSP, rather than a memorial grove; permission from families is not asked. Many of the members like the idea of a commemorative grove, not only for Jill and Sandy but others as well. Muriel and Rosemarie had concerns about the area below the overlook because of undesirable behavior issues and expected disruptions from Caltrans. Perhaps it should be located in the expansion area west of Haskell Creek. It was moved to approve the concept of a commemorative grove and unanimously passed.

We need to develop potential areas for the grove. It might be coast live oaks, perhaps with other California native trees like walnuts and sycamores. Sharon Ford suggested bringing this up at the next Sepulveda Basin Master Plan public meeting on 2/20/10.

Sepulveda Basin Master Plan: The 2nd of 3 public meetings will be February 20, as part of the process of the first update of the Sepulveda Basin Master Plan in 30 years. Glenn asked if we as a committee have a goal.

Master Plan Goals: The committee generally agreed that the former corn maize field immediately east of Woodley Avenue and between Woodley Park and the Wildlife Reserve should become part of the Wildlife Reserve, as an enhancement and link to both Woodley Section 2 and the Wildlife Reserve; the east bank of Haskell Creek and adjoining field along the stretch from the Reserve access road ("Wildlife Way") to Victory Boulevard should be restored as riparian habitat; the area north of the Reserve parking to the archery range and dam wall, which is currently but unclearly defined as Wildlife Reserve, should be protected and improved as part of the Wildlife Reserve; and that all water courses within Sepulveda Basin, including those now treated as drainage channels, should be managed as riparian corridors areas, including Hayvenhurst, Woodley and Encino Channels/Creeks. As meetings take place, these goals will be refined and improved.

Bull Creek was badly eroded in the recent heavy rains. Jeremy did a walkthrough with the ACOE to survey the damage. The erosion will be attended to. Part of the paths had to be blocked off, some of which R&P will be able to re-established.

Public Use Recreational Use Master Plan SB Wildlife Area: Glenn will have this on next month's agenda. He would like to work toward the annual review being reinstated and wants this committee to review some of the operational provisions in the document. We can then send our suggestions to the agencies involved.

Use of Wildlife Reserve for Large Runs: Glenn will invite the coach about 10K run to next month's meeting, as he did not appear this evening.

Glenn suggested that this committee become more familiar with the lease provisions between the ACOE and the City, specifically having to do with large events in the Basin. Glenn said there are fairly clear provisions about no fee events and not blocking streets. He would like one of our members to be part of the planning meetings for mega events. He doesn't know whether Steve H has yet posted the documents on our website.

Department of Recreation and Parks: Jeremy advised that the Basin did not flood during the recent rains - it was a near thing and the roads were closed for a while. Regarding Bull Creek, which will be turned over to the City by the Army Corps of Engineers in a few months, Glenn feels we need something like the Public Recreational Use Plan for it. Some entity should be looking at rules. In light of city budget cuts, how can shopping carts get removed? Are volunteer cleanups feasible?

California Native Plant Society (CNPS): Snowdy said that CNPS continues to pay Bill Neill to eradicate invasive weeds beyond what the city pays him to do.

Canada Goose Project: Rosemarie said the Canada Goose count is up this year. The golf course people call her when there are wounded birds there and she takes them to California Wildlife Center. Regarding birds being fed at Lake Balboa, Abel had asked Rosemarie to contact a man who thought a goose had disappeared, because of coyotes. She plans to try to organize an educational meeting about feeding wildlife for Lake Balboa.

Resource Conservation District of the Sta. Monica Mts (RCD): Glenn is concerned about Steve Moe's retirement, along with 3 other people from lake management, leaving one employee who is reluctant to get on the boat. Lake management may be turned over to the Bureau of Sanitation. Steve has been out for over a month and is expected to retire 2/1/10.

San Fernando Valley Audubon (SFVAS): Muriel said that SFVAS's College Conservation Committee has re-scheduled its planting project to 2/27. They will be planting thorny California native plants to block some of the unauthorized paths leading to the Wildlife Lake.

Sierra Club: Sharon Ford is collecting signatures on petitions for the State Park initiative.

Submitted by

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