

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Draft Minutes December 22, 2009

Bob Munsey chaired the meeting. Other voting members attending were Glenn Bailey, Sharon Ford, Steve Hartman and Muriel Kotin. Non-voting members were Sharon Brewer and Jeremy Thomas. A quorum was established. Self introductions were made. Jeremy Thomas is the new Recreation and Parks (R&P) representative to the committee.

Steve Hartman made a PowerPoint presentation: Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Report 2009. He showed before and after pictures of Hummingbird Hill and the burn area north of the Burbank Blvd. tunnel. In response to Steve's picture of trapped coots at Lake Balboa, Jeremy said that very soon Recreation and Parks will fix the grate so waterfowl won't get trapped. Steve requested that R&P control Russian thistle in the Basin. He pointed out non-native plants in California native plant areas near Woodley Parks Golf Course and R&P HQ. He pointed out horehound in the Bull Creek Restoration area; Jeremy said ACOE is in charge of that. There are native bunchgrasses that were planted, doing well so far. The trash weir in Bull Cr needs clearing out. There are 4 areas in the Bull Cr project that were never vegetated or weeded; Steve recommends R&P ask the ACOE about correcting that and a lot of erosion near the oxbow.

Minutes of the November 2009 Meeting: Page 3, last paragraph, remove superfluous "a". The minutes were approved with that correction.

Announcements: Glenn distributed copies of an LA Times article on cities along the LA River Watershed needing to eliminate trash from their storm drains by 2016.

Public Comment: None

Meeting Times: Steve H suggested moving our start time back to 6:30 PM from the current 7:00 PM. We will vote on this at our January 2010 meeting.

Unauthorized Cricket Field: Muriel reported that Clifford's cricket field is still being set apart and being used for cricket, including by adults. Jeremy concurred that it continues. Jeremy took down the sawhorses yesterday and will inform the weekend staff that the equipment should come down. The committee wants a letter from Abel Perez declaring the field illegal. Jeremy will remind Abel that we need the letter so that OPS can be instructed to act.

We hope to establish that that the area north of the Wildlife Reserve (WR) Parking lot is clearly part of the WR through the Master Plan Update process.

Dog Policy: There is no municipal code against dogs entering the WR so long as they are on leash. However the Public Recreational Use Plan Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area of 1987 says "Pets, including dogs, cats and horses are prohibited from entering the Wildlife Area." Glenn will draft a letter that states our case for a law barring dogs from the WR and Steve will work with him on it. Glenn will draft an email for Bob to send to Evelyn Solano requesting proper enforcement of other behavior restrictions.

Letter on Hummingbird Hill: It was voted unanimously to send a letter as in Draft 4-1 after correcting the punctuation at the end of paragraph 1. Muriel will email the corrected letter to Bob for him to mail and to email to the recipients.

Memorials: Bob Munsey said LA Audubon Society plans to plant a tree in honor of Sandy Wohlgemuth and likes the idea of a memorial oak grove. They would like to have memorial trees in the grove honoring a number of outstanding LAAS environmentalists. The committee felt the memorial grove should honor Jill Swift and-or Sandy. Glenn has not yet reached Jill's daughter, but the RCD made some suggestions. Jeremy will find out how much a new memorial bench in the WR would cost today. The memorial oak grove would probably be in the southeast corner of the north reserve, next to the Burbank Blvd. berm, well away from the Wildlife Lake and goose forage area.

Muriel pointed out that any memorial trees planted in Sepulveda Basin should be California native species, to be sure that Jeremy is aware of this policy.

Master Plan Update: Glenn feels Tetra Tech needs to learn a great deal about the Sepulveda Basin. There will be a walkthrough of the Bull Creek and Lake Balboa areas Monday Jan 4 at 10:30 AM for Tetra Tech with Friends of Lake Balboa, similar to the earlier walkthrough at the WR. Glenn requested the Master Plan Update stay on our monthly agenda, long term.

Special Events: The coach from CSUN desires to continue an annual 10K race partially in the WR, and hopes to attract 1,000 participants. We expect him at our January meeting to state what he wants.

Barbara Taylor of the events calendar is about to retire, so it is not clear that the calendar will continue. This committee very much wants to know about the special events planned for the basin as it impacts our public programs and individual enjoyment of the WR.

Annual Review of the "Public Recreational Use Plan, Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area":

Glenn reported that this annual review has not occurred for a long time. He thinks it would be useful for it to occur annually on a regular basis. Steve commented that Fish & Game is no longer much involved. We should find out who is the appropriate officer and try to get them to attend one of these Steering Committee meetings, along with ACOE. This committee should become familiar with the plan. It is on our website.

Note: The "Public Recreational Use Plan Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area," was signed and agreed to in 1987 by the City of Los Angeles, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the State of California Department of Fish and Game. The "Public Access and Use" section (beginning on Page 6) says, in part, as follows:

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 with 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.

Department of Recreation and Parks: Jeremy said they removed a couple of encampments south of Burbank Blvd this morning. The basin did not flood in the recent rains.

In case of Basin flood closure, this committee will continue its past policy of meeting at Millie's Restaurant at VanOwen and Balboa.

Steve requested that the SW Herpetologists be removed as an active member from the agenda list. Glenn suggested Jeremy to provide a list of the hard copy mailing list so we can suggest some names to be removed and so we can add some to our email lists.

Next meeting: January 25, 2010.

Submitted by

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