

## **SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE AREAS STEERING COMMITTEE (SWBSC) - MEETING MINUTES**

**Date & Time:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 6:30 pm

**Location:** Balboa Sports Center, Allstar Studio, 17015 Burbank Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

### **ATTENDEES:**

#### **Representatives:**

- Steve Hartman (CNPS)
- Nurit Katz (LA Audubon)
- Pat Bates (SFV Audubon)
- Joe Phillips (LA Sierra Club)
- Dan Cooper (RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains)
- Erin Viera (FOLAR)
- Marianne Davis (Sierra Club)
- Kathy Schreiner (NCSA)
- Glenn Bailey (Encino NC)

#### **Other attendees:**

- Paola Flores Núñez (REC)
- Richard Davis
- Nick Figueroa (Army Corps)
- Muriel Kotin
- Katherine Lettieri
- Bill Neill
- Marcelino Ascensio
- Ari Cuellar
- Joshua Martinez (Rec and Parks)

### **1. Determination of quorum, eligibility, call to order, introductions**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:38 PM

### **2. Discussion/approval of minutes of February 24, 2026 Meeting**

- No notes provided.

### **3. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items within the subject-matter jurisdiction of the Committee**

- None.

### **4. Reports from Government Agencies and NGOs not on Committee**

- **4.1. Los Angeles Office of the Mayor: Larry Frank**

- Expressed thanks for the 1,000 goats program, which protected areas with potential burrowing owls.
- Rec and Park performed two nesting bird studies, enabling an extension of the goat grazing program.
- Thanked Dan Cooper for conducting the study on Zone 11.
- Reported the removal of 52 encampments.
- Encampment removal is not proceeding in Zone 3 or Bull Creek until adequate housing options are available. Housing options include Motel 6 (120 rooms/240 beds).
- The most reliable count of people living in the basin comes from park rangers.
- Working with LASAH to house 70–80 individuals living in the basin.
- A training session was held with Chrysalis trainees on using chainsaws.
- The Mayor wrote a letter supporting applications for funding.
- **4.2. Los Angeles Council District 6: Rosie Avetisyan**
  - Glenn Bailey asked why placement (Motel 6) was not in CD6, as past homeless placements were based on where encampments were located. Rosie Avetisyan responded that surrounding council districts are collaborating to help each other, and housing options are opening in many districts.
  - Developing a long-term median maintenance strategy around the basin, aiming for maintenance a few times per year.
  - Basin improvements are continuing with the Mayor's office, but maintenance is largely halted due to nesting season.
  - Communicating with the offices of Brad Sherman and Jesse Gabriel to secure funding for the basin.
  - Pat Bates inquired about the Sepulveda Basin website project
- **4.3. Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks - Joshua Martinez**
  - Reported no updates.
  - Regarding the requested "no fishing" signs, Joshua confirmed the service request is active and waiting on carpentry for installation.
- **4.4. Los Angeles Fire Department: Chief Robert Barna**
  - Not present
- **4.5. US Army Corps of Engineers: Nick Figueroa**
  - The Sepulveda master plan revision comment period is completed. The plan is still in the review process, with an expected end date in August.
  - The inlet channel has been cleaned up.
  - Completed mowing in section B3 south of Burbank Blvd.
  - Tracking the "annabel goblin" event on April 4.
- **4.6. Encino Neighborhood Council - Glenn Bailey**
  - EncinoFest is scheduled for May 31.
- **4.7. Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council - Miriam Preissel**
  - Not present
- **4.8. Reports/Comments from other Government and/or Environmental Organizations attending**
  - (No additional reports recorded here; Item 5 covers the BOE report.)

## **5. Report from BOE on 3 crosswalk improvements along Victory Blvd.**

- Marcelino Ascensio, Senior Civil Engineer with the Bureau of Engineering (BOE), presented a scope of work via a PowerPoint. See presentation in meeting [recording](#).
- The goal is crosswalk improvements at three intersections on Victory Blvd (Gloria Ave, Petit Ave, and Hayvenhurst Ave) to improve pedestrian access and safety when crossing from the north into the basin. This idea came from the vision plan.
- Feedback was noted regarding mobility on the edges of the basin where access is currently difficult.
- The crosswalks are the baseline improvements required prior to the Olympics. Other desired improvements will follow later.
- Nurit offered to connect the project to NGOs, such as the Santa Monica Mountains Fund, that are looking for sites for community congregation and plantings.

## **6. Discussion and possible motion: Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks (RAP) Funding**

- REC is looking to become the point person for continued work with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR), as CNPS is reducing its involvement.
- Since 2009, Mayor Villaraigosa charged an administrative fee that consumes 40% of the RAP budget, which has created maintenance challenges. Since 2009, an estimated \$1.5 billion has been taken away from Rec and Parks.
- San Fernando Valley Audubon has signed on to support the charter measure to increase RAP funding.
- The measure is currently with the Charter Reform Commission. City Council and the Mayor must approve it to place it on the November ballot.
- Pat Bates drafted a letter with an environmental focus and attached it to the agenda. The Committee agreed to send a letter as a group, and Pat will send the prototype letter to the entire committee.

## **7. Discussion and possible motion regarding arming Los Angeles City Park Rangers: CE 20-0190**

- People should address the issue individually

## **8. Discussion regarding enforcement in general and requesting a change to the City Administrative Code §63.44 to prohibit dogs on or off-leash in the vicinity of the wildlife lake and the LA River south of the Burbank Blvd bridge**

- The Army Corps master plan mandates no dogs (on or off-leash) in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Because there is no city ordinance currently prohibiting dogs at Sepulveda Basin sites, the existing leash law must be enforced.
- Proper signage about the leash law is needed.

## 9. Old Business status

- **9.1. Status of The River Project as a voting member**
  - Moved to the next meeting.
- **9.2. Follow up on request for "No Fishing" signs at the wildlife lake**
  - The service request is in, and RAP is waiting on carpentry for installation (See Item 4.3).
- **9.3. Status of Haskell Creek blockages and trash**
  - Sanitation needs to finish the cleanup.
- **9.4. Follow up on collapse of LA River embankment near Great Blue Heron rookery and associated encampments**
  - No report

## 10. Reports from Member Voting Organizations

- **10.1. California Native Plant Society - Steve (Hartman)**
  - Requested that George Waddell replace Greg Stewart as the CNPS representative.
  - Requested that the City provide a storage space (with a key) for CNPS equipment (carts, hoses, pumps, and tools), as volunteer Robert is retiring and Paula (from REC) will be taking over.
  - Joshua Martinez requested an email with a description of the items to be stored, which Paola will send.
  - The unusual rainfall and temperature this year have caused an unprecedented amount of weeds, and without herbicide, controlling some poisonous invasives and non-native perennial grasses will be difficult.
- **10.2. Friends of the Los Angeles River - Erin Viera**
  - Announced the Earth Month Habitat Restoration Day on April 18, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
- **10.3. Los Angeles Audubon Society - Nurit Katz**
  - No report.
- **10.4. Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance - Kathy Schreiner**
  - No report.
- **10.5. Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains - Dan Cooper**
  - Reported that the RCD has a new executive director who comes from the park service.
- **10.6. San Fernando Valley Audubon Society - Pat Bates**
  - Reported on the goat grazing evaluation. The goats did a good job but did not eat the stalks of bastard cabbage (which are resprouting) or ragweed. They did graze on some coyote bush, which is expected to survive.
  - The Fire Department will obtain aerial photos of the grazed area.
  - The organization is looking into overseeding the bastard cabbage area with something else.
- **10.7. Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter - Joe Phillips**
  - No report.

- **10.8. Sierra Club, San Fernando Valley Group - Marianne Davis**
  - No report.

**11. Committee members' comments on items not on agenda.**

- No comments

**12. Next regular meeting is April 28, 2026**