

SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE AREAS STEERING COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES

Prepared by Erin Viera

Date & Time: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 6:30 pm

Location (In-Person): Balboa Sports Center, Allstar Studio, 17015 Burbank Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

Attendees:

Voting members:

- **Pat Bates:** San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (Chair)
- **Nurit Katz:** Los Angeles Audubon Society
- **George Waddell:** California Native Plant Society
- **Joe Phillips:** Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter
- **Erin Viera:** Friends of the Los Angeles River
- **Theresa Brady:** Sierra Club, San Fernando Valley Group
- **Kathy Schreiner:** Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance
- **Glenn Bailey:** RCD of SMM, Encino Neighborhood Council

Others:

- **Josh Martinez:** Department of Recreation and Parks
- **Hanna Weyland:** US Army Corps of Engineers
- **Richard and Marianne Davis**
- **Paola Flores Nunez:** Recreate Educate Coadapt (REC)
- **Charles Hannah:** Forward alliance LA

1. Determination of Quorum, Eligibility, Call to Order, Introductions

- Quorum was determined.

2. Discussion/Approval of Minutes of January 27, 2026 Meeting

- **APPROVED.**
 - Motion: Erin
 - Vote: Pat (yes), George (yes), Kathy (yes), Glenn (yes), Joe (yes), Terry (yes)

3. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

- Pat was congratulated and thanked for accomplishing the goat grazing project by the model plane field. The goats will be there for 2-3 weeks and will be removed by March 17 unless nesting is observed.
- Mike Browney commented on people dumping dogs at the Basin and suggested that local shelters should be able to take these abandoned dogs to keep them safe.

4. Report from Forward Alliance Los Angeles (Charles Hannah): Update on Lake Balboa/Bull Creek Proposal

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- The biggest initial issue was has been getting written, signed site access from the Army Corps of Engineers and Rec and Parks to raise money. Access was eventually secured in progress with help from Larry Frank, including sharing a letter of support from the Mayor to Senator Councilmember Padilla (signed Feb 11 by both), and support from Rec and Parks (Darryl Ford provided access).
- Site Plan Details:
 - LA28 (Olympics) will hold use the "dust-bowl, mud pit" site, which floods heavily as the staging area for BMX Racing. Charles informed LA28 that their any plan to install a blacktop there must be avoided as it will compound urban heat. Permeable pavers and oak trees should be installed to create a shade canopy. The surrounding area will eventually be restored to its native habitat.
 - Pat noted the area still has many native plants and nesting sites for Least Bell's Vireos to keep, in addition to removing invasives. All partners are invited to weigh in and be part of the project.
 - A separate walking path shaded with oak trees will be added along Burbank Blvd (separate from the existing bike path).
- Goals before LA28: Native plant nursery planted on site, dust bowl paved with permeable pavers, and feasibility study completed.
- The 40,000 sq. ft. space at the physical building planned for the community/resilience center will have be converted into a green roof with a protected nesting site on top.
- Area Project 22 (in the Vision Plan), the Bull Creek revitalization site, will undergo habitat restoration with the Bureau of Engineers involved.

5. Report from Recreate Educate Coadapt (REC) (Paola Flores Núñez)

- REC (Recreate Educate Coadapt) delivered a land acknowledgment.
- Mission: Founded in 2022 to transform neighborhoods and spaces that are safe, beautiful, inspiring, and connect people to nature, themselves, and each other.
- Community Pillars: Community beautification, wilderness restoration, environmental education.
- Activities at the Reserve: They currently provide education and restoration services.
- Vision: Looking ahead, they plan to fund skill building and leadership development at the Basin.

6. Reports from LA8 and Government Agencies

- **6.1. Los Angeles Office of the Mayor (Larry Frank)**
 - Thanked Rec and Parks for the nesting bird survey prior to goat grazing; right of entry, liability assurance, and approvals are complete.
 - Thanked Hanna Weyland for supporting permission for the goat grazer to camp

with the goats.

- Goat grazing covered on the Mayor's social media.
- Next possible site: CD3, pending a survey. Thanked Audubon Society for pioneering work.
- Continued focus on encampment removals in Zones 11, 12, and 6.
- LA Conservation Corps has Prop 4 money for corps projects. They want to work in the Basin, requiring a Notice of Exemption. Hope to get funding in summer and start in September after nesting season. They could look at Bull Creek as another site.
- The Corps committed to taking on castor bean and arundo, and also working on Mexican fan palms.
- Tiny homes housing is anticipated for late 2026 or 2027.
- Efforts continue to place people in good housing.
- **6.2. Los Angeles Council District 6 (Rosie Avetisyan)**
 - **Housing/Shelter:** Meeting tomorrow with neighboring council districts to prioritize placing Basin residents into upcoming tiny homes and shelters.
 - Sun Valley Tiny Homes will give priority to Sun Valley residents and are set to open in April.
 - CD12 also has shelters coming to its district.
 - The RV lot at Balboa Park and Ride is under construction and will open at the end of March for temporary RV storage (no living permitted). A recent judge's ruling prevents the city from taking and demolishing RVs.
 - **Prop 4 Funding:** The office is working with Jesse Gabriel and Henry Stern's offices on Prop 4 money allocated to the Basin. Priority must be sorted between state and city goals to fulfill the Vision Plan with year-over-year funding.
 - **Franklin Fields:** A recent fire occurred. The Attorneys Office deemed the city responsible. Working to secure a secondary access point for fields and parking and to place repairs on the budget.
 - **Balboa Sports Complex:** Working with the new director to get a list of immediate, minor fixes for upgrades.
 - **Steering Committee Website:** Motion went through but needs follow-up with Rec and Park about launching the website.
- **6.3. Department of Recreation and Parks (Joshua)**
 - Signage (No Fishing and goat signage) is done; waiting on carpentry for pole installation around the boat ramp.
 - Sanitation cleared a blockage in the creek (a storm drain issue). Pat requested they return to ensure proper drainage is occurring.
- **6.4. Los Angeles Fire Department (Chief Robert Barna)**
 - Not present.
- **6.5. US Army Corps of Engineers (Hanna Weyland/Nick Figueroa)**
 - Sediment and vegetation removed in the Haskell Creek area.
 - Working on vegetation management in Zone 3 (little vegetation left on the side of Burbank Blvd).
 - The Masterplan for both Sepulveda and Hansen Dam is being reviewed internally

by the specialty team in Texas. A draft is hoped for by April/May. Work in the LA River is completed.

- **6.6. Encino Neighborhood Council (Glenn Bailey)**
 - Meeting tomorrow night.
- **6.7. Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council (Miriam Preissel)**
 - Not present.

7. Old Business

- **7.1. Motion to remove The River Project as a voting member**
 - Nurit reported that there are no remaining staff but there are living board members interested in finding a new representative to sit on the committee.
 - *Deferred until next meeting*
- **7.2. Follow up on request for "No Fishing" signs at the wildlife lake**
 - Signs are on the way to combat rampant fishing.
 - Bad behavior (urinating, off-leash dogs) is being documented to share with rangers. Members should send documentation to Pat.
- **7.3. Follow up on collapse of LA River embankment near Great Blue Heron rookery**
 - No update provided.
- **Other Old Business:** A bill was moved forward that might permit virtual participation by voting members for committees. Larry was asked to investigate if City Council can take action to identify if this can be used by boards and committees throughout the city.

8. Reports from Member Voting Organizations

- **8.1. California Native Plant Society (George Waddell)**
 - Reported a great planting day on January 25th, grateful for collaboration with Paola (volunteering to lead plantings).
 - A habitat restoration day is scheduled for Saturday with FoLAR and Audubon.
 - Met with FoLAR to brainstorm grant writing for Prop 4, focusing on getting the creek cleaned out and lifted up, and estimating costs.
 - Trying a new method of solarizing but there are concerns related to lack of manpower.
- **8.2. Friends of the Los Angeles River (Erin Viera Orr)**
 - Habitat restoration day on Saturday.
- **8.3. Los Angeles Audubon Society (Nurit Katz)**
 - No report.
- **8.4. Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance (Kathy Schreiner)**
 - No report.
- **8.5. Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (Dan Cooper)**
 - Glenn reported yesterday's meeting was rescheduled to March.
- **8.6. San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (Pat Bates)**
 - Exciting news: goats are currently grazing in the basin.
 - A raptor specialist will speak on Thursday at 6:30 pm at the Encino Community Center (refreshments, family friendly).

- Monarch butterfly event is scheduled for March 26th. Check the website for upcoming walks.
- **8.7. Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter (Joe Phillips)**
 - No report.
- **8.8. Sierra Club, San Fernando Valley Group (Theresa Brady)**
 - The program is now active again and looking at interesting speakers.
 - Upcoming speakers: April-Josh Jackson (Encino Women's club), International trail building organization (Zoom), and a speaker on salt lakes worldwide.

10. Next Regular Meeting

- March 24, 2026