

**Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes - February 28, 2006**

The meeting was chaired by Melanie Winter. Other voting members attending were Glenn Bailey, Steve Hartman, John Holmes, Dexter Kelly, Muriel Kotin, Melba Simms, and Rosemarie White. Non-voting members, alternates and guests included Patrick Aubuchon, Carvel Bass, Sharon Brewer, Sharon Ford, Nedenia (Deanie) Kennedy, Lynda Levitan, Rich McClellan, Jesse Medina, Michael Moertl, Ken Novak, Lisa Reveen, Michael Tou and Alex Watt. After self-introductions, minutes of the 1/24/06 meeting were approved as submitted.

Public Comment: Rich McClellan of the Animal Legislation Network pointed out regarding a plan to eradicate feral cats at Lake Balboa as part of the Bull Creek project, that a permit is needed that requires trapping and taking the animal to the Dept. of Animal Services. Alex Watt of the ACOE said it was just a semantics issue; the reference referring to getting rid of the cats meant trapping and removal.

Lisa Reveen of the West Van Nuys Neighborhood Council was concerned that birds being fed massively by one woman are being run over by speeding vehicles. She wants speed bumps, enforcement of driving laws and not feeding animals. Glenn recommended that her neighborhood council pass a motion and pass it to their council offices. Jesse Medina said Rec & Parks needs to coordinate with General Services which now include the rangers. Ken Novak said there will be a ranger in the Basin full time, which should help. There is already greater safety officer presence.

Sepulveda Basin Master Plan: Melanie has requested that we have available a current version. Nedenia Kennedy, ACOE, said it is time to update the master plan as the latest version was 1981. Alex Watt: It might take 2 or 3 years. Carvel Bass, ACOE, said the funding request is sort of in the pipeline, but it is not budgeted yet. Glenn expressed concern that there will be proper public notice, etc. Alex and Nedenia said it would meet all NEPA requirements. The scoping process will include public visioning meetings.

Bull Creek Project: Alex Watt reported that the ACOE has received comments. The higher ups said there was too much upland and not enough riparian in the

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original plan; they don't want to build hills. After adjusting plans to increase riparian habitat, there will still be about 5 acres of oak woodland. The comments to not build bridges to the island will reduce the cost and makes environmental sense, so only 2 bridges will be built. Alt. 4a will have the same footprint, less contouring, fewer native grasses, fewer bridges. There will be a path along the oxbow. There will still be gabions at the bridges, but otherwise slope and plants will provide the erosion control. Brush mattresses and willow cuttings will be employed. The size of the oxbow may be increased to provide more water for the riparian vegetation. Ken pointed out that there is no flow to Lake Balboa at night well into the morning, which may require special planning to use the oxbow to keep any remaining feral cats off the island. Alex said the check dam to be built just downstream of the island should ensure the oxbow has water 24/7, even if the creek below it may be dry at night. The design will probably be done in-house, this year.

Sepulveda Sports Complex and Other Proposed or Conceptual Projects in the Basin:

Ken Novak reported that the Sports Complex is still in traffic study. It will be at least 45 days to the next public meeting. There is also a project to upgrade the playground at Lake Balboa to fully adaptive facilities by a non-profit. Construction will probably begin in the fall.

There is nothing new regarding Prop O. Melanie said this could be a Prop O opportunity; she would like to discuss this with Ken and Jesse. Ken said Rec & Parks doesn't control the creeks in the Basin. Jesse said they did propose a series of Prop O projects. Melanie wants to help them develop the right language for the next round.

The department is considering building a pedestrian bridge over Hayvenhurst Creek from Lake Balboa to the clubhouse restaurant. Steve Hartman suggested that the city try to get a grant to remove the evergreen ash when bridge construction takes place. Bill Neill has been removing other exotics in Hayvenhurst Cr. Ken said he may have funds to remove them. Rosemarie is concerned about the bridge building impacts on feral cats and the people trying to rescue them; Ken said this will be considered. The bridge would be built with golf surcharge or

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concession money. Glenn is concerned about walkway issues near Lake Balboa to the bridge. Melanie would like to see the concrete come out of the creek as part of the project - this had been proposed during treatment wetlands alternatives discussions. Ken said Rec & Parks is already considering these issues. The bridge over Hayvenhurst Cr. will be the same style as those in the WA.

Michael Tou of Congressman Sherman's office said the Valley Regional VNOC has recommended soccer fields for the 10-acre parcel west of Hjelte field, which Tapia Bros. currently leases. At most it would be 3 adult-sized soccer fields with no lights or other infrastructure, just sod. They're asking the city to study the feasibility. Lighting is too costly. Rosemarie doesn't want lights for environmental reasons. Glenn pointed out that some documentation from the RVNOC mentions lighting; the descriptions should be changed. Melanie is concerned that fertilizers and pesticides from the fields not get into Encino Creek. Tapia Bros. Farm will still have access to the fields east of Hjelte. There is a separate proposal to build 6 soccer fields on the cornfield east of the busway.

Jesse said someone is proposing a roller rink behind Pedlow Field, near Victory.

Glenn pointed out that the Basin is a regional park and should not be the site of projects that could go into neighborhood parks. He would like to see the phase 2 part of the Sports Complex changed to something environmental if there are to be soccer fields built west of Hjelte Field.

Muriel commented that the rapid developing of recreational facilities in the Basin makes it crucial that boundaries between uses and borders of water courses be planted with riparian and other native trees and plants and provide good habitat and sufficient buffer zones.

Ken reported that for the archery range, the Easton Corp. has approached R & P with the concept of constructing a new restroom and archery building including an indoor archery range. Muriel objected to the idea of a large building. So did

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Steve. Alex said that the Corps' rules on buildings concern what can be built at what elevations and may not preclude an archery building. Glenn said the RVNOC recommended building cricket fields in the old corn maze field and building restrooms in the garden center expansion area south of Magnolia. Lynda Levitan pointed out that the Tillman tanks may not be built under the present new cricket fields.

Michael Moertl described his proposal for a polo field project east of Hjelte Field. There is a great lack of places to play polo in the LA area. They want to level the land slightly. They would plant deep-rooted hybrid Bermuda grass instead of corn. There would be no lights. They are not concerned that it is a flood plain. They would play perhaps 3 days a week, in the afternoon, often on weekdays. They don't play in winter. Birds could graze whenever they are not playing. They would have irrigation, but no pop-ups. They might put in parking near the dam and perhaps bleachers near the berm toward the dam. They would not use the area adjacent to the LA River, so there could be some natural habitat there. They would self-fund the project. They are meticulous about cleaning up the horse droppings. Lynda expressed grave security concerns. Michael thinks the increased traffic flow may reduce the amount of homeless. They would develop a program to introduce at-risk kids to polo, as has been done in other areas. Carvel pointed out that this project has not been reviewed at all. Alex said he wants to talk to Michael later as he has some other locations to suggest.

Draft Environmental Assessment South Fire Break: Carvel reported that the EA has not been finalized yet. They are discussing the mitigation. The big question in NEPA is whether there is significant impact. The EA will not be finalized before March 15, the start of the Bell's vireo nesting season. So the road will not happen soon. The ACOE will be fixing a road on the dam.

There will be a Los Angeles River planning meeting 3/25 at 10 a.m. at Birmingham HS. Melanie encouraged members to attend.

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Verizon Telephone Tower. Glenn said the wireless facility is still pending.

Recreation and Parks Report: Ken provided a list of tree species being planted in valley parks. Steve objected to planting pepper trees in the Basin. Ken said he thought Lake Balboa was exempt from the limitation to California natives. Steve said the cherry trees are exempt, but otherwise the policy is to plant only natives there.

Rec & Parks will meet with MTA about placing a fence along the south side of their busway between Balboa Blvd. and Hayvenhurst Cr. April 2 will be Persian New Year celebration at Lake Balboa. They are eliminating their parking fees to avoid various problems and will charge admission instead. Sunday May 7 will be the Israeli Festival at Woodley Park, access to WA from Burbank Bl only. There will be a trail restoration in the So Reserve in a few weeks.

Michael Tou: Congressman Brad Sherman's office is trying to secure additional \$2M funding for Bull Cr. in 2007 above the \$2M already secured.

Lynda Levitan: Reporting for CD 6, she is looking forward to General Services safety personnel being fully implemented in the Basin. She is enthusiastic about the adaptive playground to be built at Lake Balboa.

Committee Reports: Rosemarie reported that the migratory Canada Geese have largely left. Oaks in Chatsworth Nature Preserve are dying. Dennis Kroeplin died last week. Muriel requested participation in the Wildlife Area Cleanup April 1.

Submitted by

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