

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
October 26, 2004

Gene Arias chaired the beginning of the meeting. Also attending were voting members Glenn Bailey, John Holmes, Muriel Kotin and Rosemarie White and alternates, non-voting members and guests Sharon Brewer, Gene Greene, Joyce MacKinnon, Hal Sullivan, and James Ward. The meeting was low on voting members, apparently because the Basin was closed to traffic because of the possibility of flooding in the heavy rain. Following introduction were announcements: Ranger Anne Waisgerber will attend next month rather than tonight. There will be a town hall meeting about park rangers' status at Griffith Park tomorrow night.

James Ward explained that specialized divisions within the Department of Recreation and Parks (R&P) are being combined into other city departments. Rangers will be moved into General Services as armed peace officers. Some rangers stationed at the 5 largest parks will focus on interpretation, as well as being unarmed peace officers. The details are not yet worked out.

Minutes of the 8/24/04 meeting: Under announcements, the date of the West Nile meeting should read Sept 13. The topic head two paragraphs down should read Public Comment. Minutes of the 9/28/04 meeting were approved without change.

Proposed Firebreaks: At the Oct. 12 Users Meeting, Glenn learned of a meeting earlier that day of the fire department, R&P, Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Dam Keeper and council office concerning a proposal on firebreaks which the fire dept wants - apparently everywhere in the Wildlife Area (WA). Glenn is concerned as to whether this is really necessary, its impact on wildlife, and the nature of the proposed firebreaks. James explained. There have been several fires in the WA in recent years. They're especially concerned about areas just south of Burbank Blvd. They want to be able to see the area from the top of the dam. The city does not do controlled burns. There will be another meeting after a walk through of the area. Gene A described his problem getting the police to enforce the no-parking signs along Burbank. Joyce said the senior lead officer told her the homeless the police roused moved onto Burbank Blvd. and the sidewalk. That caused 100 phone calls from the public complaining. James commented that there's no easy fix. Muriel had a lot of concerns about disturbing important habitat south of Burbank, which is habitat for Yellow-breasted Chats and Least Bell's Vireos. Parking restrictions on Burbank need to be enforced. Joyce has seen 2 women with blankets north of Burbank: "working" women? Glenn spoke of the days when the portion of the WA south of Burbank was begun, when he and many other volunteers planted the first trees and shrubs. He wants to preserve the original intent. He

went to the Pothole Pond recently. The banks were surprisingly muddy, but the vegetation seemed healthy and in proportion. There were families with kids at the pond, enjoying the area for the purposes it was intended. He pointed out that the fire department does not have a mission to preserve wildlife. The no parking signs should be better located and the curbs should be painted red. Then it will be clear that you can't park in the turnouts. He will fight against proposals to put in clear-viewing corridors through a 35-year old area for the convenience of the fire department. Rosemarie agreed and felt the sightings of the Bell's Vireo is significant. She feels the committee should be consulted. In response to an observation of Glenn, Gene A explained that R&P had temporarily lowered the pothole pond's water level so they could remove water hyacinth. Gene said illegal behavior was much worse on weekdays than on the weekend. Gene A has been cleaning up the area along the pond.

Glenn moved that this committee communicate to the ACOE that we would not like any agency to arbitrarily negatively impact the natural qualities of the area without an Environmental Assessment and the full participation of this committee. Since there are only 4 voting members here (see the paragraph immediately below), Rosemarie suggested we vote and then phone the missing voting members for their vote. (See several paragraphs down.)

Status of Gene Arias and other Voting Members: Gene A ^{said} explained that he has long volunteered in the WA and was brought in by Rosemarie to represent the Canada Goose Project. However, she no longer wants Gene to rep the Goose Project. Muriel suggested he might remain the chair, even if non-voting, or that we might add a park volunteer voting membership. Glenn invited him to be his alternate for the RCD. Gene said he will continue to volunteer in the WA. He left the meeting with many thanks expressed for his volunteer work. He will await hearing from us with whatever we decide on.

Rosemarie White will now represent the Canada Goose Project and is seeking a new Sierra Club representative. Muriel felt the committee should consider restricting the ability for a representative to switch organizations.

Glenn now takes over the remainder of Gene Arias' term as chair tonight through January. Then the next chair (Steve H.) will serve February through July. Rosemarie moved thus. The motion passed 3 votes yea, 1 nay.



Back to the motion on firebreaks: Muriel proposed an amendment to write to ACOE, R&P, other city departments and representatives, requesting to participate in the walk-through. Glenn accepted the amendments. The 4 organizations here supported the motion as amended. Harold Sullivan pointed out the Brown act means we can't do this vote by phone. We will postpone the vote to next month's meeting. We requested James to ask that we be invited to the walk-through.

Update of Mailing List: Glenn had requested a mailing list from R&P staff. Patty broke her ankle and will be off 6 weeks; Christina is taking her place. James copied out the list for our review.

ACOE: Lois Goodman retired. Katie Parks may be the next ACOE rep. Glenn expressed concern that the Bull Creek project not slip under the radar during personnel changes. James said the Bull Creek restroom project is under funded. So the benches around Lake Balboa will be upgraded probably after the first of the year and the driveway to a future restroom will be built. They couldn't afford both a restroom and the infrastructure for it. They're trying to get funds thru the congressman to do the restroom later. Some of the \$750K money apparently will be left for building the restroom.

Recreation and Parks: James announced the Garden Center is almost ready and may be done before Thanksgiving. Senior Gardener Patty Jones will be in charge of booking space there. The city meeting about what to do about closing the basin for flooding is scheduled for 2 weeks from now as the recent and current heavy rain is unusual so early. The entrance project is not yet complete. Hopefully it will be finished before the end of the year. A soccer field is to be built west of Balboa, north of LAR on sod fields. The planning process is to begin soon. Rosemarie asked why we hadn't been notified about the sod-field soccer field. James said he has mentioned it several times. It will happen over a several year period. Glenn requested this be placed on the Users Committee agenda.

There was a Persian Festival last Sunday that James heard went well. Joyce complained of excess noise even at her home. Muriel inquired about the loss of water to the WA restroom. MTA's busline construction cut into the water lines. The water is back on. If it is turned off again, there WILL be port-a-potties.

Japanese Garden: Gene Greene announced Autumn in the Garden this Sunday 10 - 3 will probably be the last one. They're going to move toward more cultural events, but

will keep Springtime in the Garden. Tillman Plant has a new plant manager: Hiddo Netto. The current construction project should be over in about 2 months, with construction of new tanks for odor control to start in about 8 months.

Canada Goose Project: Rosemarie was involved last weekend in a major conference. The goose count started first week of October and will continue through March. There are no migratory geese here yet. She is alarmed about the state of the lake in Chatsworth Nature Preserve.

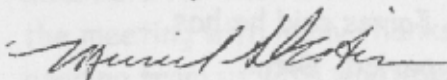
Official Representation Letters: Glenn revisited the issue of a letter from our organizations appointing their representative and alternate to the committee. He requested all members bring a letter from their organization appointing their official representative and alternate. A new letter should be submitted whenever there is a change.

Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains: Glenn announced their new Interim District Manager is Dan Preece. Their board has adopted a comparable budget to past years, but the state budget impact is still not clear. One of their directors, Woody Hastings, may attend our next meeting.

Southwestern Herpetologists Society: John announced their study will start in November and continue for a year.

Glenn suggested we try to encourage another representative to come to these meetings. Muriel-Dexter, Rosemarie-Tom, Glenn-Melanie&Steve.

Submitted by



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

