

## **SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE AREAS STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Date:** March 25, 2025 6:30pm/ 17015 Burbank Blvd., Encino, CA 91316 - Balboa Sports Center, Clubhouse Room 1

**Attendees:** Pat Bates SFVAS, Chair, Erin Viera, Terri Brady, Glen Bailey. Greg Stewart. Joe Phillips, Barbara Heideman SFVAS, Hanna Wayland USACE, Jon Rishi USACE, Melanie Winter, Miriam Keith, Murial Kotin, Mirium Preiss, Rosie Avetisyan Council District 6, Nurit Katz: LA Audubon

**Presenters:** Rick Corsini, Charles Hannah, Photographic society, Cara Campbell,

### **Meeting Minutes:**

1. Determination of quorum, call to order, introductions
  - a. Medical excuses for Nurit and Melanie voted eligible to vote remotely
  - b. 2449 Assembly Bill Motion- second and motion passes.
2. Minutes of last meeting (corrections and approval)
  - a. Will approve January at the next meeting
3. **Reports from Governmental Agencies**
  - a. Rosie:
    - i. The camera will be placed at Burbank Blvd and the 405 freeway. There's a chance for a second camera further into the basin, which will be decided based on how well the first one works. We expect the first camera to be live in a few weeks.
  - b. Army Corp: Presented by Jon.
    - i. Channel sediment approval was completed, and vegetation management of the south preserve was also finished since January. The results were positive, with native plants retained and non-natives removed.
    - ii. The Masterplan's public comment period closes on March 26, 2025. The team will address and document all comments as part of the environmental assessment, then draft the Masterplan for further public comment. Young eucalyptus trees were also removed.
    - iii. The City of LA is planning Annabel Godwin Day next to the Japanese Garden on April 12, 2025, from 7 AM to 2 PM, with an expected attendance of 2,500 people.
  - c. Pat: Meeting on homeless count will be this 3/27/25.
4. Presentation delivered from Forward Alliance Los Angeles regarding their proposed infrastructure projects at the south-east corner of Balboa and Victory, as well as re-restoration of Bull Creek. There is a much more detailed information package on Google Drive.
  - a. Pat: Emphasized the importance of the Forward Alliance collaborating and consulting with existing groups working in the area.

- b. Melanie (The River Project): Stressed the need for an expert to lead river restoration efforts and the importance of establishing a relationship with the Army Corp Real Estate Division. Also advocated for a permanent funding source and increased support from other tribes.
  - c. Greg: Agreed with consulting The River Project, citing its successful work at Debbs Park. Inquired about parking size, receiving the answer that it would blend into the native landscape rather than feel like a traditional parking lot, and its size would be relative to the buildings. Raised questions about ownership, management, and duration, which were noted as being questions for the city. It was clarified that Forward Alliance is an NGO and a community project, with an active board of experts and local residents. They expressed a willingness to be a sublessee to Rec and Park, similar to the golf course arrangement.
  - d. The interpretive center was commended. It was noted that Los Angeles has few Nature Centers in its parks and natural areas. Security was highlighted as an important aspect, and it was recommended that the site map clearly show the location of water features.
  - e. Nurit, identifying herself as from LA Audubon and the Chief Sustainability Officer at UCLA (among other roles), stated the project area overlaps with the future Olympic site. She appreciated the inclusion of restoration efforts and suggested meeting with Melanie. Nurit confirmed strong indigenous involvement in the project and recommended an endowment due to the basin's underfunding. She also emphasized the importance of open fields and spaces, and considering existing adjacent built spaces.
  - f. Hanna inquired about the project timeline. The response was that the city stated no construction would occur before the Olympics.
  - g. Glen mentioned the area is listed by the Corp to the city and believes Rec and Park typically grants right of entries or concession agreements, not leases. He expressed concern about adding more buildings, as it would reduce natural space, and noted the committee's desire for more community gardens.
5. Shrilanken photography association: WAnts to plant trees at the Wildlife Reserve
- a. Nurit: Noted that a proposal had not been seen and recommended integrating with existing restoration efforts rather than focusing solely on planting trees.
  - b. Muril: Stated that it is not the appropriate time to plant trees.
  - c. An invitation was extended to join events on April 12th or April 26th. Greg will be contacted.
6. **Reports from Member Organizations**
- a. FoLAR: Growing momentum for habitat restorations at the basin
    - i. 184 attendees for the monthly HRD on March 22.
    - ii. Growing interests by partners: schools, organizations, members.
      - 1. JGI event: April 12

2. FoLAR Earth Month Habitat restoration April 26.
    - iii. Hiring a new Director of Community Engagement
  - b. CNPS: Reported planting up to 270 plants recently, with Boy Scouts planning to plant 50 more, and another small group also participating.
    - i. Nurit: Requested that all Sepulveda-related plans be cleared through the committee. Provided updates on cultural burning, noting its potential relevance to grassland management in the basin and offering to share a webinar on the topic.
    - ii. Melanie: Shared that Tree People held an inspiring conference showcasing developing data.
    - iii. Glenn (Encino Neighborhood Council): Noted the council's jurisdiction up to Victory Blvd, covering both basin and non-basin areas. Mentioned that the city budget council file is open, with the Mayor's budget release scheduled for April 20th or 21st. Given the billion-dollar deficit, Glen stressed the need to pay attention to its potential impact on Rec and Parks general funding. Pat added that the Chief Ranger is losing 7 positions.
  - c. Sierra Club: Had nothing to report.
7. Comments on US Army Corps of Engineers Sepulveda Dam Master Plan Revision:
- a. Consider SFV Audubon comments and River Project supplement
    - a. A letter incorporating these comments was drafted and submitted to the Corp today.
      - i. The committee unanimously voted to submit the letter after incorporating member edits.
    - b. Land use classifications were discussed, including the possible expansion of Wildlife Areas.
    - c. Consideration of SB WASC comments was noted.
8. Los Angeles City Park Needs Assessment - assign a committee to consider
- a. A needs assessment for existing and new parks. The survey runs through mid-April. The committee wants to give input by the May meeting.
  - b. Pat will look to see if there is a need for a special meeting.
9. Councilmember Padilla Motion - discussion:
- a. CF 24-1533 regarding removing invasive plants and planting more natives in the basin.
    - a. Pat is working on this. Removing this from the agenda.
10. Adjournment (8:30 p.m.)