

**Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Project  
Community Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
From the Thursday, April 26, 2012 Meeting  
At Hansen Yard**

**I. Welcome/Introduction**

Meeting attendance sign-in sheet attached.

**II. Review of Meeting Agenda**

Grace Yu reviewed the meeting agenda.

**III. Discussion of Action Items from the October 6, 2011 Meeting**

Action items from the last meeting were reviewed. Each action item is listed followed by the discussion about each item. New action items generated from the discussions are listed in section VIII.

- 1. ECORP may include an article about removal of Yucca flower stalks and other vegetation from the Mitigation Area in the spring 2012 Big T Wash Line Newsletter.** An article discussing the vegetation in the Mitigation Area was included in the spring 2012 newsletter. *This action item is now complete.*
- 2. Grace Yu will continue providing 40 copies of the newsletters to Terry Kaiser and 30 copies to Chris Arlington. She will also continue sending an electronic version to Mary Benson.** Copies of the newsletters were provided to Terry Kaiser and Chris Arlington at the spring Community Advisory Committee meeting. An electronic version was sent to Mary Benson. LACDPW will continue to provide hard copies to Mr. Kaiser and Ms. Arlington each time a newsletter is produced. *This item is now a standard practice and will be removed from the action item list.*
- 3. Grace Yu will send the Big Tujunga website link to Elektra Kruger and Terry Kaiser.** Cindy Rowlan (LACDPW) sent the website link to Ms. Kruger and Mr. Kaiser. CAC Members requested that the website link also be sent to Carlos George and Terri Ortiz. Grace Yu or Cindy Rowlan will send the link.
- 4. ECORP will include the Big Tujunga website address in the announcements section of the upcoming Big Tujunga Wash Line newsletter.** The Big Tujunga website address was included on the front and back of the spring newsletter and will continue to be included on the front and back of future newsletters. *This action item is now complete.*
- 5. ECORP will include an announcement in the spring 2012 Big Tujunga Wash Line newsletter that informs people that they can call Los Angeles County Sheriff's Dispatch if they see anyone in the Mitigation Area with paintball**

**guns and/or air rifles.** An announcement was included on page 4 of the spring newsletter. *This action item is now complete.*

- 6. Grace Yu will coordinate a tour of the Mitigation Area for County and City Officials. Councilmember Krekorian would like 10 people from his office to attend. Grace Yu will schedule through Mary Benson once the water lettuce removal is finished.** The water lettuce removal has been completed and Mary Benson expressed that a site visit would still be a nice invitation for City officials. The Mitigation Area will be redistricted from District 2 to District 7 within the City of Los Angeles. This will likely occur sometime after July 1, 2012, which will result in a new District 7 representative for the Mitigation Area. A site visit would be a great transition to meet the new City officials involved and to introduce them to the Mitigation Area. Grace Yu will send Mary Benson a list of possible dates that would work best for a site visit, which Ms. Benson will then forward to Councilmember Krekorian and coordinate between contacts in District 2 and District 7.
- 7. Ben Smith will provide Grace Yu with follow up photos of the problem trail at the north end of the Cottonwood area where equestrians are taking their horses down the steep hillside. Grace Yu will work with Flood Maintenance Division to determine a method to close that trail.** Photographs were provided to LACDPW and Flood Maintenance installed a barrier across the lower shortcut trail. However, the upper shortcut trail has not been blocked. This trail is a safety concern because there is metal debris sticking out of the side of the slope. Grace Yu will work with Flood Maintenance to determine a method to discourage riders from using the upper shortcut.
- 8. Grace Yu will check on the correct phone number people should call for dog problems in the Mitigation Area.** Sergeant Caffrey from Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department stated that issues with loose dogs in the Mitigation Area should be reported to the Sheriff's Department dispatch [(800) 834-0064] and dispatch will coordinate with animal control to address the issue. *This action item is now complete.*
- 9. Grace Yu will follow-up with Officer Larios by email to ask the officers who patrol on ATVs to shut off their vehicles when approaching equestrians on the trails. In addition, she will ask him to remind his officers to talk to the riders as they approach so the horses recognize them as people.** Officer Larios has been reassigned. LACDPW contacted Officer Larios's supervisor and the patrol team has been notified. Grace Yu also reminded the Los Angeles Police Department, the County Sheriff's Department, and County Animal Control that motorized vehicles are not allowed in the Mitigation Area, except in emergency situations. *This action item is now complete.*
- 10. ECORP will notify Grace Yu about the date of the next maintenance event in the Mitigation Area. Grace Yu will send a notification to the community about when the crews will be on site.** A notification was sent out prior to site maintenance activities. *This action item is now complete.*
- 11. Mari Quillman will email the article about why trees and vegetation should not be cut during the bird breeding season to Grace Yu. Valerie De La Cruz**

**will review the article and then forward it to Chris Arlington for the SHPOA newsletter and an email blast to the SHPOA members. The article will also be provided to Terry Kaiser so he can send them it to the ETI members.** The article was sent to Valerie De La Cruz in 2011. No action was taken by LACDPW at the time. ECORP will resend the article to Grace Yu in the fall of 2012.

**12. ECORP will prepare text for an email blast (in English and Spanish) to the SHPOA and ETI members about the importance of staying on the trails in the Mitigation Area. ECORP will provide the text to LACDPW for review and then Grace Yu will provide it to Chris Arlington and Terry Kaiser.** It was decided that ECORP will provide Chris Arlington and Terry Kaiser with electronic copies of the Spanish/English information brochure.

**13. Grace Yu will continue following up with Vector Control to find out additional information about the schedule for mosquito treatment within the Mitigation Area.** LACDPW contact at Vector Control has retired. Wesley Collins is the new contact for the Mitigation Area. A mosquito treatment in the Mitigation Area was conducted late last summer. Mr. Collins will email Cindy Rowlan prior to each mosquito/vector control treatment conducted at the Mitigation Area. People are encouraged to notify Grace Yu or Cindy Rowlan if they are noticing mosquito infestations in the Mitigation Area. Several CAC members did state that the mosquitoes are just now starting to be a problem so Cindy Rowlan will notify vector control to schedule a treatment in the Mitigation Area.

**14. Grace Yu will coordinate a meeting on site with Andrea Gutman or Terry Kaiser regarding graffiti abatement.** Cindy Rowlan provided information regarding the online Graffiti Hotline where people can report graffiti. Grace Yu stated that when reporting graffiti at the Mitigation Area on the online form, it is important that the "flood control" option be checked in order for LA County to address the request within the Mitigation Area. If "property" or "residence" is checked, then the online request will be denied, as those areas are serviced by the City's graffiti abatement team. *This action item is now complete.*

**15. ECORP will send the text of an email blast to Grace Yu that reminds the equestrians and other site users to report mosquito infestations and trail problems. In addition, the email blast will include the graffiti hotline number.** This action item was completed in 2011 but the CAC group decided it would be worthwhile to send another email blast out about reporting trails issues and downed trees. ECORP will send the text for a new email blast to Grace Yu for review and then Grace Yu or Cindy Rowlan will send the email out to the people on the email list.

**16. ECORP will follow-up with Terry Kaiser to see if he is still willing to provide GPS data for the minor trails through the Mitigation Area.** LACDPW will initiate a contract to survey all the trails within the Mitigation Area for an updated map. ETI has already begun tracking the minor trails within the Mitigation Area with GPS equipment and is able to send the data to LACDPW. LACDPW will provide the data to ECORP so the minor trails can be incorporated into the trails map for the Mitigation Area. Grace Yu will work with ECORP to have a biologist walk the minor trails in the Mitigation Area to assess them for biological resources.

**17. LACDPW will decide if they want to move forward with installing trails signs that indicate open and closed trails and directions. If requested, ECORP will provide LACDPW with information on where the Bureau of Land Management has their trails signs fabricated.** This item will be initiated once the official trails map has been updated with minor trails.

**18. Grace Yu and Cindy Rowlan will check into creating a certificate of community service for kids who help out with the trails cleanup day in the Mitigation Area. Grace Yu will send an email to Mary Benson and Elektra Kruger announcing the program and will include an indemnification form for parents to sign if kids are under the age of 18. Mary Benson and Elektra Kruger will forward the announcement to Sunland Tujunga Village Christian School, Sun Valley High School, and other applicable organizations.** This action item could not be completed prior to the 2011 Trails Maintenance Day but LACDPW may be able to do this prior to the 2012 Trails Maintenance Day. Mary Benson will get an example certificate from Heal the Bay and send it to Grace Yu. Grace Yu will follow-up internally in LACDPW.

#### **IV. New Discussion Items**

##### **1. Site Security Issues**

Sergeant Caffrey from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department was present at the meeting and discussed the current safety issues at the Mitigation Area. Sergeant Caffrey reported the following facts to the CAC group:

- The Sheriff's Department has 10,000 sworn deputies throughout 26 stations serving LA County, including one office at Whittier Narrows, one station in Castaic, and one in South LA;
- They recently took over Los Angeles County Office of Public Safety (OPS);
- They have unlimited resources to address emergencies; however, due to the remote nature of the Mitigation Area, it may take time for deputies to show up at the site;
- The Sheriff's Department patrols all County Parks throughout Los Angeles County but they do not patrol the City Parks (only portions of Hanson Dam area are under the authority of the Sheriff's Department);
- Call the phone number for the Sheriff's Department dispatch on the back of the newsletter to report any problems (1-800-834-0064). When you are on the phone with dispatch, explain your location with reference to the Tujunga Ponds because that is the only point of reference the Sheriff's Department has for the Mitigation Area. If it is a minor issue, they will send a deputy over if there is already one in the area;
- The only address that the Sheriff's Department dispatch has for the Mitigation Area is I-210 and Wentworth;
- The Sheriff's Department does not work very closely with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD);
- The Sheriff's Department does have a mounted patrol that they can dispatch, if needed;

- If there is a special event planned in the Mitigation Area, notify Sergeant Caffrey and he will be able to send deputies there to patrol, either mounted or on foot; and,
- There is a newly-formed off-road enforcement team that will also be able to respond to calls within the Mitigation Area.

Chris Arlington reported some issues she ran into while trying to report safety issues at the Mitigation Area (people with paintball guns, teenagers using weapons, and etc.) and asked for clarification on who patrols certain areas in and around the Mitigation Area. Cindy Rowlan stated that there was a plan in place (with regard to who patrols what portions of the Mitigation Area), but now it seems like we are back at square one, with questions as to who patrols the Mitigation Area. Sergeant Caffrey stated that the Mitigation Area is still a "gray area" in terms of the Sheriff's Department's jurisdiction, however, they will definitely be responding if there is a severe emergency. Ms. Rowlan requested a contact at the Sheriff's Department that the CAC can direct questions to. Also, LACDPW would like to give the Sheriff's Department maps of the Mitigation Area to aid dispatch in telling the deputies where the issue is happening. Sergeant Caffrey said it is also important for whoever calls dispatch to leave their cell phone number when reporting something so the deputy responding to the call can contact the person directly to ask for the person's exact location.

The Sheriff's Department has Cat 30 keys to access the Mitigation Area. It was requested that the road into the Mitigation Area at the North Wheatland entrance be smoothed out to allow easier access for patrol vehicles. If there is an emergency, the newly formed off-road enforcement team can use off-road vehicles to access areas within the Mitigation Area. The off-road vehicles, however, will not be used for regular patrols to be consistent with the rules and regulations of the Mitigation Area.

Chris Arlington, who is now a member of the Foothill Mounted Patrol Association will email their patrol reports to Sergeant Caffrey and he will forward them on to his mounted patrols.

The Sheriff's Department would like to know about all events occurring in and around the Mitigation Area. They may not be able to send deputies to patrol, but they would like to know anyway. Grace Yu mentioned that when a permit is requested for an organized event occurring in and/or around the Mitigation Area, then LACDPW will forward the information to the Sheriff's Department for notification.

## **2. Gate at South Wheatland Entrance**

Terry Kaiser is continuing to investigate the construction of a new one-way gate at the South Wheatland entrance to the Mitigation Area for horse and rider safety purposes. Mr. Kaiser was able to get \$5,000 approved by the neighborhood council. His original design is more expensive than the funds that he has so he is in the process of redesigning the project and getting 2 bids for the construction. While looking for a way to construct the gate in place, Mr. Kaiser found that there is a 20- to 30-foot drop off just north and inside of the South Wheatland entrance that is covered by vegetation. This drop off could be very dangerous if a horse or person stepped through the bushes at this location. Mr. Kaiser suggested that the existing fence be replaced or repaired to prevent horses or people from venturing into the area where the drop off is located.

LACDPW and ECORP will look into this issue. If a more stable fence is erected at that location, then Mr. Kaiser's design for the one-way gate can incorporate the fence in the design and this would lower the costs associated with constructing the one-way gate.

### **3. Mitigation Area Permits for Organized Events**

The need for permits to authorize organized events within the Mitigation Area was discussed. LACDPW needs to be aware of all events in and around the Mitigation Area to maintain the site's function for mitigation purposes. LACDPW views the permits as having three functions; 1) to protect the site and its purpose as a mitigation area, 2) to protect users of the site, and 3) to notify LACDPW about events occurring in the Mitigation Area. LACDPW is most concerned about the recreational users that are unaware of the site's purpose as a mitigation area. Once LACDPW receives the permit application, they will then forward the event information to the Sheriff's Department so they are aware of the event(s). A question was raised about the number of riders that would constitute the need for a permit; oftentimes, groups of riders will run into each other on the trails and ride together, but it was never intended on being an organized riding event. LACDPW said these types of occurrences do not need a permit. Additionally, individual riders riding through the Mitigation Area to attend an organized event outside of the Mitigation Area boundaries do not need a permit either. Only the event organizers need to apply for the permit. LACDPW will also look into a rider threshold number that would warrant the need for a permit.

The Mayor's Good Food Day was a success this year; a permit was requested from LACDPW prior to the event. Chris Arlington mentioned that monthly Charro events are held at the Hansen Dam Equestrian Center. She will forward the information on these events to Mari Quillman. LACDPW will decide whether or not to have a Spanish-speaking biologist at some of these events to educate the Spanish-speaking riders about the purpose of the Mitigation Area.

## **V. Current Status of Programs**

### **Exotic Plant Removal**

A large exotic plant removal effort was conducted a few weeks ago. Due to breeding bird issues in the upland area, removal activities were not conducted in certain areas. These areas will be addressed during the next major exotic plant removal effort. Additionally, due to high rainfall amounts experienced recently, an increasing number of exotic plants have been observed. Natures Image will be out at the site again to conduct a removal effort prior to the vegetation monitoring studies this spring.

### **Exotic Aquatic Wildlife Species Removal**

An exotic aquatic wildlife species removal effort will be conducted in the Mitigation Area within the next couple weeks.

### **Sensitive Species Surveys**

The first of five arroyo toad surveys was conducted on Monday, April 23, 2012. Arroyo toads were not observed or detected. The first of eight least Bell's vireo surveys will be conducted on Monday, April 30, 2012. Southwestern willow flycatcher surveys will begin in May.

### **Water Quality Monitoring**

Water quality monitoring was conducted in March 2012. Results were the same as in previous years; no changes in water quality at the Mitigation Area were documented. Results of the water quality monitoring were included in the 2011 Annual Report for the Mitigation Area.

### **Trails**

The eroded trail adjacent to Big Tujunga Wash at the western edge of the Mitigation Area has been repaired and is now safe for users. It is unclear as to who performed the maintenance; possibly LA County Department of Parks and Recreation.

There was concern with a severely undermined trail near where the haul road goes under the 210 freeway. Due to safety concerns, this trail needs to be investigated and modified as soon as possible. LACDPW and ECORP will assess the problem and determine a method to either repair or close the trail in question. It appears that this trail might be within the Caltrans District 7 right-of-way. Grace Yu will check on whether or not this trail is located within an easement that LACDPW has in the area near the 210 freeway.

Other trails issues were also discussed, including the "sink hole" area at one of the creek crossings. Flood Maintenance Division blocked the trail to the "sink hole." ECORP's Biologists will conduct a site visit to check out the trail closure at the crossing.

### **Community Outreach**

The CAC members stated that they thought the community outreach program utilizing the Spanish-speaking biologist has been very successful. Trash has been greatly reduced within the Mitigation Area. LACDPW will continue this program during the summer of 2012.

## **VI. Discuss and Schedule for the Next Trail Maintenance Day**

The next Trail Maintenance Day is scheduled on September 29, 2012 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. The event will be cancelled if rain is forecasted. An alternate day of October 13 or 20, 2012 may be utilized if the event is cancelled. LACDPW will provide trash bags, gloves, water, and snacks.

## **VII. Schedule Next CAC Meeting**

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 27, 2012, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Hansen Yard, 10179 Glen Oaks Boulevard, Sun Valley, California, 91352.

## **VIII. Action Items**

1. Grace Yu (LACDPW) will send the Mitigation Area website link to Carlos George and Terri Ortiz.
2. Grace Yu will send Mary Benson a list of possible dates for a tour of the Mitigation Area for County and City Officials and Mary Benson will forward it on to Councilmember Krekorian's office. Mary Benson will also coordinate between District 2 and District 7.
3. Grace Yu will work with Flood Control to determine a method for blocking the steep upper shortcut trail at the end of the Cottonwood Avenue area where the metal debris is sticking out of the side of the slope.
4. Mari Quillman (ECORP) will resend the article about trimming trees in the fall as opposed to other seasons to Grace Yu. Grace Yu will review it and then send it to Chris Arlington for the SHPOA newsletter and an email blast to SHPOA members. In addition, Grace Yu will also provide the article to Terry Kaiser so he can send it to ETI members.
5. Mari Quillman will provide Chris Arlington and Terry Kaiser with electronic copies of the English/Spanish Information Brochure.
6. Cindy Rowlan (LACDPW) will notify Vector Control to schedule a treatment for mosquitoes at the Mitigation Area.
7. Mari Quillman will send Grace Yu the text for a follow-up email blast that alerts site users about staying on the trails and reporting problems like downed trees on the trails. Grace Yu or Cindy Rowlan will review it and then send it out to the recipients on the email list.
8. Grace Yu will assess the need for open and closed trails signs once the new trails map is completed. If the signs are deemed necessary, then ECORP will provide Grace Yu with the information on where the Bureau of Land Management has their trails signs fabricated.
9. Mary Benson will provide Grace Yu with a community service certificate from Heal the Bay to use as potential template for a community service certificate that can be utilized for student volunteers at the Trails Maintenance Day. Grace Yu will follow up internally with LACDPW.
10. Grace Yu or Cindy Rowlan will provide the Sheriff's Department Dispatch with maps of the Mitigation Area to aid deputies when responding to calls in the Mitigation Area.
11. Grace Yu will coordinate with Flood Maintenance Division about blading or smoothing the access road in from the North Wheatland entrance in order to provide easier access into the Mitigation Area for the Sheriff's Department and LAPD.



12. Grace Yu and Mari Quillman will meet with Flood Maintenance Division and Terry Kaiser at the south Wheatland entrance to look at the location where the fence needs to be replaced or repaired.
13. Chris Arlington will send Mari Quillman info about the Charro get-togethers. LACDPW will decide whether or not to send a bilingual biologist to these events as an outreach activity.
14. Grace Yu will coordinate with Flood Maintenance Division about the problem trail near where the haul road goes under the 210 freeway. Grace Yu will also determine whether this trail issue is within the Caltrans right-of-way or if it is within a LACDPW easement. The trail is a safety issue that needs to be taken care of soon. An alternative solution was offered by Terry Kaiser. Terry Kaiser will report back to Grace Yu and/or Mari Quillman on the status of the trail problem.
15. Grace Yu or Cindy Rowlan will update the Mitigation Area website with the new water quality monitoring results from most recent monitoring study.