

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Meeting January 25, 2011 - Minutes

Sharon Ford called meeting to order at 6:55. She suggested we focus on finding solutions. Self-introductions were made. Other voting members present were Glenn Bailey, Steve Hartman, Bob Munsey and Muriel Kotin. Non-voting members and guests were Robert D. Baker (R&P), Lynda Levitan (CD 6), John Popoch (Asm. Bob Blumenfield), Karo Torossian (Councilmbr. Paul Krekorian), and Michael Tou (Rep. Brad Sherman).

Sharon distributed a picture of a wildlife-related rules sign at Ken Malloy Harbor Park, as Robert had said at the November meeting that that is the only LA City Park with wildlife protection, because it is within the coastal zone. She asked committee members to discuss their issues.

Muriel explained that the Wildlife Reserve is a wonderful place. She does not understand how the Steering Committee is not considered to have official standing with the City when the City Attorney advised us that we must follow the State Brown Act. She and others do much to organize volunteers, but there are limits on what volunteers can do. She believes that the City could and should consider this committee as official and that it is due to the huge staff turnover in recent times that its standing has diminished.

Bob Munsey wants to see a Commemorative Grove become a reality. He would like us to consider having the Wildlife Reserve become certified as wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

Glenn said that despite the limits on what volunteers can accomplish, we can lead people through the WR, organize cleanups, and act as advocates. Bull Creek needs attention, fixing. We need for behavior rules to be enforced. We used to have attention of highest levels of Rec & Parks - for example, general managers have attended these meetings. We should prioritize our issues.

Steve commented that we need coordination by very many different levels of government, that all have some jurisdiction in SB. We need the map of jurisdictions requested as part of the master plan update. Weeds are a major problem, fence lines and border areas are worst areas. His goal is to eliminate certain weeds - needs coordination of jurisdiction. We have a website, SepulvedaBasinWildlife.org.

Sharon: We need for the city to have a wildlife policy: Where there are no codes, there are no enforceable rules. How can we get some protection for the WR?

John Popoch: How did he get signs for Ken Malloy Regional Park, where he used to be director? The Park Advisory Board (PAB) and park users kept expressing concerns. He researched with help from Cal. Fish and Game, county and scientists and found these and federal codes apply to all natural parks. The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act provides protection for all nesting birds. Rec & Parks paint department made the signs. Can only state officer enforce state laws, only city officers enforce city laws? Uncertain. Park Rangers helped develop the rules. They didn't get rid of non-native birds, but tried to eliminate sport fishing, dumping of animals, and harassing, and got lots of community involvement.

Sharon mentioned Fall Festival of several years back. Muriel said not enough bang for effort.

Muriel said a major problem is getting people to the WR. What is the address? Publicity in media keeps giving incorrect information. The incorrect address (6350 Woodley) on Rec & Parks website needs to be corrected. Muriel uses 6100 Woodley, the address of the Japanese Garden. It needs to be added/corrected on our SepulvedaBasinWildlife.org website and map programs like Google Maps.

Glenn thought a law higher than LAMC might be more effective to use.

Michael Tou: Master Plan release to public expected in this spring. Budget issues may reduce number of ACOE projects. Bull Creek: Hydrology Branch is looking at whether there were design flaws. Probably the report will be completed this quarter, but the report may not be made public. Mitigation (repair) should be the focus. ACOE met their cap (\$5M) for the project, so legislation would be required before federal funds could be used. Glenn asked whether removing erosion isn't a maintenance issue rather than new construction. Glenn mentioned erosion at the sidewalk and bus turn around. Robert said the city will fill that in somewhat when the weather permits.

Lynda Levitan: Bull Creek situation is not something the city council office can handle. She feels we have plenty of signs; the problem is enforcement. She is in contact with Officer Evelyn Solano and the Senior Lead Officer frequently, primarily after someone contacts her.

John Popoch mentioned the lack of a reserve director onsite is a problem. He recommended getting politicians to participate.

Karo Torossian would be happy to support the other offices or distribute information about events through their e-newsletter.

Glenn suggested moving public officials' reports earlier on the agenda. Sharon mentioned some of the projects we hope to see in the future, such as commemorative grove and native plant demonstration garden.

Meetings: Do we want to reduce to meetings every-other month? We could add meetings as needed. **Moved and Seconded that we meet every other month (odd months)**. There was discussion as to whether it would weaken our position. Sharon advised that Rosemarie White who was absent opposes the change. It was suggested we could do more by email. The motion **Passed (4-1)**.

Steve Hartman becomes chair after tonight. We will discuss at our next meeting (March 22 at 6:45) whether to change the term of the rotating chair to a year. We will also discuss changing the start time to 6:30 or 7:00 at the March meeting.

Recreation and Parks Report (Robert Baker): "No Bicycles, No Smoking" signs are installed at Lake Balboa. None of the new signs for the WR have gone up yet. He is still working on getting the trash weir at Bull Creek cleaned. He has keys to all the kiosks now. They're still working on removal of graffiti from under the bridges.

Steve asked about the cutting down of native plants, shrubbery, large grasses, salvias, etc. in front of R&P headquarters. It is unfortunate and wasn't under Robert's direction. Steve hoped to have that area teaching R&P staff how to care for native plants.

Moved, Seconded and Passed unanimously to put public officials reports first on the agenda.

Submitted by

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