

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee

Minutes -- March 25, 2008

Mike Vensky chaired the meeting. The other voting members attending were Glenn Bailey, Sharon Ford, Muriel Kotin, Bob Munsey, Rosemarie White, and Melanie Winter. Non-voting members, alternates and guests were Ranger Pat Aceves, Sharon Brewer, Kathleen (Kathy) Hanover, Dexter Kelly, Lynda Levitan, Joyce MacKinnon, Michelle Nosco, and Abel Perez.

After self-introductions, minutes of the Feb 26, 2008 meeting were approved with the following corrections. Spelling of Sepulveda. The meeting date should read 26 February, rather than 24 March. Additional attendees were voting member Snowy Dodson and non-voting members, alternates and guests Pat Aceves, Patrick Aubuchon, Sharon Brewer, Kathleen Hanover, Joyce MacKinnon, Katie Parks, Julie Szende, and Michael Tou.

Under CONTINUING BUSINESS, Item 3e should refer to inviting General Manager Jon Kirk Mukri. Item 4c should read "Katie Parks spoke regarding the possibility of some sort of spraying campaign at Bull Creek."

Under REPORTS AND UPDATES: In 1, remove the list of agencies and names. 1a should read "The Universal Access Playground is under construction." In 2, remove listing of former members. 3 should show adjournment was at 8:23PM. 4 should show the next meeting as 25 March. Add Michael J. Vensky as submitting the minutes.

Public Comment:

Joyce MacKinnon expressed concern over increasing occurrence of graffiti in the Wildlife Reserve. Mike asked about procedures for graffiti abatement. Ranger Pat explained that R & P makes a police report and issues an order to graffiti abatement. Lynda said much of the graffiti is by taggers, not necessarily gangs. She is working with the tagger taskforce. Graffiti is usually removed within 48-72 hours after an order. Phone 311 to report graffiti - the non-emergency number or email Pat: Pat.Aceves@lacity.org.

Michelle Nosco described the upcoming Arts for Earth gathering on 4/26. They introduce neighbors to wildlife sanctuaries using art as a vehicle. There will be a low key display of painting and photography. She hopes some member organizations will offer tours of the WR. They will be in Woodley 2 primarily and send people to the amphitheater and WR. Their permit is for 250 people. Michelle hopes the boy scouts who are having an event in Woodley 1 the same day will participate. Muriel finds it odd that R & P is limiting to 100 the number of people allowed in the amphitheater, when it was built to hold 125 people.



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Sharon Brewer reported that children are still chasing coots at Lake Balboa. Trash is going from L. Balboa into the LA River because of lack of screening at outlets. She is also concerned about baby ducks getting trapped. Abel said a screen has been put on the outlet that handles the greatest volume of water. Construction division is reluctant to screen the other outlets.

Melanie suggested the Bureau of Sanitation might be interested in getting involved. Lynda said they're a separate entity, but R & P might ask Sanitation's Watershed Management Division to help. Melanie pointed out that since the City of LA is under court order to reduce trash in the LA River under TMDL timelines, cooperation seems appropriate. Abel will look into the issue of screens further. Melanie again urged talking to Sanitation; they have been researching ways, including trash screens, to limit trash and have been mandated to work on clean water. Melanie is to email Lynda who she recommends be contacted at Sanitation. Lynda will try to facilitate collaboration.

Rosemarie recommended a greater spirit of positive approach to solve the problems frequently encountered at Lake Balboa. Perhaps the Ad-hoc LA River Committee of the LA City Council should make a report to this committee.

Lake Balboa Park Advisory Board (PAB): Abel said he will start advertising for a volunteer and/or users group for Lake Balboa. It will not be a PAB. It will meet something like 4 times a year. He will send out a flyer in April. He plans to select members from the people who contact him. Sharon Ford said the meetings should be open to the public. Abel agreed. Lynda asked what about other segments of users? Rosemarie would like to see a reinstatement of the broader Sepulveda Basin Users Group.

Glenn commented that this committee voted previously to recommend a PAB for L. Balboa, and that a Sepulveda Basin wide user group should go on next month's agenda. All agreed. (Muriel is to research the approved motion for next month.) Glenn further commented that Abel should carry on putting together a group for Lake Balboa, and that we will remain interested in wildlife issues there in any case. The committee looks forward to hearing next month how the process of a committee for Lake Balboa is going and discussing a basin wide Users Group as well.

Sharon Ford said she met in December with Abel, Ron Berkowitz and Ramon Barajas. In that meeting she expressed our support of a Lake Balboa PAB. Ron and Ramon decided they want a less formal organization for L. Balboa than a PAB.

Fishing Line Containers: Abel spoke to the city's safety engineer and risk manager. The city can't approve private parties putting out containers. Abel hopes the new Lake Balboa group will be able to support a solution.

Bob will ask Cal Dept. of Fish & Game how other groups are handling their fishing line problems. Glenn asked a County Parks person about the problem in their facilities and got the impression they might be more successful handling the problem. Rosemarie suggested a field trip. Bob will try to get info from Cal DFG.

Russian Thistle: Kathy will do a walk through with Steve H, Steve Moe and Bill Neill to look at an abatement program.

Signs: Ranger Pat gave an update. The rangers are zeroing in on homeless encampments in the reserve south of Burbank Blvd. They are especially concerned with an increase in fire danger as we approach summer. There are 5 encampments now. Pat will email Lynda for help getting rid of stuff dumped into the LA River west to Hjelte Field. Pat will be at the cleanup on 4/5.

The Wildlife Way signs have been made; they're waiting for posts. Behavior signs will cite law on interfering with migratory birds and poaching, referencing Cal DFG and US F&WS code. Rosemarie will help with the ordinance wording. Then Pat will take his suggestions to his bosses. Pat is walking the Wildlife Reserve a lot.

Proposed Memorial for Cesar Chavez: Abel has received the committee's letter. He's working on the project.

Rotation of Chair and Voting Members: Mike Vensky is now the rotating chair of this committee. Letters from Southwestern Herpetologist Society and Los Angeles Audubon Society, appointing Mike and Bob Munsey respectively as their representatives were handed to R & P.

Army Corps of Engineers: ACOE was not in attendance. Glenn would like the committee to get at least a brief update on Bull Creek project when ACOE will miss at a meeting. Construction has not started yet on the Bull Creek project.

The River Project: Melanie would welcome comment on the Tujunga Wash Watershed Management Plan even into early next week. It is intended to be understandable by community members. TRP has published an educator's guide to

the Tujunga Watershed. They will complete their project along the LA River's western reaches within Sepulveda Basin, west of Balboa Blvd. REI is taking on the challenge of removing shopping carts there, using special equipment.

Recreation & Parks: Abel expects the universal access playground to be finished the first week of May. The Persian Festival will be this weekend. Muriel was advised to reschedule a scheduled family bird walk from Sun 3/30.

Councilman Cardenas: Lynda said there will be an EarthDay event 4/19 in Sun Valley and a sanitation fair in Sun Valley 5/3. 5/24 is a pet fair in Sepulveda Basin in Woodley 1; there will be access to the WR. There will be an aviation career day for high school students 4/25 and an Emergency Preparedness Fair at the Braude Center in Van Nuys June 7.

Canada Goose Project: Rosemarie and Kathy got a wounded great blue heron from the golf course to the California Wildlife Center, but it died the next day. There will be a necropsy. The geese are pairing off, but nests have not been observed yet. CGP's EarthDay celebration at Chatsworth Nature Preserve is 4/6.

Los Angeles Audubon Society: Bob has spoken with Brian Young of Cal DFG in Los Alamitos and hopes to meet with him and have him look at the Lake Balboa situation. DFG seems very interested. Dexter reported LAAS received a check from the Mercer Foundation and will send a \$5000 check to SFVAS for the 2008-09 SBEEP (Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program).

Resource Conservation District of the Sta. Monica Mts.: Glenn announced the RCD will reinstitute a native plant sale.

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society: SFVAS's cleanup at the Wildlife Reserve will be held 4/5 and focus on Haskell Creek.

Muriel requested R & P require the cub scouts or any other groups contact to SFVAS before using the WR storeroom because of the educational equipment there.

Submitted by

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