

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee

Minutes: September 25, 2001

Glenn Bailey chaired the meeting which was attended by Carvel Bass, David Ecklund, Gene Greene, Adel Hagekhalil, Steve Hartman, Muriel Kotin, Joyce MacKinnon, Kelly Ristuccia, Linda Waade, James Ward, Rosemarie White, and Sandy Wohlgermuth. (Eric Lesser has a conflict between these meetings and his music.) Introductions were made. (David Rankell of Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association attended the second half.)

Minutes of the August, 2001 meeting were approved after the spelling of Carvel Bass's name was corrected. Clarification: we couldn't come to consensus on size of groups at Woodley Park, so decided to wait for Muriel to return. She, Glenn, Rosemarie, and Steve H. will write a draft letter.

Announcements: Steve H. passed out maps (a recent aerial photo) of the Sepulveda Basin and flyers to the native plant sale 10/13 and 10/14.

Constructed Wetlands: Adel Hagekhalil explained that Muriel showed him, Linda Waade, Kelly Ristuccia and Jack Baylis around the W.A. before this meeting. A number of questions were asked at the on-site viewing of the site of the pilot wetlands (Area 7) on 9/15/01. The survey of the site has been delayed because the farmer was concerned about impact on his activities. The survey resumed today and should be complete in about a week. Adel will e-mail the results to the committee.

Bureau of Sanitation and Rosemarie toured the San Joaquin Marsh last Friday. Constructed wetlands there use natural processes to treat water and create excellent habitat and recreation opportunities. That site treats rainwater runoff and minimizes impact on Newport Bay. Adel will arrange a tour for members of the committee. Steve H. asked why? Committee members suggested it. It's the same sort of process as being proposed here. It's about 200 acres. They did not experience any mosquitos or odors. The tour may be on a Thursday in October.

What guarantee is there that the Bureau of Sanitation will not go over 50 to 75 acres and stay in Area 7, south of Burbank Blvd? Adel is committed to putting that in writing from the director of the Bureau of Sanitation and it will also be in the environmental documentation. Would a letter be helpful? The committee thought it would be very helpful. By end of October there will be documentation of the revised size and answers to questions raised like silt and odors. Sanitation will go over the draft revised report with us before it is finalized. They need to try various technologies some of which require much less acreage than old technologies. They can live with whatever size Area 7 is.

Rosemarie wanted to clarify that this is a discussion prior to a decision; a decision has not yet been made. Carvel said that the city has not decided whether the land is to be used for recreational fields or a wetlands, nor has the ACOE made its decision. Glenn asked that all committee members who regularly attend these meetings be invited to go over the draft revised report. We are to be clear that the draft will only be a first draft, open to significant modifications.

Adel passed out a flyer on a public meeting on wastewater plans to be held October 3. Steve H. asked about alternatives. Adel said they will be looked at as part of the EIR (or EIS). They do not want to have to build much infrastructure or cause much impact on the area. To build at the ponds on the golf courses would have much more impact and require more infrastructure. In this project, water would be taken from the pipe that takes discharge to the LA River downstream of the dam, taking it from near the river and returning it to that pipe just upstream of the dam. Sanitation will work with us to be sure the wetlands complement the Wildlife Area. Adel hopes there will be a boardwalk to encourage recreation. There may be a science center, perhaps an open space with tables for students, if this is feasible.

Steve H asked how much of the area will be under water? About 60%. There will be berms, no office. The emphasis will be water treatment. Rosemarie's reaction to the field trip to San Joaquin Marsh was to note that the main purpose there is a water treatment facility. Birds also pollute water and can be hard on plants. You have to replace plants every 5 years or so. Muriel commented that she has visited primary sewage treatment facilities in Israel to see the excellent birdlife there, that S. Joaquin Marsh is one of her favorite birdwatching places.

Glenn was concerned about the appropriateness of an educational center so close to the dam where it would be very prone to floods. Re the DWP pipeline: it appears that the line will cut through some of the land proposed for this project. Adel said they have met with DWP. For example, they will have to be sure

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the pipe does not float by being sure there is at least 5 feet of soil above the pipe. If they get to a design stage on this, they will work closely with DWP. Carvel said the ACOE has already worked with DWP engineers on designing a pipeline that will work under the conditions of the flood control basin. Adel said a berm can be built over the pipe.

Dave Rankell (SOHA) asked whether the Steering Committee has taken a formal position. Glenn and Steve H explained that we are presently hearing from Bureau of Sanitation as part of a scoping process, that we may take a formal stance later. Adel offered to meet with Dave Rankell after the meeting to arrange to visit his organization.

Steve H asked whether the wetlands will be lined. No, unless the watermaster requires it. There would only be minor infiltration, and a liner would make silt removal much more difficult. Adel said that silt issues will be covered as thoroughly as they can in the upcoming report. He will keep us updated on that report. He asked whether the committee wants Bur of Sanitation to keep coming to these meetings. Steve H said that an education center would need teachers and money to staff it. Sanitation would be willing to split a science center teacher's salary with the school district. They would be willing to partner with us on a science program. They have some resources and would provide appropriate management and help fund a science education program.

Linda Waade asked about the Users Meeting as a venue for a public meeting on the wetlands. She will work with James on this.

Army Corps of Engineers: Carvel Bass said the City & ACOE have been meeting monthly on various projects. The constructed wetlands are early in the planning stage, and the Corps is doing a small preliminary planning study on it. The project primarily is still internal to the city decision process. Carvel is satisfied that it is working its way through the system properly.

The arundo in the river has been cut and sprayed, though not removed yet. However, some of the arundo is probably still alive. Sometime within the next 9 months or so, more work and spraying will be done on it.

Recreation & Parks Dept: James ward announced there is new golf management. A VNOC (Volunteer Neighborhood Oversight Committee) is being formed for a new garden center building. R&P is shy on funding for the building and seeking Prop K funds. A lot of events have been postponed because of the events of 9/11.

Japanese Gardens: Gene announced an upcoming Bonsai sale. TWRP Berm tours start in October, integrated with their Japanese Garden tours. They've put up a public information bulletin board and we can post our events there. "Autumn in the Garden" will be the same weekend as CNPS plant sale.

Los Angeles Audubon Society: Sandy said the Consortium has \$20,000 in a CD at 5.3% and a money market account with \$15,153.

San Fernando Valley AS: Muriel gave the status of SFVAS's Sepulveda Basin education program, with a teacher workshop to be held Sept. 29 and field trips beginning Oct. 23. She'll get together with the Woodley Park letter committee. They will e-mail a draft to committee. Glenn wants minutes e-mailed to him when Muriel sends them to Patty.

Canada Goose Project: Rosemarie said their surveys are about to start.

California Native Plant Society: Steve H. said that exotic weeds remain a large problem. We cannot get timely spraying from R&P, as they don't have the resources. Steve wants up to \$2,000 in next year to hire Riparian Repair to deal with weed issues in the WA. He wants to remove arundo in the south reserve, including in the river. There are weeds in Haskell Creek and large exotic grasses throughout the WA. There is shamel ash in the creek and fennel. The time of year to remove exotics depends on the species. Carvel commented that the corps welcomes help from other agencies in exotic weed removal. He has great admiration for Bill Neal of Riparian Repair. The corps would need a project description for the river part of the project. **The Consortium voted to pass the motion to fund up to \$2,000 for exotic weed removal by Riparian Repair with no votes against.**

Our next meeting will be October 23. The agenda deadline is October 8.