

**Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee  
Meeting March 28, 2023 – Approved Minutes**

The meeting was chaired by Melanie Winter and called to order at 7:45pm. It was held in person at the Balboa Sports Center. Here is the link to the [recording of the March 28 meeting of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee](#). Meeting was set up for zoom audio only except for presentations. A quorum was established.

Attending in person were Voting Members: Glenn Bailey, Theresa Brady, Nurit Katz, Muriel Kotin, George Waddell, Melanie Winter. Non-voting Members: Pat Bates, Brian Yamasaki. Guests and Alternates not voting tonight: Dan Cooper, Isabella Isles, Ryan Kinzel, Clark Stevens, Greg Stewart, Amanda Thompson. Remote participants (guests and alternates not voting tonight) included Shelly Backlar, Michele Barton, Shelley Billick, Austin Cyr (Lindsey Horvath rep, unable to report due to tech issues), Jonah Glickman, Barbara Heidemann, Dennis Mabasa, Bill Neill, Mark Osokow, Jon Rishi, Arezo Sarwary (RCD), Charlie Wilken.

Minutes of Jan 2023 were approved as submitted without objection. Recording began. Introductions continued. Park Director Katy Penny welcomed the committee back to the community center. We will post our agendas within the building and on the bulletin board at the tennis court.

**Govt Agency Reports:**

ACOE – Jon Rishi: they finished cleaning out the river channel above the dam just before the heavy rains began. Dan Cooper joined him in checking out the South Reserve as vegetation maintenance began there. Bird nesting season has begun, so further work will be preceded by surveys before any vegetation removal. Concerned especially about nesting Least Bell's Vireos. Jon will send info about nesting sites to Melanie. They don't have critical nesting habitat designated in Sepulveda Basin, but ACOE treats the areas where the vireos nest as such.

RAP: Who is responsible for the water level of the Wildlife Lake? Jon says it's RAP – or another entity within the city. Who is lake manager? Forestry? Engineering? Some entity within RAP. Brian will look into it. Michele Barton said Sanitation has an interest in the biodiversity, but Tillman is their active interest in the water there. The biodiversity group hopes to become more greatly involved in the biodiversity of the basin. Suggestion for coordination between RAP and Sanitation. Suggestion made to remove the mesh weir that was added because of water lettuce.

CD-6 – Jonah Glickman: Working with homeless at high flood risk, especially before rain events. LAFD airlifted 4 homeless and their pets from south of Burbank Blvd in heavy rain in late February.

RAP – Brian Yamasaki: He will arrange a second restroom cleaning after lunchtime on weekends. Thanked Sanitation for their weeding and planting efforts in SBWR. And FoLAR/CNPS for weeding. Engineers are involved now with the sinking Viewing Area 3. He doesn't yet know what they will do to fix the problem. Is there any possibility of federal funds? Jon will look into it. Flood damage: many trees within Sepulveda Basin have toppled from saturated soils and wind. Forestry's Leon Boroditsky or Steve Dunlap would have the info on the species of fallen trees as all the trees are mapped on GIS, including the fallen ones.

Goat grazing: Brian has no information on the progress of the right of entry. Would LA San be interested in being involved along with RAP? Probably not. Michelle is suggesting a joint committee to consider herbicides for invasive weed management for restoration purposes. The neighborhood councils' joint monthly meetings have been attended by LAFD and the issue raised consistently. There is a LAFD wildlands taskforce committee that may have not met yet. Captain Diede may be the head.

LA San Volunteer Restoration – Ryan Kinzel of Climate Action Corps (Americorps): Project was on 2 weekends on about ¾ acre area east of the lake in the riparian zone. Collaborated with Tree People, FoLAR, CNPS, SFVAS, RAP, etc. First Saturday dedicated to weed removal. Second Saturday to volunteers from FoLAR planting 95 native plants and watering them. Black walnut, Mulefat, toyon, mugwort, deer grass, giant rye, California rose, etc. A pilot effort to enhance ongoing efforts. Maintenance is still being planned, but they want to give the plants the best chance for survival. A pilot for LA San. FoLAR and CNPS contributing greatly.

RCD Presentation – Dan Cooper, Bella (Isabella) Isles, Clark Stevens: Their **SBWA Wildfire Resilient Habitat Plan which they are developing**. Funded by a wildfire grant. Hope to wrap up in June. Tonight's presentation is a "community workshop." A version of the presentation with videos embedded can be viewed at this link: [Presentation with Videos](#). Guiding principles: mitigate fire risk. Re-envisioning SBWR. Committed to privacy for wildlife (fewer trails), prioritizing native ecosystems, enjoyment of nature. Habitat restoration is about changing human behavior and inappropriate uses more than about planting. Sensitive species should be emphasized more than in the past. Concerned about the status and advisability of the path on the east side of the lake. (Steering Committee recommended a few years ago that it be formalized, perhaps moving parts of it farther from the lake.) Encampments – their relationship to fires – RCD is mapping them. Analyzing months fires have occurred. Reduce ignition, reduce human presence. Lack of parking enforcement, semi-permanent encampments in Burbank Blvd tunnel, etc. Effective fencing. (Jon: Corps would not allow tall picket fencing in SB.)

Altering soil moisture: Big fires tend to follow a high moisture period followed by severe drying, then the big fires. They propose prescribed inundation of west field and possibly part of the south end of the east field to keep the soil from drying out severely. Shallow water flooding would result in water infiltration, improved water quality, etc. It would use some of the 13-acre feet that flow through the wildlife lake and creek every day during the droughts. For south end of the West Field. Suggestion to communicate with Tillman about the possible use of their effluent.

East Field: Is mostly too high to flood. Propose solid fencing along Burbank Blvd and base of dam's rock wall, radiating from where the overlook now is. Solid fencing south of Burbank too. Remove the overlook parking. Passive restoration plus aggressive weed control. Rope/soft fencing along pathways to encourage people to stay on the paths. Wildlife could travel through the tunnel and the watercourse under Burbank.

Concerns expressed about impediments to debris flows, closeness of bike path to fencing that could be a safety hazard, and the protocols for bike paths. Mosquitoes wouldn't have an opportunity to breed, as the water would be in place only briefly. Bella will share the presentation with the committee. Update at our May meeting.

Council File 23-0105 re plans for Sepulveda Basin (Raman) is tabled, as Lee (CD-12) wants to wait for CD-6 council person to be in place (expected in June). Link for information: [Council File 23-0105](#).

Senator Stern's Senate Bill 539 is in committee, providing that state funds should go toward nature-based solutions for the LA River in Sepulveda Basin. Link to information: [Senate Bill 539](#).

**Reports from Member Organizations:**

*Enc NC* is supporting FoLAR's efforts. FoLAR Earth Day creek cleanup and 4/15 cleanups elsewhere in SB. FoLAR cleanups April 15 and 22. Dennis Mabasa if questions.

*Amanda Thompson's book "Wings + Wonder + Water"* is close to publishing a bird photography book about Sepulveda Basin that will send some of its profits to SBWR.

Brown Act requires an in-person quorum. We can attend remotely but only for illness and a very few other exceptions (illness, child/elder care, and traveling on official business) with advance notice.

Adjourned 9:49pm. Next meeting May 23, 2023. The chat follows.

Submitted by

Muriel S. Kotin, SFV Audubon Representative to SBWASC

The Chat:

18:33:52 From B H to Everyone:

In case you are unaware, this meeting had to go back to in person meetings. They were hoping to be able to connect to Zoom from the Sports Center.

18:34:26 From B H to Everyone:

In case you are unaware, this meeting had to go back to in person meetings. They were hoping to be able to connect to Zoom from the Sports Center.

18:54:09 From Dennis Mabasa to Everyone:

Dennis Mabasa, Friends of the Los Angeles River

18:54:09 From Arezo Sarwary-RCDSMM to Everyone:

Arezo Sarwary RCDSMM

18:54:16 From Charlie Wilken, Audubon to Everyone:

Charlie Wilken

18:54:26 From Shelley Billik to Everyone:

Shelley Billik, Community Forest Advisory Committee, Chair

18:54:34 From Shelly Backlar to Everyone:

Shelly Backlar, RCDSMM

18:54:35 From Charlie Wilken, Audubon to Everyone:

San Fernando Valley Audubon, RCD

18:54:45 From Austin Cyr - Supervisor Horvath's Office to Everyone:

Austin Cyr - Supervisor Horvath's office

18:55:48 From Michelle Barton to Everyone:

Michelle Barton - Biodiversity Program Manger, LASAN

18:57:45 From Jonah Glickman CD6 to Everyone:

Jonah Glickman, District Director for CD6

18:58:00 From Jon Rishi, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to Everyone:

Jon L. Rishi, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, L.A. Angeles District

18:58:07 From Charlie Wilken, Audubon to Everyone:

multiple instances of zoom are on in the room makes feedback

19:08:41 From Bill Neill to Everyone:

Bill Neill, LA/SMM Chapter of CA Native Plant Society (I am spectator, George Waddell is representative)

19:09:58 From Austin Cyr - Supervisor Horvath's Office to Everyone:  
Sorry my tech is not cooperating

19:14:39 From B H to Everyone:  
The Toilets are working again near the amphitheater. I just wanted to say a big THANK YOU!

19:16:03 From Nurit Katz to Everyone:  
Austin - feel free to add any updates in the chat if you have anything to report

19:17:51 From Shelley Billik to Everyone:  
It's about maintenance, not species

19:34:43 From Nurit Katz to Everyone:  
can you hear Dan ok?

19:34:56 From Jonah Glickman CD6 to Everyone:  
Yes!

19:35:02 From Nurit Katz to Everyone:  
great!

19:39:52 From Michelle Barton to Everyone:  
The western meadowlark is an LASAN biodiversity indicator species (<https://www.lacitysan.org/cs/groups/public/documents/document/y250/mdc1/~edisp/cnt075161.pdf>)

20:08:18 From Nurit Katz to Everyone:  
zoom folks raise your hand if you have questions, I'm monitoring