

PUBLIC RECREATIONAL USE PLAN  
SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE AREA

10-87

PURPOSE

The subject public use plan for the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife area has been developed in compliance with the Agreement between the State of California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), Wildlife Conservation Board and the City of Los Angeles entered into September 17, 1985 (WCB 86-727862). The construction, operation, and maintenance of the Wildlife Area is in accordance with the above authorization of the State Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). Funding for the development of the Wildlife Area is being provided by the WCB. The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (City) will be responsible for all operation and maintenance of the Wildlife Area.

INTRODUCTION

The Sepulveda Basin is located within the city limits of Los Angeles, California, in the San Fernando Valley approximately 2 miles southwest of the community of Van Nuys. Public land (2,150 acres) within the basin is administered by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (Corps), but a majority is leased to the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks for recreational development. Approximately 1,027 acres are planned for recreational development. Of this total, 60-acres has been designated for the Wildlife Management Area. This is in addition to the 48-acre existing wildlife area south of Burbank Boulevard.

The objectives of the wildlife enhancement project are to develop a wetlands system, enhance habitat for wildlife, and increase wildlife interpretive opportunities within the eastern portion of the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin. The project site is located north of Burbank Boulevard, south of the Tillman Water Reclamation Facility, east of Woodley Avenue, and west of the San Diego Freeway. The entire project lies within the 50-year floodplain (elevation 702) and is subject to occasional flooding.

An 11-acre lake will be constructed within the Wildlife Management Area. The lake will feature a 1-acre island to provide a secure waterfowl refuge. The lake will be supplied with advanced secondary treated water from the reclamation plant to the north. The water for the lake will be on a gravity flow system through underground pipes from the plant to the lake. To ensure high-quality lake water at all times, a continuous supply of reclaimed water will totally replace the lake water at least once per week with a capability of higher turnover rates during hot weather (by adjustment of the supply valve). In addition an adjustable outlet weir will allow the lake level to be raised 18 inches above normal to control botulism episodes among the lake waterfowl. The quality of incoming water from the reclamation plant will be suitable for body contact although none is intended nor will be allowed. The 11-acre lake is for wildlife purposes only. Two observational blinds will be built to allow for wildlife viewing.



The project will also continuously supply Haskell Channel with 4500 gallons per minute of reclaimed water to provide year-round water enhancement to both wildlife areas, north and south of Burbank Boulevard: the channel reach adjacent to the wildlife lake will be flowing half-full year-round; the channel will convey this water to the 48 acre wildlife area south of Burbank Boulevard operated by the Corps of Engineers. Recirculation and fill water will thus be furnished year-round to the 8 foot deep, 3 acre wildlife pond and 7 acre marshland in the Corps wildlife area. In addition Haskell Channel will provide physical isolation of the wildlife areas from the recreation areas on the west side of the channel.

The Wildlife Management Area lake will also be enhanced by the planting of 16 acres of locally occurring riparian vegetation. Current wildlife habitat enhancement plans for the Wildlife Area include the following habitat types - a sage scrub habitat, a riparian habitat zone, and a freshwater lake. A subsequent phase of development, to be cost-shared by the Corps of Engineers and City Recreation and Parks Department, may provide for the replanting of the present ruderal grassland to a sage scrub habitat, an oak woodland, and/or a Canada goose forage crop area.

#### FUTURE FORAGING SITES

The 40 acre area east of Hjelte Park, south of Burbank Boulevard

and the Los Angeles River and north of the dam will be redesignated as a wildlife management area to remain in agriculture (grain crops) to provide foraging for wintering Canadian Geese. To provide a permanent source of irrigation water for the foregoing forage area, the City will bring a pressurized reclaimed water supply main to the westerly boundary of the area, as part of the Sepulveda Basin reclaimed Water Distribution System Project scheduled for construction during 1989-1990.

In conjunction with the above land use change, the City Recreation and Parks Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game will seek to establish at least 60 acres of additional permanent foraging site(s) (excluding the WCB-funded Wildlife Area) within the Sepulveda Basin for the purpose of maintaining Canadian Geese historic wintering populations. These population levels will be determined through existing baseline data.

To provide a permanent source of irrigation water for non-riparian sections of the subject Wildlife Area, the City Recreation and Parks Department will bring a pressurized main to the northerly boundary of the Wildlife Area, as part of the previously indicated Sepulveda Basin Reclaimed Water Distribution



System Project. In addition, an adequate landscape strip should be provided to buffer the Wildlife Area and additional foraging site(s) from adjacent development.

#### WILDLIFE LAKE

The primary purpose of the freshwater lake will be for the benefit of wildlife. Consideration is given to public enjoyment and use of the area for birdwatching, nature study, wildlife observation, photography and other such compatible uses inflicting minimal amounts of disturbance to wildlife. Lake management concerns relative to aquatic vegetation control, avian botulism potential, and requirements for mosquito abatement resulted in the recommendation that the lake be filled and drained seasonally. The lake shall remain filled long enough to accommodate migrating waterfowl and birds. Filling should begin at a time to accommodate early arriving species of waterfowl. The timing and extent of filling and draining will be monitored by the City and DFG over several years to determine the optimum maintenance schedule. However water will be available year-round in Haskell Channel which will continuously flow half-full in the channel reach adjacent to the lake.

Two wildlife blinds will be constructed for public viewing of wildlife. The blinds will be designed to blend in with the surrounding vegetation.

#### PUBLIC ACCESS AND USE

Management of visitor use in this type of urban wildlife area is particularly important due to the potential for resource impacts resulting from the demand for intensive public use of the area. The goal of the Wildlife Area is to provide optimum success for the wildlife while providing for appropriate public use. There is a likelihood that visitor demand will exceed wildlife resource capability. It is expected that major public visitation will occur during the wildlife migration months in the Spring and Fall. Management of visitor use will not only prevent disturbance to wildlife and resource impacts but will ultimately increase the quality of the visitor experience.

Therefore the following rules and/or regulations will be enforced within the Wildlife Area by City park rangers and City police. These rules will be incorporated in appropriate public use information signs and posted at the entrance and appropriate locations within the wildlife area.

1. Public use shall be allowed on the Wildlife Area during daylight hours only.
2. Camping, open fires, and the use of gas cooking stoves on the Wildlife Area is prohibited.

3. All visitors shall remain on the designated trail. There will be no public access to the east side of the wildlife lake to prevent disturbance to wildlife.
4. Bicycles, skateboards, or rollerskating will not be allowed in the Wildlife Area.
5. No person shall drive, operate, leave or stop any motor vehicle, off-road vehicle, or tractor in the Wildlife Management Area except for maintenance vehicles.
6. No person shall swim, wade, or dive within the Wildlife Area.
7. No person shall launch or operate a boat or other floating device within the Wildlife Area.
8. No person shall disturb or take any bird, nest, or eggs thereof, or any plant, mammal, fish, mollusk, crustacean, amphibian, reptile or any other form of plant or animal within the Wildlife Area.
9. No person shall possess, fire or discharge any firearm, bow and arrow, air or gas gun, spear gun, or any other weapon of any kind within or into the Wildlife Area.
10. Individual user permits will not be required; however, a visitor sign-in booth will be located at the entrances and will be maintained by the City.
11. All commercial activities are prohibited on the Wildlife Area. Large organizational groups of over 50 people will require prior Parks and Recreation (City) approval before use of the Wildlife Area.



12. The release of any fish or wildlife species, domestic or domesticated species, or the introduction of any plant species, is prohibited.
13. The feeding of wildlife is prohibited.
14. Pets, including dogs, cats and horses are prohibited from entering the Wildlife Area.

PUBLIC USE DESIGN FEATURES (SEE ATTACHED EXHIBIT A)

1. Benches shall be provided in appropriate locations along the Wildlife Area access trail. The access trail and wildlife viewing blinds will be designed to accommodate use by the handicapped visitor. Only one public access trail will be constructed through the Wildlife Area allowing access to the wildlife viewing blinds.
2. Interpretive and educational signs pertaining to wildlife and vegetation will be employed along the Wildlife Area access trail. These signs will be produced and maintained by the City.
3. Barriers will be constructed to prohibit unauthorized vehicular access to the area. Appropriate fencing will be installed to prevent unauthorized access and trash dumping within the Wildlife Area.
4. The existing parking facilities on Woodley Avenue will

continue to function as parking areas for the Wildlife Area.

5. The existing maintenance road on the east side of the proposed lake will be eliminated by discing and reseeding.
6. Trash receptacles and appropriate public sanitary facilities will be provided by the City. Standard 55 gallon galvanized metal trash containers, painted green, gray, brown or natural color, will be placed in convenient locations throughout the area. The collection of trash and service of sanitary facilities will occur as necessary and will be augmented when heavy public use of the Wildlife Area mandates it. The locations of the receptacles and service schedule will be determined by the City.
7. Wildlife Area signs will include a project sign, public directional signs, safety, and interpretive signs to be constructed and maintained by the City. The site location and makeup of the project sign, including dimensions, materials and lettering shall be as mutually agreed upon by the City, DFG and the Corps.

#### ANNUAL REVIEW

This Public Recreational Use Plan will be reviewed annually by

the Department (DFG), Corps of Engineers, and the Department of Recreation and Parks (City) in order to assess plan implementation progress and status of operation and maintenance requirements. Other interested parties will be notified of and invited to participate in the annual plan review process.



The Public Recreational Use Plan for the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area together with the provisions and objectives thereof, is hereby accepted for implementation.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES, a municipal corporation,  
acting by its BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK  
COMMISSIONERS

By [Signature] 12/9/87  
President Date  
By [Signature] 10/9/87  
Secretary Date

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

By [Signature] 11/10/87  
Glen F. Weien Date  
Lieutenant Colonel  
Corps of Engineers  
Deputy District Engineer  
For Civil Works

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DEPARTMENT OF  
FISH AND GAME

By COPY ORIGINAL SIGNED BY  
FRED WORTHLEY

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_