

**Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Project
Community Advisory Committee
2015 Spring Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2015**

I. Welcome/Introduction

Meeting attendance sign-in sheet attached.

II. Review of Meeting Agenda

Grace Yu (County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works [LACDPW]) reviewed the meeting agenda.

III. Discussion of Action Items from the April 24, 2014 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 VII.

- 1. LACDPW will discuss the possibility of moving the Trail Cleanup Day to a late summer date with ECORP.** Trail Cleanup Day was canceled the last two years due to decreased debris accumulation resulting from existing drought conditions. In addition, trash pick-up and other problem areas are regularly addressed during maintenance efforts and privately-organized community cleanup events conducted on the site. Therefore, a Trail Cleanup Day is not scheduled for this year. The need for a Trail Cleanup Day will be assessed annually. *This action item is complete, but will be an ongoing task.*
- 2. ECORP will send the locations and coordinates of the homeless encampments found in the Mitigation Area to LACDPW.** ECORP sent the locations and coordinates to LACDPW and will continue to report homeless encampments. *This action item is complete, but will be an ongoing task.*
- 3. LACDPW will work with ECORP and CDFW to renew the Streambed Alteration Agreement.** LACDPW, ECORP, and CDFW are still working closely on this item. *This action item is an ongoing task.*
- 4. Grace Yu will inform the CAC of the rescheduled community walk with Councilmember Felipe Fuentes.** The community walk with Councilmember Felipe Fuentes took place on May 31, 2014. The community walk was a success. *This action item is complete.*
- 5. ECORP will schedule a trails visit in the coming weeks to assess the undercut trail in near the South Wheatland Entrance. They will contact Terry Kaiser to confirm the exact location of the issue.** *This action item is complete.*

6. **LACDPW will work with Mary Benson to provide GIS data for the trail system at the Mitigation Area.** *This action item is complete.*
7. **ECORP will confirm with its biologists if yucca stalks are being cut before they flower or after they have dried up.** Yucca stalks appear to be cut before flowering, according to ECORP biologists. *This action item is complete.*

IV. Ongoing and New Discussion Items

1. Site and Security Issues

- A map of the incidents that have occurred in the Mitigation Area since the last CAC meeting was distributed. This map will continue to be updated prior to each CAC meeting and distributed at the meeting to inform the community about homeless encampments and other site issues within the Mitigation Area. Heather Driscoll, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (LADPR), said that LADPR is currently keeping track of incidents reported on their properties. LACDPW, ECORP, and LADPR will work together to combine the reported incidents from both properties. The incident map will be included with the meeting minutes that are posted to the Mitigation Area website to notify site users of safety concerns.
- Terry Kaiser, a local resident, observed a fire outside the Mitigation Area associated with a homeless encampment during the week of April 20, 2015. The fire was approximately one acre in size and Mr. Kaiser called the Fire Department. Fire issues have been abundant lately and are expected to be problematic this year with the current drought conditions. Fires associated with homeless encampments are becoming a more serious safety concern. One idea to help the site users become more aware of the issue is to coordinate with the group that has posted the laminated bilingual “no trash” signs at the site and see if they would post similar signs to discourage fire building. Mr. Kaiser knows the group and is willing to coordinate with them if “no fire” signs are provided.
- Identifying and removing homeless encampments is an ongoing task. The camps are getting elaborate and are very well hidden from the trails. Locations of homeless encampments are regularly reported to LACDPW so they can send crews to remove the encampments. Typically, a notice is posted in the area of the encampment that allows sufficient time for the occupants to voluntarily relocate. After allotted timeframe ends, LACDPW cleans the encampment out with assistance of local law enforcement. Ms. Driscoll has worked with homeless people in the past and has offered to help with the situation if needed.
- Ms. Driscoll reported observing an equestrian galloping at unsafe speeds through the Mitigation Area recently.
- Ms. Driscoll requested an update on the proposed fish screen installation project. The fish screen would be installed at the outlet of the West Tujunga Pond to prevent exotic fish species from entering Haines Canyon Creek. The

application for the Endangered Species Act Section 6 grant was not awarded that year; therefore, the project was put on hold. A new grant application can be submitted since the grant program is refunded every year. But, the fish screen would not be on LACDPW property. The project would need to be proposed by LADPR.

- Major trail obstructions have been reported just outside of the Mitigation Area boundary. Recreational site users should be aware of the safety issues if they travel off the Mitigation Area parcel.

2. Public Education Opportunities

The 2014 public hike with Councilmember Felipe Fuentes was such a success that there is an increased interest in hosting more public hikes or educational outreach opportunities at the Mitigation Area. Mr. Kaiser will provide Ms. Yu's business card to the new Area Director to allow for continued coordination between City Council District 7 and LACDPW.

There was additional interest in contacting the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts for educational outreach opportunities at the Mitigation Area. Ms. Driscoll will contact the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to gauge interest for education opportunities.

3. Mountain Bikers

Mr. Kaiser reported that there have been mountain bike races in the area scheduled one day per week for eight weeks. The signs at Hansen Dam have been taken down, so law enforcement cannot enforce the codes that prohibit mountain bike riding on the trails at Hansen Dam. Mr. Kaiser has observed mountain bike tracks recently at the Mitigation Area, entering the Mitigation Area from Foothill Boulevard near the church or under the Foothill Boulevard Bridge by the golf course.

4. Mosquitos

ECORP biologists observed mosquitos in the Haines Canyon Creek area during a survey in April. The observation was reported to Los Angeles County Vector Control. During a survey on April 27, 2015, ECORP biologists observed two vector control traps in the Mitigation Area. Mosquitos carrying dengue fever have not been found in the area, but the mosquito species *known to carry* dengue fever has recently been identified at the Tujunga Ponds. Residents are encouraged to report mosquito infestations at the Mitigation Area to Vector Control via their reporting website (www.glacvcd.org/Contact/Service-Request.aspx).

5. Drought Conditions

There was some concern that water levels in Haines Canyon Creek would be affected by the current drought conditions. The water in Haines Canyon Creek comes from water exiting from the West Tujunga Pond, which is fed by an underground spring, so ECORP does not expect the water levels in the creek to be substantially affected by the drought conditions. ECORP's aquatic biologists monitor water flow rates in the creek during exotic wildlife removal efforts, so they will monitor flow rates and report any changes detected.

V. Current Status of Programs

1. Exotic Plant Eradication Program

The first effort was conducted between April 1 and 15, 2015. Next effort is scheduled for summer 2015. Site maintenance will also be conducted at this time (trail cleanup, trash pick-up, etc.)

2. Water Lettuce Control/Monitoring

Water lettuce has not been observed in the Tujunga Ponds since August 2013. The Tujunga Ponds are monitored regularly for presence of water lettuce.

3. Exotic Wildlife Removal/Monitoring

The first aquatic wildlife removal effort was conducted from March 23 to 26, 2015. The second of four efforts will occur May 12 through 15, 2015. Female and male Mozambique tilapia (5 total) were observed during the first removal effort in March 2015. No evidence of breeding observed yet, but there is concern that the potential for this species to breed is present. The tilapia situation will continue to be monitored by ECORP.

4. Water quality monitoring

Results were normal for 2014 water quality sampling on site. The next water quality monitoring will be conducted in October/November 2015.

5. Focused Surveys

Focused wildlife surveys have been tentatively scheduled for 2015.

- Riparian bird (least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher) started on April 23, 2015 and will continue through July 16, 2015.
- Arroyo toad surveys started on March 19, 2015 and will continue through June 15, 2015.
- Two native fish surveys will be conducted between May 18, 2015 and October 6, 2015.

Least Bell's vireo have been reported downstream of the Mitigation Area in the past. ECORP will find out if focused surveys for least Bell's vireo are being conducted at Hansen Dam this year. ECORP will also search the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), a database published and maintained by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), to see where the closest least Bell's vireo observation has occurred in relation to the Mitigation Area.

6. Brown-headed cowbird Trapping

The trapping for 2015 began on April 1 and will continue through June 30. All four traps were placed in the same locations as previous years throughout the Mitigation Area. In 2014 and 2013, Trap #2 was not as successful as in previous years, likely due to decreasing cowbird populations and the overall success of the program. It may be beneficial to relocate the Trap #2. ECORP will find out why Trap #2 was placed in the same location despite low success rate. There was some discussion about brown-headed cowbird trapping downstream of the Mitigation Area in Hansen Dam. ECORP will find out how many traps were placed in Hansen Dam this year.

7. Trails Restoration/Maintenance

The last trails assessment site visit was conducted on March 31, 2015. Problem areas identified included unauthorized trails, poison oak encroachment on trails, narrowed trails from vegetation overgrowth, rock dams in Haines Canyon Creek, and fallen trees. ECORP biologists worked with their landscaping contractor to address the site and trail maintenance issues. The next trails assessment site visit is scheduled for summer 2015.

8. Public Outreach Program

The public outreach program will be starting on Memorial Day weekend. ECORP's bilingual biologists will conduct weekend site visits throughout the summer (and on holiday weekends) to speak with equestrian and non-equestrian site users. Ms. Driscoll requested that ECORP send her and Debbie Pepe (LADPR) the schedule of weekend outreaches so that LADPR can coordinate outreach efforts on the same weekends.

VI. Schedule Next CAC Meeting

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 28, 2016, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Hansen Yard, 10179 Glen Oaks Boulevard, Sun Valley, California 91352.

VII. New Action Items

1. LACDPW, ECORP, and LADPR will work together to combine the reported incidents from both the Mitigation Area and the Tujunga Ponds properties.
2. The updated incident map will be included in the CAC meeting minutes that are posted to the Mitigation Area website to notify site users of safety concerns.
3. Mr. Kaiser will provide Ms. Yu's business card to the new Area Director to allow for continued coordination between City Council District 7 and LACDPW.
4. LADPR will contact Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to see if they are interested in educational outreach opportunities at the Mitigation Area.
5. ECORP's aquatic biologists will monitor the water flow rates of Haines Canyon Creek and report any changes detected.
6. ECORP will find out if least Bell's vireo surveys are being conducted downstream of the Mitigation Area. ECORP will also search CDFW's CNDDDB to determine where the closest least Bell's vireo observation has been reported in relation to the Mitigation Area.
7. ECORP will find out why brown-headed cowbird Trap #2 was kept in the same location for 2015 despite low trapping success in 2014 and 2013. ECORP will also find out how many traps have been placed at Hansen Dam.
8. ECORP will send the schedule of weekend bilingual outreach site visits to LADPR so they can coordinate outreach efforts.