

DRAFT
Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Project
Community Advisory Committee Minutes
Thursday, September 24, 2009
Hansen Yard

I. Welcome/Introduction

Meeting attendance sign-in sheet attached.

II. Review of Meeting Agenda

Valerie De La Cruz reviewed the meeting agenda and explained to the group that there were a couple of pressing issues that needed to be discussed before the regular agenda was addressed. The group decided that if the discussion didn't cover all of the evening's agenda items, then they would be deferred to the next meeting.

III. Discussion Items

Poker Rides and Other Organized Events

Mari Quillman (ECORP Consulting, Inc.) asked the CAC about organized rides that take place in the surrounding communities that might use the Mitigation Area as part of the route for the rides. Terry Kaiser mentioned that the San Fernando Rangers do four organized rides per year and the Gibson Ranch does some organized rides as part of the Ride for a Cure Events. It is not clear whether these groups typically include the Mitigation Area as part of the route for their organized rides.

New Public Outreach Activities

Mari Quillman informed the group that Greg Benavides, one of ECORP's Biologists, has been actively conducting public outreach activities to family groups and other users of the Mitigation Area. The main focus of the outreach activities are the non-English speaking groups that picnic, hike, and play near the creek and ponds. LADPW and ECORP realized that this user group was not being adequately informed about the value of the Mitigation Area and the sensitive resources that occur there. In order to reach out to this group, ECORP and LADPW developed an English/Spanish flyer that described the reason for the Mitigation Area, the sensitive resources, and the activities that are allowed in the Mitigation Area. The flyer was shown to the CAC group. Greg Benavides mentioned that many of the Spanish speaking community cannot read English but they can read Spanish so that's why the flyer was developed. In addition, Greg Benavides conducted regular outreach activities on numerous weekends during August and September. He was able to speak to both the Spanish and English speaking user groups. In general, he received very positive feedback from the recreational users of the site.

Incident Between ECORP Biologist and Equestrians

Mari Quillman and Greg Benavides informed the group about an altercation that Greg Benavides had with a group of equestrians while he was out doing public outreach at the Mitigation Area. A group of equestrians had open liquor containers with them on the site while riding on the trails. Greg greeted them and explained that he was conducting an educational outreach to all users of the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area. The equestrians were very unfriendly, made negative remarks about other user groups, and attempted to crowd Greg off of the trail with their horses. The concerns in this incident involve both the open containers on the site and the potential that these equestrians were participating in an organized poker ride that might have been using the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area as the route for the ride.

Discussion

The CAC group was in favor of the new outreach efforts and Andrea Gutman stated she would like to walk along with the Biologist during one of the outreach efforts. Andrea Gutman stated that the biologists conducting outreach should wear identifying clothing or name tags that indicate official business is being conducted. She thought that perhaps proper ID would avoid altercations with equestrian visitors. Greg says that ID was not a problem and in spite of identifying himself and his official business, the equestrians in this case were still uncooperative and rude. Andrea suggested other Shadow Hills folks (equestrian visitors) need to be notified of the presence of ECORP biologist doing outreach and she suggested putting it into the Shadow Hills newsletter.

Pat Davenport suggested that the flyer should be rearranged so that the English is before the Spanish translation. There was discussion on this issue because the focus group for the flyer was mainly the Spanish speaking community. However, the group did agree that the flyer should be rearranged. Alternatively, a suggestion was made to make separate Spanish and English flyers. ECORP will take care of the modifications.

The CAC group thought it was important to draw in the equestrian groups as protectors of the site so they also feel a sense of stewardship. The group mentioned that the people who walk on the trails commonly set up their picnic activities on the trails, which causes a problem for equestrians who need to pass. Since most of the equestrians don't speak Spanish, it's difficult to communicate between these groups. Andrea Gutman noted that many of the families are not very diligent about picking up their trash and diapers. She suggested that the public outreach stress better education about trash pickup. Greg stated that in all of the interviews and onsite outreach sessions he has conducted, the families and groups have stated that they do clean up after themselves. They also expressed a disdain towards other who do not clean up after themselves.

Terry Kaiser requested that the County pick up the trash in the trash cans on Mondays, which are right after the busy weekends. They are currently picking up the trash on Thursdays or Fridays.

Access Permits

Chris Stone stated that any organized event must obtain an access permit from the County of Los Angeles when accessing the Mitigation Area as part of their event. There is no alcohol allowed at any time in the Mitigation Area.

Officer Wall stated that he would check to make sure the San Fernando Rangers had a temporary alcohol license for the event that took place on the weekend when the altercation between the equestrians and ECORP's Biologist occurred. Conditions of the temporary alcohol license would specify the use and selling of alcohol for the event.

Terry Kaiser stated that he leads one Trails Trials event every year and that the next one is scheduled on June 20th, 2010. He stated that there is no drinking allowed on ETI rides. Terry Kaiser suggested the preparation of an awareness article that discusses what is required when hosting an event that may pass through the Mitigation Area and what activities are prohibited in the Mitigation Area. He mentioned that this could be disseminated to ETI and then it would reach the members of that organization.

Valerie De La Cruz stated that she would call Dale Gibson about an access permit for the events scheduled on September 26 and 27, 2009 as part of the Ride for a Cure. If any organized events are going to utilize the County property (the Mitigation Area), then an access permit is required ahead of time. She also stated that they aren't difficult to acquire from the County and can be provided with a relatively short turnaround time.

Site Safety and Patrols

Andrea Gutman and Carol Roper have been doing trash pickup and rock dam removal on a regular basis at the Big Tujunga site. Andrea found people near stream that had open fires burning so she tried calling the phone numbers on the signs that were erected by LADPW. She said that the person who answered the first number didn't want to help and the second number also resulted in no help. Andrea called the fire department and they said they might go check it out. Finally, a ranger called her back and said they would check it out. Pat Davenport stated that she didn't think that the officers would know to go out on the site. Andrea says that the responding officers are good and that they have gotten out of their cars and have entered the site in the past.

Chris Stone mentioned that he and Millie Jones talked to Los Angeles Police Department Chief Michael Moore LAPD and he committed the Department to doing enforcement at the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area. Officer Wall, a guest at this CAC meeting, stated that he has never been informed by his Chief that they have enforcement over the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area.

Pat Davenport suggested that the phone numbers on LADPW's signs should be clarified that one is for enforcement (675-HELP – [Public Works]) and one is for information (1-877-ask-LAPD [Dispatch]).

Terry Kaiser stated that the phone number on the Big Tujunga map, which was developed by Equestrian Trails Corral 20, is the LAPD dispatch (818-734-2209). Andrea Gutman stated that

no one will respond to the call. Pat Davenport suggested that someone act as an intermediary between LAPD dispatch and LADPW. She thinks LAPD dispatch has the maps but they are too complicated so she suggested that she and LADPW come up with a simplified map so the dispatchers can understand it. Pat Davenport stated that they can do the interface and training. Chris Stone requested a meeting with Pat Davenport and LAPD Dispatch to find out what they need and to determine what information the callers need to provide for the officers. Pat Davenport would like LAPD to initiate the discussion on what they will need.

Terry Kaiser thought it would be prudent to work out some sort of patrolling with the park rangers, which might include subsidizing them for conducting patrols on the Big Tujunga site. The Park Rangers have 2 new quads that are outfitted with special modifications that allow access into remote areas. Valerie De La Cruz mentioned that quads and motorcycles are not allowed in the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area and if they are seen on the site, then other visitors might think it's OK. If that were the case, then it might invite others to drive quads or other motorized vehicles into the Mitigation Area. Officer Wall stated that when they had the off-road enforcement (motorcycles) in place for two months, they made 200 citations of people illegally using OHV's on the trails. Terry Kaiser stated that he has taken the rangers out to show them around the open space but they aren't allowed to go on the LADPW Property until there is an agreement. Pat Davenport was worried about consistency with the rangers and officers that might patrol/visit the site because they get moved around. Terry Kaiser stated that only certain Rangers are OHV trained so they have to be available. Officer Wall said he has been working with Terry Kaiser and Larry Martinez on getting the Rangers on OHV's to patrol. They patrol one day a weekend.

Assorted Discussion Items

Paintball Activities

Paintball players were seen on the site two weekends prior to the CAC meeting. They appear to gain access at the Wheatland and Foothill entrance at the freeway. They come onto the site pretty regularly.

Development of an Equestrian Information Flyer

Pat Davenport suggested creating a focused equestrian information flyer, which was discussed by the group. The focus could include equestrian related issues, the nature of the bank, the rules that have to be abided by, and the threat of closure if site users don't comply. It could also include simple instructions on how to get an access permit from the County for organized group activities that will enter the Mitigation Bank. Alternative methods of informing the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area visitors were also discussed, including digital or electronic means of disseminating information to equestrian groups. The hope is that information will spread and reach their club/group members.

Portable Toilets

Andrea Gutman stated that the company who is cleaning the portable toilets is throwing away full rolls of toilet paper, which is very wasteful. Andrea also mentioned that she has been calling the County to come out to pick up the trash more often.

Erosion by the Mary Bell Entrance

Carol Roper stated that the fire department occasionally releases water from fire hydrant near the Mary Bell entrance and it is eroding the soils under the stepover bars at the Mary Bell entrance. She suggested that there needs to be some sort of asphalt berm to divert water flow away from the entrance when the fire department releases water. Terry Kaiser suggested using decomposed granite for this purpose. He also suggested that a berm could be put on the County's property, at the site of erosion. Andrea Gutman stated that sand was placed at the erosion site after Valerie De La Cruz made a call about this issue.

Downed Chain Link Fence

Andrea Gutman stated that there continues to be concern about the chain-link fence that is still laying on trail on east side of ponds. The County was shown the location and fence but nothing was done. Chris Stone stated that Flood Control people have been overwhelmed with other tasks. He also said that they will assess a better way to address onsite issues. Pat Davenport stated that the County will be even busier because many debris basins have to be cleaned out. The debris basins are now the top priority since the after-effects of the Station Fire (mud slides, runoff, metal debris) will intensify during the rainy season.

Post Station Fire Concerns

Valerie De La Cruz stated that no one should be in the Mitigation Area if there is a threat of rain. Pat Davenport informed the CAC group that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has been working with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to do a probability map of post-fire debris flows. The model is predicting the worst debris flow probability they have ever seen. Big Tujunga is one of the biggest threats for debris flow. In addition, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is predicting an El Nino this winter, which may result in substantial precipitation. Even a small amount of rain can result in flows containing a large amount of debris. The biggest concerns for debris flows are as follows:

- 1.** Big Tujunga Dam is a major concern because the fire burned most of the watershed and because the dam is being rehabilitated. Chris Stone described the stage of construction of the Big Tujunga Dam. At present, there are no operational valves there, so there will be no flood control at the dam. Flows will be able to pass right through the dam until they get plugged up. Then, there may be a potential for the buildup of a lot of debris and water behind the dam, and a potential for it to flow over the spillway. Pat Davenport is lobbying for the debris basins to be cleaned out as soon as possible. Haines Creek contains a debris basin that is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACOE). That basin supports southwestern pond turtles and other sensitive species so the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) would have to be consulted prior to a clean out of the basin. Haines Creek is in the trajectory of major debris flow.
- 2.** Highway 2 is the second highest concern due to the potential for debris flows that may block the highway.
- 3.** Highway 39 is the third highest concern. Like Highway 2, there is a high potential for debris

flows that block the highway. In addition, there is also a potential for debris flows to negatively impact sensitive fish in the San Gabriel River. Pat Davenport stated that LADPW needs to have a chat with USFWS about threats of mud flows to native fish.

4. The threat of post fire damage (debris runoff, siltation of Big Tujunga sensitive areas) will be in effect for the next three to five years.

Valerie De La Cruz passed out printouts of the County of Public Works webpage. She wanted people to know that there is up to date information available on the Public Works site (www.ladpw.org). Specifically, current fire info, road closures, and post fire flood flow protection are provided on the website. The fire departments have helped with communication needs between agencies.

Internal Gate at Wheatland/Wentworth Entrance

Terry Kaiser mentioned that another horse got loose on the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area and escaped through the entrance at Wheatland and Wentworth. Terry Kaiser stated that he would contact Valerie De La Cruz regarding the permit to construct a self-closing gate at that entrance. The purpose of the gate is to block the entrance so horses cannot run out onto Wentworth.

Ride for a Cure at the Gibson Ranch

The final event for the Ride for a Cure event at the Gibson Ranch is scheduled for October 3, 2009. Valerie De La Cruz will contact Dale Gibson to see if ECORP/LADPW can put a display table at the event.

IV. Current Status of Programs (Discussion Deferred Until April 2010 Meeting)

1. Exotic Plant Eradication Program
2. Riparian Habitat Restoration
3. Exotic Wildlife Removal/Monitoring
4. Water Quality Analysis
5. Trail Restoration/Maintenance

V. Discuss and Schedule for the Next Trail Maintenance Day

Mari Quillman and Greg Benavides explained that there is a critical spawning period for native fish in Haines Creek (from mid to late spring to the end of July). This critical period precludes many activities in or near the creek so it was suggested that the Trails Maintenance Days be changed to a fall schedule. The next Trail Maintenance Day is scheduled on November 14, 2009 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Valerie De La Cruz discussed the fact that this event will be changed to the fall season to avoid impacts during the spring bird breeding season and the hot summer months. The CAC was very agreeable to changing the schedule for this event. Valerie De La Cruz stated that new flyers would be prepared and a backup date of November 21, 2009 was set aside in case of rain on November 14th. Greg Benavides stated that ECORP would translate the flyer into Spanish and both versions would be posted at the Gibson Ranch, at the

Big Tujunga site, and at local feed stores and etc. Valerie De La Cruz encouraged the CAC members to encourage equestrians to bring their horses to help take the trash to a centralized location. LADPW will provide trash bags, gloves, and snacks and ECORP will provide a tabletop booth with information on the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area.

VI. Schedule Next CAC Meeting

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 22, 2010 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Hansen Yard, 10179 Glen Oaks Boulevard, Sun Valley, CA 91352.

VII. Action Items

- ECORP will contact Andrea Gutman when the biologist will be going out to do public outreach again.
- ECORP will submit an article on the new public outreach efforts to Carol Roper for inclusion in the Shadow Hills Newsletter (Due Date September 25, 2009 and less than 200 words).
- The CAC Group determined that a representative from Lakeview Terrace should attend the CAC meetings. Terry Kaiser suggested Heidi Paul. He or Pat Davenport will contact her about attending the meetings.
- ECORP will modify the Spanish/English flyer to put the English descriptions before the Spanish translations.
- LADPW to reschedule trash pickup from the site on Mondays.
- Officer Wall will check to see if the San Fernando Rangers had a permit to sell alcohol for their September 20, 2009 poker ride.
- Terry Kaiser will contact Bill and Sheila Meers (San Fernando Rangers) to inform them about the need for an access permit if their poker rides go on the County property.
- LADPW will contact Dale Gibson about the need for an access permit on County property for the Ride for a Cure events.
- LADPW will contact Dale Gibson regarding setting up an information booth at the day of the Ride for a Cure events.
- LADPW (Chris Stone) and Pat Davenport will set up a meeting with LAPD Dispatch to clarify the procedures and information necessary to ensure police coverage on the County property.
- LADPW to check phone numbers on County signs and clarify who will be responsive to emergencies on the County property.
- Pat Davenport will call Chief Moore and then have a discussion with the San Fernando Rangers regarding the September 20, 2009 poker ride.
- LADPW will check into setting up an agreement with the Park Rangers to patrol the County property.
- ECORP/LADPW will begin formulating an equestrian focused flyer and then circulate that to the CAC members for review.
- LADPW will check with the company who cleans the portable toilets about throwing away new rolls of toilet paper.
- LADPW will remove the downed chain link fence on the east side of the ponds.
- Terry Kaiser will talk to Valerie De La Cruz about a permit to construct the internal gate at the Wheatland/Wentworth entrance.
- The CAC group will encourage equestrians to bring their horses out to haul trash during the Trails Maintenance Day. If anyone is interested, they should contact Valerie De La Cruz at (626) 458-6126.