

**Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee  
Meeting December 29, 2020 — Approved Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 by Muriel Kotin. Recording began, followed by introductions. A quorum was established. Voting members attending: Shelly Backlar (FoLAR), Glenn Bailey (RCD-SMM), Terrie Brady (SC-SFVG), Nurit Katz (LAAS), Muriel Kotin (SFVAS), Joe Phillips (SC-AC), George Waddell (CNPS, very late). Non-voting members: Pat Bates (ENC), Robert Buenrostro (RAP), and Ruth Doxsee (LBNC). Non-voting alternates and guest: Robyn Albaeck, Wendy Barsh, Natalie Beckman-Smith, Margot Griswold, Linda Gravani, Barb Heidemann, Jerry Haro, Steve Hartman, Linda Ivanov, Jan Kidwell, Rose Leibowitz, Elena Maggioni, Bill Neill, Diana Nicole, Paula Orlovich, Mark Osokow, Richard Rachman, Dave Weeshoff, and Melanie Winter.

Post Fire Recovery Planning:

CNPS. Bill Neill, Steve Hartman, and Richard Rachman presented.

- Importance of weed control was stressed.
- West Field interior goat grazing proposed for Mid-April - May in the area within the path along the perimeter. Perennial weeds to be treated with herbicide at other times. Between the path and perimeter removal to be herbicide or volunteers doing manual removal. At far north end: manual removal to continue. Path to remain open during goat grazing. Land close to Burbank Blvd. in both East and West fields was not burned; they hoped to have goats graze it this fall but did not get approval.
- Linda Ivanov described a successful use of the goats in Irvine and the advantages of that approach to weed control. There was a lot of positive commentary. Cost for one year of grazing only inside the perimeter path of the West Field will be \$15K (30 acres at \$500/acre) per Bill.
- RAP is still waiting for decision from assistant general manager, Cathy Santo Domingo who is in charge of maintenance, planning and construction.
- Backup plan depends on amount of rain. If rain, triage areas.
- East Field perhaps volunteers and spraying herbicide, goat grazing at south end. More lightly infested except at south end.
- Plan on a minimum of 3 years of weed control. Herbicide? Not using glyphosate. Bill Neil is a professional applicator and will do the application of other materials. Weed whacking not allowed March 16 – Sept. 15 because of bird nesting season. Robert will talk to Thurman about RAP permission and send Bill and Muriel Cathie Santo Domingo's email.
- West Field: Their vision is an oak savannah as has been discussed for 25 years -- prairie with groups of trees. Bill has a hand-drawn map.

FoLAR: Shelly Backlar reported that she sent out Tom Ryan's bird survey report with the first year of data. They include the differences in bird species seen in the different types of habitat. Where is greater need for weed control? She hopes to have the Council for Watershed Health and Tom present in Jan to SBWASC. What is the best timing for volunteer efforts? What are the key areas? She wants to go back to SMM Conservancy and let them know it's at least a 3-

year project to get a handle on the invasives. Prop 1 involves habitat, preventing fire, climate change. Other funders too. FoLAR is successful in persuading decision makers. She suggested a meeting with Cathy Santo Domingo, including Linda Ivanov. She's willing to go back to this funder and others to get necessary funding. She needs input, scope of work, costs, etc.

Permission for goat grazing is key to proceeding. FoLAR can go to decision makers. RAP Commission meeting Thursday. LBNC will send letter to RAP Comm to support goat grazing and Pat Bates will call Noah tomorrow.

RAP and ACOE have not responded yet to City Council's request for a new masterplan. We need to ascertain how it will impact the Wildlife Reserve and possibly goat grazing.

SFVAS: Muriel Kotin presented ideas for East Field, east of the lake and the intensely burned area south of the lake.

Focusing on the *field east of the lake*, it has been largely neglected.

- Stop managing the field for waterfowl and
- stop discing an area immediately east of the lake for Canada Geese.
- Make the de facto pathway a real path with 2 or 3 viewing areas, planning to possibly include viewing structures later.
- Need a professional landscape plan.
- Suggest extending the oak forest on the Burbank Boulevard berm east of the tunnel north onto the flat area, the oaks becoming increasingly more open until it becomes an oak savannah, then a small tree savannah.
- Around the "East Field" lettering, more pollinator plants.
- Farther north, close to the fence, more small trees. This would make a more attractive interface with the far east part of Woodley Park.
- Perhaps extend the planting into Woodley Park.
- Stop ploughing the goose forage area and integrate that with the surrounding field.
- Ensure this fits in with the future masterplan.
- During the River Charrette, an idea was advanced to lower the land close to the toe of the dam to make a more wetland habitat and enhance the flood capacity of the basin.
- What's involved in getting a landscape plan?
- Implementation ideas included that it would be good to start planting next fall if feasible.
- Perhaps plant part at a time and manage intensively, including weeds and irrigation.
- We will need dedicated volunteers who return many times.

**NOTE:** There was general agreement that the de facto path east of the lake should become an official path.

- Follow through after planting is essential. Perhaps create/find a high school program for students who volunteer regularly to get credit as volunteers. Benches, especially on the

path proposed to be official, were suggested to enhance “birdability” for people who cannot walk long distances.

- Outreach to the community and local high schools was suggested.
- What is the timing for planting?
- How do we handle competition for resources between the East and West fields?
- Some mowing in the East Field might be considered.

Outreach: A Friends of SBWR was suggested. Perhaps a partnership with a high school(s), college students. Margot and Richard have more suggestions.

#### West Field - More:

- Bill might want to plant the slow growing trees like oaks in the West Field next fall and manage the weeds around them.
- The size of this project is daunting. CNPS has limited resources. We should consider contacting Northeast Trees, LA Conservation Corps, and perhaps TreePeople.

#### General:

- LAAS is doing mowing for 3 years in their restoration projects, then seeding.
- Oaks planted as close to the dam as possible given ACOE constraints would be good to hide the dam and buildings and filter the air from the adjacent I-405.
- There are huge opportunities to get what we've been hoping for many years in the coming year.

Priorities: A Priorities Committee was formed to get ready for the master planning processes that are upcoming. Committee members will be Bill Neill, Glenn, Jan, Margot, Muriel, Nurit, Shelly, Steve H, and Terrie. Draw ideas on map. Software: Mural? Committee might put their ideas up and then report back to and work with the rest of the committee. Priorities/goals mentioned were

- Support wildlife – set up an ecology.
- Plant a lot of trees.
- Create habitat for birds that need specialized and somewhat rare habitat like riparian woodland and riparian shrub.
- Size of trees: saplings or larger? After discussion of pros and cons, suggestion was to consider planting of various sizes of trees.
- Watering essential for successful planting!

Committee Chair for 2021: Nurit Katz will chair SBWASC for the year. A motion to add a vice chair position will be voted on at the January, 2021 meeting. Posting of agendas in this time of Covid was discussed.

Request to Approve Grazing by Goats: there has been no answer to request Bill Neill sent 6 weeks ago to RAP. Nurit will send an email to the city to follow up as incoming chair and Joe

will sign it as outgoing chair. (Bill Neill applied to RAP for permission 6 weeks ago and submitted insurance information. He will send Nurit the correspondence to inform her in drafting the email.)

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM. Chat from the meeting is appended, private contact information deleted.

Next meeting will be January 26, 2021.

Submitted by

Muriel S Kotin  
San Fernando Valley Audubon's Representative to the SBWASC

Chat from the Zoom recording:

18:47:26 From Richard Rachman : The audio is going in and out.

18:47:36 From Jerry Haro Ranger : Its just not you, I am also experiencing the audio glitch

18:52:40 From Mark Osokow : What is the date of the photo? Part of it is cut off in the image.

18:53:46 From Joe Phillips, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter : I still have video but lost my audio feed. Im trying to get back in.

18:54:29 From margotgriswold : How many years are you planning for goat grazing? I have found that weed seed banks will be active unless we plan for 2 - 3 years.

18:55:02 From diana nicole (LAAS) : I'd like there to be a discussion about the use of Roundup or other glyphosate based herbicides.

18:56:46 From Mark Osokow : Why is the approval process taking so long?

18:57:51 From Wendy : What are the next steps we can take to get approval?

18:59:05 From Richard Rachman : Its mustard.

19:06:32 From diana nicole (LAAS) : I have had success with well-timed and persistent weed-whacking without the use of herbicides.

19:08:13 From diana nicole (LAAS) : goat grazing for annuals is good

19:10:50 From Mark Osokow : Dove weed seed is excellent bird seed.

19:13:45 From diana nicole (LAAS) : 100% on using the goats!

19:14:39 From Melanie Winter : How is park visitor interaction with goats managed?

19:15:21 From Terrie brady : is there any concern about the goats eating herbicide

19:18:27 From Mark Osokow : Are there any other plants toxic to goats we should be on the lookout for?

19:20:11 From diana nicole (LAAS) : All - I've been maintaining landscapes for over 20 years. The use of herbicides is an outdated practice. Modern ecological practices in weed removal make the use of herbicides unnecessary

19:20:37 From Richard Rachman : Not really true but ok.

19:20:44 From NURIT KATZ : @Mark, we don't have any at the basin I don't think but rhododendron and related plants are super toxic to goats

19:22:36 From NURIT KATZ : @Diana, though that may be true for landscape maintenance, as Richard is likely thinking of in his response, in restoration there can be different challenges that might justify limited targeted uses.

19:23:04 From Richard Rachman : The majority of the scientific community supports limited herbicide usage.

19:23:56 From Terrie brady : the use of alternatives to herbicide is important. in wild areas as well as landscapes. Diana may have information some of the commenters are not aware of.

19:25:04 From Terrie brady : i have recently heard that removal of the green part of the invasive and compost for native plants restoration is best.

19:25:38 From Terrie brady : maybe this should be an agenda item. to hear the full idea that diana is trying to tell us

19:26:07 From Richard Rachman : Why not listen to scientists?

19:26:53 From Glenn Bailey : Here is RAP's Cathie Santo Domingo's email address: [DELETED]

19:27:30 From Terrie brady : richard these are scientists.. one is elaine ingram. check her out.

19:29:01 From Linda Ivanov (Sage Environmental) : thank you for Cathies email

19:29:27 From diana nicole (LAAS) : Why not listen to the folks who have done this work, some of whom are scientists, and have had success in the field without using herbicides? Isn't Elain Ingram is a soil scientist not a human microbiologist or medical scientist?

19:31:02 From NURIT KATZ : All, re herbicides, I've dived deep into this topic as part of the UC Herbicide Taskforce, and now the Systemwide Pesticide Oversight Committee, which includes leading experts on the application side and the public health side and science side regarding impacts of herbicides. There are plenty of good reasons to minimize their use, but as Richard notes, there is a lot of support for limited targeted use. For example, the recent use to remove the invasive water lettuce far more successfully than the hand removal. There is a lot of expertise in this group and I am certain we can come to a good consensus on when and how and if to use any herbicides at the Basin.

19:33:30 From Terrie brady : not just bill and steve

19:33:34 From Barb H SFVAS : Have we explained to Kathy how time sensitive it is to get goats approval?

19:35:56 From Dave Weeshoff : Rec & Parks Commission public comments limited to 2 minutes, not one second more.

19:37:15 From Mark Osokow : I want to send Cathie an e-mail about this situation.

19:38:07 From Mark Osokow : Goat grazing could be very helpful at Chatsworth Nature Preserve as well.

19:39:11 From NURIT KATZ : perhaps the simplest would be for the diff orgs to sign on to one quick letter/ email to Cathie? including neighborhood council?

19:39:47 From Mark Osokow : Can we get an Olympic event involving goats?

19:40:09 From NURIT KATZ : ðŸ˜„, ðŸ˜„

19:40:21 From NURIT KATZ : like goat racing?

19:41:32 From Mark Osokow : I am going to send an e-mail to Cathie whether or not Martinez is involved.

19:42:13 From diana nicole (LAAS) : If herbicides are used, who would be applying those herbicides?

19:42:20 From Ruth Doxsee, LBNC : It says November 2011

19:43:49 From Terrie brady : some native plants like lupine need fire

19:44:28 From Richard Rachman : <https://smmtc.org/plantofthemonth/Fire02.php>

19:44:48 From Richard Rachman : List of fire followers near the Santa Monica Mountains.

19:45:01 From NURIT KATZ : As Diana notes, it is critical that any herbicide application be by licensed applicators with proper PPE. There should be no volunteer application, or none without close supervision of a licensed applicator.

19:45:10 From Glenn Bailey : The next regular meeting of the BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES should be held on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. as they usually meet on the first and third Thursday of the month. The agenda for next week's meeting has NOT been posted on their website yet. From the last meeting, the Zoom access information is as follows:  
Dial (669) 900 6833 to Join the Meeting  
Then Enter This Webinar ID: 886 8330 5777 AND PRESS #

19:45:55 From Glenn Bailey : This is subject to change so should be confirmed by the new agenda

19:48:43 From Glenn Bailey : Here is the website link to the RAP Commission's agenda page:  
<https://www.laparks.org/commissioners/agendas-minutes-reports/2016>

19:49:24 From Terrie brady : thanks glenn

19:49:59 From NURIT KATZ : highly support making the path official, thank you Muriel

19:50:00 From Terrie brady : thanks richard

19:50:32 From Richard Rachman : I have a more extensive list of fire followers made by botanists at NPS if anyone wants to email me for that. richard.rachman.872@my.csun.edu

19:52:44 From Jan Kidwell : I would like to see that. Will email you. jankidwell@sbcglobal.net

19:53:06 From Terrie brady : same here just did

19:54:20 From Shelly Perry Backlar : I like your ideas, Muriel. Especially seasonal flooding.

19:54:48 From Natalie Beckman-Smith : I love all of these ideas from Muriel

19:56:40 From Glenn Bailey : I would like to see California live oak trees planted along the easterly border to help mitigate the air pollution from the 405 freeway immediately alongside the embankment

19:57:23 From Terrie brady : i like the idea of the elderberries. birds love them.

19:58:29 From Terrie brady : bunnies might eat the mustard instead of the native plants if the mustard wasnt taken so much

19:58:38 From Robyn Albaeck : Definitely.

20:01:14 From Barb H SFVAS : I suggest plan it all, but implement in stages.

20:01:28 From Terrie brady : i agree barb

20:02:37 From Shelly Perry Backlar : We can definitely work on implementing service learning opportunities that support these plans with high schools in the area

20:03:52 From Terrie brady : can the goats be on the mustard rather than herbicide

20:03:56 From Richard Rachman : Margot I just wanted to say, I'm the Biodiversity Coordinator for the CSUN Institute for Sustainability. Given COVID-19, we currently have our student volunteers doing citizen science projects. Once the vaccine comes out and folks feel safe going outdoors, we should talk about doing something with the Institute. We have hundreds of students with volunteer requirements.

20:04:20 From NURIT KATZ : second the benches idea. and some concerns with larger concrete viewing areas on that side.

20:04:29 From Patricia Bates : We are looking at a "Friends of..." in the future - outreaching and engaging the community

20:05:24 From Robyn Albaeck : I have a group of high school students interested in helping.

20:07:40 From Kelly Kazmirchuk - RCDSMM : I have been helping with the adoption of the State Seal of Civic Engagement. This allows high school students to receive a "seal" on their diplomas after completing certain requirements. It may be a great fit to combine this project with a civic engagement school.

20:08:03 From margotgriswold : Sounds good Richard. It has worked very well for us in the Baldwin Hills with both the WLA College students and high school program students.

20:08:40 From margotgriswold : We can use seeds if we are planning to weed for three years!

20:09:40 From margotgriswold : Seed after we have either grazed or weed whacked for three years.

20:11:11 From Shelly Perry Backlar : We have \$5K in a NFWF grant for LA Conservation Corps. for work in the Basin.

20:13:18 From Melanie Winter : You could always ask CM Koretz for support. Shared jurisdiction, no?

20:13:31 From Shelly Perry Backlar : It sounds like we should put together a multi-year plan that prioritizes what we want to achieve and the scope of work needed to achieve our goals.

20:14:24 From Patricia Bates : Not Koretz - whole basin is CD 6 other than very small area S of Burbank

20:15:12 From Mark Osokow : Thank you Shelly. I agree that is what is needed.

20:16:14 From diana nicole (LAAS) : I had to leave for a moment and still have the following questions regarding the proposal to use herbicides: 1. What are the herbicides that the advocates of herbicide use want to use? 2. Who would be applying the herbicides? 3. How often would they be applied? What is the method of application (how would the herbicides be applied? What is the amount of herbicides that would be applied?

20:18:19 From Terrie brady : is there a possibility of making an interactive map

20:18:48 From Shelly Perry Backlar : We can have this committee report at our regular meetings and reach out to members for input as the plan progresses

20:19:56 From Ruth Doxsee, LBNC : Diana, what is your email address? I can forward you one from Bill Neill that has most answers to your questions.

20:22:17 From Shelly Perry Backlar : Thank you Melanie! I will look at what you've posted.

20:24:31 From Richard Rachman : Melanie, were any restoration ecology or native plant folks at the charrette? I feel terrible that I wasn't able to attend.

20:25:11 From NURIT KATZ : @Richard yes it was well attended, and not at the plant selection stage yet, more big planning ideas

20:25:51 From Richard Rachman : Thanks Nurit :)

20:27:01 From Mark Osokow : If the road at the base of the dam is opened as a trail, it might help discourage a criss-cross pattern of trails developing in the east field that would disturb wildlife.

20:29:00 From Patricia Bates : Mark I agree...or maybe a couple deliberate cross-overs and discourage the rest

20:29:31 From NURIT KATZ : good suggestion Mark. people walk the circle now and aren't really interested in the eastern field much. official paths could definitely help

20:30:15 From Mark Osokow : Quit picking on rabbits. They're great food for all manner of predators. Include Barn Owl boxes and other raptor nest poles, etc. in the planning.

20:30:38 From Shelly Perry Backlar : Owl boxes would be great!

20:30:46 From NURIT KATZ : @Mark was about to say that re the Cottontails ðŸ~Š

20:31:18 From Patricia Bates : We had an owl box there that burned up. Never had owls - we have great horned in the vicinity....

20:31:43 From Patricia Bates : I mean no barn owls - I think kestrels nested in it once

20:33:09 From Melanie Winter : Have any birders seen bank swallows using the eroded river bank by the model air field?

20:33:12 From NURIT KATZ : there's a lot of trees and a lot of raptors, so not sure boxes would bring more

20:33:35 From Dave Weeshoff : Maybe we could find a tech-savy helper to help put Muriel's ideas into graphics?

20:33:57 From Richard Rachman : Eziekiel?

20:34:00 From NURIT KATZ : @melanie no but tons of cliff swallows nested at the dam using mud from LA River

20:34:16 From Melanie Winter : @Nurit - thanks!

20:34:23 From Natalie Beckman-Smith : I have a connection with someone at Tree People

20:35:43 From diana nicole (LAAS) : you can't successfully relocate oaks

20:36:07 From NURIT KATZ : and Melanie, I meant to say that I hadn't seen them not that they for sure aren't there over by the model plane area

20:38:01 From diana nicole (LAAS) : Correct, smaller oaks are better for transplanting.

20:38:13 From Melanie Winter : @Nurit - gotcha, thanks

20:38:55 From Paula Orlovich : Thank you I need to leave but look forward to the next meeting

20:39:35 From margotgriswold : Does anyone know what the depth to groundwater is in the east area?

20:39:37 From Barb H SFVAS : So many topics tonight! Time to summarize?

20:39:41 From diana nicole (LAAS) : You have to have a plan to water after the establishment phase, especially in times of drought