

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee Meeting July 29, 2025 Zoom AI notes edited by Pat Bates, Chair 9/25/2025

Attendance:

Environmental Group voting members:

- California Native Plant Society - Not represented
- Friends of the Los Angeles River - Erin Vierra Orr
- Los Angeles Audubon Society - Nurit Katz
- Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains - Glenn Bailey (alt)
- San Fernando Valley Audubon Society - Pat Bates
- Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter - Not represented
- Sierra Club, San Fernando Valley Group - Theresa Brady
- The River Project - Melanie Winter (Virtual)

Governmental Groups:

- US Army Corps of Engineers Hanna Weyland present
- Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Los Angeles not represented
- Encino Neighborhood Council - Glenn Bailey Present
- Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council - Miriam Preissel Present

Patricia Bates calls the meeting to order at 6:38 PM on July 29th, confirming a quorum is present. She introduces the voting members and guests in attendance, including representatives from various organizations and government offices. Melanie, a voting member, is attending remotely due to a medical excuse related to a contagious disease concern. The committee approves Melanie Winter's participation as a voting member under Assembly Bill 2449 provisions.

The minutes from the May 27th meeting are approved unanimously

Update from US Army corps: Hannah from the Army Corps of Engineers provides updates on the Sepulveda and Hansen master plan, mentioning a site visit in late August and ongoing work on the fire plan. The committee requests a 45-60 day comment period for the final draft of the master plan, expected in early 2026.

The committee discusses issues related to vector control, mosquito abatement, and homeless encampments in the Sepulveda Basin and LA River area. Hannah from the Army Corps of

Engineers clarifies that they are not responsible for law enforcement or mosquito control, but can assist with vegetation and sediment removal depending on funding and personnel.

Council District 6: Sepulveda Basin Vegetation Management Updates

Rosie from CD6 informs the group about recent and upcoming walkthroughs of the Sepulveda Basin involving various stakeholders, and plans to consolidate future meetings to ensure all parties are informed and aligned.

Rosie provides updates on vegetation management in the Sepulveda Basin. The fire department is working on getting approval for specific zones, with the first area targeted near Hjelte Sports Complex. Median maintenance is also planned for areas surrounding the basin, to be carried out by LA Conservation Corps. Rosie mentions ongoing discussions about potentially bringing an Inside Safe operation to house people in the basin. She is working to include representatives from wildlife and environmental groups in future internal meetings about these plans.

Sepulveda Basin Groundwater Project Update

Gabriel Vargas from LA DWP provides an update on the groundwater replenishment project in the Sepulveda Basin, which is on schedule to be completed by the end of 2027. He invites attendees to a "Making Water Work" event on August 27th from 9 AM to 12:30 PM, featuring speakers, panels, and a construction tour. The committee discusses attendance at the event and potential state grant opportunities for the Sepulveda Basin, with Jack from Assemblyman Gabriel's office offering to help connect the group with relevant state agencies if needed.

Burnbot Technology for Invasive Species Management

Patricia updates the group on a promising technology called Burnbot for controlled burns and invasive species management in the Sepulveda Basin. The machine can create 8-foot wide controlled burns without emitting smoke or particulates, and when combined with mastication equipment, it can effectively eliminate invasive seeds like black mustard while preserving native seeds. Patricia also mentions ongoing efforts to develop a fire resilience corps for fuel management, and emphasizes the importance of balancing fire prevention with habitat preservation. The group discusses the potential benefits and concerns, including the impact on nesting birds, with Patricia assuring that proper surveys and precautions would be taken.

Olympic Updates and Community Matters

Patricia updates the group on various topics. She mentions skipping the flooding proposal discussion due to absent members. For reporting encampments, she sends photos with coordinates to Rosie's office. Regarding the Olympic plans, Rosie shares that LA28 is working on ideas, but nothing is concrete yet. She promises to follow up and share more information once available. Patricia notes that the planned Olympic briefing for neighborhood councils has been postponed. The park needs assessment preliminary report is expected in early fall. Patricia also mentions the importance of being aware of climate bond opportunities. Upcoming

events include a presentation on fire safety related to defensible space by Dr. Travis Longhorn and a river fest on Sunday.

Sepulveda Basin Bike Path Reroute

The committee discusses a proposed bike path through the Sepulveda Basin and its associated funding shortfall. They suggest rerouting it to connect with an existing bike path along Oxnard Boulevard, which could save money and allow for beautification of a neglected area. The group plans to draft a letter with this recommendation to send to relevant officials, including Rosie from the mayor's office, who offers to help get it to the right people. They also briefly touch on other local environmental initiatives and the jurisdictional complexities involved in the bike path project.

Meeting was concluded at 7:35 PM

Zoom Participants:

Patricia Bates (In person conference)
Muriel Kotin SFVAS
Kathy Schreiner VNNC
Jack Dorfman Asm. Jesse Gabriel
Hanna Weyland - USACE
Rosie Avetisyan; CD6
Gabriel Vargas - LADWP
Anne Abramson
Lionel Mares
Melanie Winter (SBWASC, The River Group)
B Heidemann SFVAS

Chat file

00:22:31 Lionel Mares: What about improving the bike paths at Sepulveda Basin and Recreation?
00:57:58 Gabriel Vargas - LADWP: Gabriel.vargas@ladwp.com
00:58:41 Gabriel Vargas - LADWP: Signing off. Thank you for your time!