

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes June 29, 2005

The meeting was chaired by Steve Hartman (CNPS) and attended by other voting members Glenn Bailey (RCD-SMM), Dexter Kelly (LAAS), Muriel Kotin (SFVAS), Rosemarie White (Canada Goose Proj) and Melanie Winter (The River Proj). Visitors, non-voting members and alternates were Carvel Bass, ACOE (213.452-3392); Sharon Brewer, Enc ~~NC~~; Richard A. Cotterall, LAFD (818.756-9674); Sharon Ford, SFVAS; Gene Greene, Japanese Garden; Lynda Levitan, Council Dist 6 (818.778-4999); Ed Lozon, LA Tillman Plant (818.778-4151); Joyce MacKinnon, SFVAS, Lake Balboa ~~NC~~; Ken Novak, R&P; Reina Pereira, LA/DPW/Sanitation (323.362-6251); Hal Sullivan, Enc ~~NC~~; Michael Tou, Congressman Brad Sherman's office (818.501-9200); Bill VanWagoner, LA DWP (213.367-1138); and Linda Waade, Harris & Co for LA (310.451-1662).

The meeting followed a 4:30 tour of the South Reserve (the part of the Wildlife Area that is south of Burbank Boulevard), to afford members an overview of that area in connection with a proposed fire road.

Minutes of the May 24, 2005 meeting were approved with the name of attendee Don White corrected and the clarification that notes of the minutes were taken by John Holmes and then typed by Steve Hartman.

Public Comment: Sharon Brewer reported finding a mallard crippled by a fishing float around her leg at Lake Balboa. She has been hearing complaints that dogs have been killing and maiming ducks there. Joyce MacKinnon advised of dangerous gaps in bridges and a protruding bolt there.

Presentation Regarding Proposed Fire Road: Captain Cotterall and Carvel Bass explained that the fire department wants to put in a fire break (more properly a fire road) to divide the area south of Burbank Blvd. and east of Haskell Creek into 3 or 4 quadrants, at a minimum one road going south from the tunnel to near the ramp that leads up to the top of the dam near the LA River. The road needs to be at least 8 feet wide, preferably 10 feet wide, to accommodate 8-foot wide fire trucks. The dam keeper would like the road to be straight so he can see people coming and going through the tunnel from the top of the dam, as a crime deterrent, although that is not necessary for fire-fighting purposes. A gentle

curve in the road would be acceptable. The purpose of the road is for safety of firefighters, of appropriate users of the area, and of the homeless, some of whom are responsible for all of the fires we have had in the Wildlife Area. Carvel stressed that road construction and maintenance must be only in fall and winter to avoid disturbing nesting birds. Practically this means these activities must be in the fall.

Muriel Kotin asked about the impact on the endangered Least Bell's Vireo which nests in the WA. Carvel is aware of this issue and is already discussing it with California Fish & Game. Glenn Bailey would prefer a collaborative, multi-benefit road/path. He is skeptical of the dam keeper's likelihood of performing significant law-related observations. Rosemarie White asked if there is no other way to control homeless problems in the south reserve. The captain and Lynda Levitan said that the danger of fires is for all users of the area and firefighters. Lynda said the inability to get rid of the homeless is true throughout the city.

Captain Cotterall said the road will need to be scraped down to soil, crushing vegetation would not be enough. Dexter Kelly asked if the road could follow an existing path. Yes, it does not have to be straight. It could follow the existing informal path leading south from the Burbank Blvd. tunnel. Steve Hartman said he is not too concerned about habitat loss as there are now so many big trees and shrubs throughout the south reserve. Glenn asked if the road could be taped off for us to see before the work begins. Yes. Glenn and Melanie Winter would like to see a decomposed granite surface to the road. Ken said a 5' center might be cheaper to get a DG walking path. Muriel didn't think DG important unless it would save much maintenance expense, since we already have DG pathways and the fire trucks will need access only in the dry season. Glenn asked if an Environmental Assessment will be needed. Yes. Carvel will notify us of any EA developments. Glenn asked if a helicopter can be used. Yes, one is always called in, but firefighters are always needed too. They use only water. Could water come from the LAR or Haskell Creek? The fire hoses are only 10'. What is the status on a fire hydrant? Bill Van Wagoner said that a recycled-water hydrant is possible if the city ever gets a permit to use recycled water in the Basin. Regulatory issues are holding up using such water for irrigation in the Basin. He hopes the permit will

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be issued by the end of this year.

Presentation of LA City Integrated Resource Plan (IRP): Reina Pereira led a description of four alternatives for handling of LA's sewage, reclaimed and recycled water, and storm runoff. In all alternatives, all Tillman WRP expansion would be within the existing footprint, other than a buried storage tank for ~~pre-treated~~ sewage under the cricket fields immediately east of the TWRP. (The cricket field would have to be temporarily dug up during construction of the tank.) Glenn requested that the EIR cover the safety issues of the holding tank under the cricket field. In all alternatives, Hyperion's capacity to handle solids will be increased. New sewer lines are being planned.

Several people asked how does the constructed wetlands fit in? Reina said those are for runoff and stormwater, while she is focusing her presentation tonight on wastewater facilities. Gene Green advised that the wastewater will be polished within TWRP, not in wetlands. Wetlands for water runoff have not been sited yet. Melanie said the wetlands for denitrifying TWRP is off the table and that the Basin will probably not be a site for a treatment wetlands. The soils of the valley are generally better suited for infiltration and it may be that most treatment wetlands sites will be sited in other areas like the Ballona or Santa Monica watersheds.

Melanie discussed the CREST process (Cleaner Rivers through Effective Stakeholder-led TMDLs - an acronym with an acronym!) and asked if any city staff is integrating the CREST and IRP processes. Reina said there is a multi-department group discussing this. Melanie said the Proposition K people need to learn to use Proposition O funds to further their projects. Ken Novak said every creek within Sepulveda Basin has been listed by Rec & Parks for future Proposition O projects. Melanie noted that the mainstem LA River should be, too, especially as it relates to the proposed park at the Sod Farm site.

Carvel asked whether there would be any impacts on the Basin other than in the TWRP footprint and the soccer field. Not until later sewer lines are added. 2016 is the earliest that the proposed Spring Lane Interceptor will be built. That will likely go through the Wildlife Area.

Verizon Telephone Tower Proposal: Lynda said Verizon hasn't submitted a plan yet. She has advised Verizon that the tower has to be aesthetically appropriate to being in a Wildlife Area and they seem willing to cooperate. The city has no control over where the project is located. Glenn was concerned about safety issues when drivers lose control of their vehicles. The project will have to follow normal traffic safety rules.

Rain Closures: It was moved, seconded and passed to make Millie's Restaurant our default meeting location whenever the Basin is closed because of rain on our meeting nights. Millie's is at 16840 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys 91406, tel. 818.785-3894. The manager requests a phone call at least 30 minutes ahead so they can move tables for us. Millie's is on the south side of Vanowen Street, just east of Balboa Boulevard. Take Balboa Blvd. to Vanowen. Turn east and look for the restaurant on the right.

Bull Creek Restoration Project: Gail Campos who did not attend tonight is our new ACOE representative. A fact sheet was distributed. We should receive a Draft Detailed Project Report/ Environmental Assessment (DPR/EA) by mail within the next few weeks! (This should be on July agenda.)

Michael Tou, Policy Director for Congressman Brad Sherman, reported that the congressman got \$2 million of federal funds into the fiscal year 2006 appropriations bill for the project, with possibly more in the pipeline. The remainder of the approximately \$4M total cost is largely covered with existing ACOE funds. So there should be full federal funding of this long-awaited project to restore Bull Creek and the area west to Balboa Blvd, between the busway and LA River!

Proposed Transfer of Park Rangers to General Services Department: Ken said that the transfer has been delayed to early August while background checks are completed. More rangers than originally planned have been requested for regional parks, although not funded yet. These special rangers will have limited citation abilities, for problems like off-leash dogs and for not cleaning up after dogs.

Future Presentations: Rosemarie said that Dr. Lynn Whited, Veterinarian at the

California Wildlife Center in Malibu, will make a presentation at our August meeting. General Manager John Mukri will probably attend our July meeting and wants to be added to our mailing list.

Recreation and Parks: Ken announced that the Sherman Oaks Little League wants to take over the old Babe Ruth field at Victory and Louise, which has fallen into extreme disrepair. Steve suggested replacing the non-native trees there with natives. Glenn mentioned bike safety issues there. The MTA wants a lay-down site for 5 months through October, just south of the Balboa station, east of Balboa Blvd. They will make a deposit to ensure cleanup when they're done and pay rent. Pergolas around L. Balboa will be replaced this summer. L. Balboa will always have algae problems in summer, but the problems should diminish when the TWRP effluent is denitrified. Cal Fish & Game inspected the basin last week. Mosquito abatement will be a big concern again this year because of West Nile Virus. Muriel asked about the newly planted exotic magnolia tree next to the WA fence and the new jacaranda trees in Woodley Park near the WA. The magnolia was planted by a former elected official as a memorial and will not survive the first freeze next winter. The jacarandas are part of an urban forestry program where he had little choice of species. Ken may have someone address us on this program next month. Several members stressed that R & P had earlier agreed to plant only native trees and shrubs in the Basin. Steve asked about maintenance of the native landscaping near the entrance to the road to Woodley Golf, which he found is looking much better. Ken said they're doing the best they came with few employee hours. In the fall, they'll move water-needing plants to cluster them together.

Japanese Garden: Gene reported good attendance at the public event last Sunday that none of this committee attended. We are encouraged to attend future events. Trash from the Israeli Festival has still not been cleaned up. Trash from these huge events is a big problem.

Local Base Closures: Glenn asked Michael Tou for information on military base closures in the Basin. Michael expects the Navy facility on Victory to close in 1 year, possibly 2. They are looking for non-profit uses of the property. Glenn hopes for a common-sense coordination of that and park projects to the south, for example shared parking lots. He would like that on next month's agenda. (The

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ACOE remains the owner of the land under the facilities along Victory Blvd.)

WRDA Funds: (Water Resources Development Act): Melanie asked about getting WRDA funds to remove exotic trees from the LA River between the busway bridge and Balboa Blvd. and to do bio-engineered stabilization of Bull Creek and LAR banks along the sod farm. Michael will look into it.

Submitted by

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

Lydia Jaggard, Sherin Brewer reported finding a mallard crippled by a fishing trap wound her leg at Lake Balboa. She has been hearing complaints that traps were been killing and maiming ducks there. Joyce MacKinnon advised of dangerous gaps in bridges and a protruding bolt there.

Presentation Regarding Proposed Fire Break: Captain Carlene and Carol Beck explained that the fire department wants to put in a fire break (more properly a fire road) to divide the area south of Burbank Blvd. and east of Masked Creek into 3 or 4 quadrants, of a minimum one road going south from the tunnel to near the ramp that leads up to the top of the dam near the LA River. The road needs to be at least 8 feet wide, preferably 10 feet wide, to accommodate 8-foot wide fire trucks. The dam keeper would like the road to be straight so he can see people coming and going through the tunnel from the top of the dam. A straight road is a deterrent to people that is not necessary for safety. A straight road is a deterrent to people that is not necessary for safety. A straight road is a deterrent to people that is not necessary for safety.