

**Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Project
Community Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
From the Thursday, October 6, 2011 Meeting
At Hansen Yard**

I. Welcome/Introduction

Meeting attendance sign-in sheet attached.

II. Review of Meeting Agenda

Valerie De La Cruz reviewed the meeting agenda.

III. Discussion of Action Items from the April 28, 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. Sergeant Nikolof stated that he will send the information about the Bail Schedule to Valerie De La Cruz by email.

Valerie De La Cruz has followed up with an e-mail but has not heard back from Sergeant Nikolof.

2. Sergeant Nikolof will check on why there were no officers available when Chris Arlington reported people with beer walking towards the Tujunga Ponds on November 14, 2010 around 11:00 am.

Valerie De La Cruz has followed up with an e-mail but has not heard back from Sergeant Nikolof.

3. ECORP may include an article about removal of Yucca flower stalks and other vegetation from the Mitigation Area in the September Big T Wash Line Newsletter.

This article will be included in the spring 2012 newsletter when the plants are blooming.

4. Valerie De La Cruz will provide 40 copies of the April 2011 newsletter to Terry Kaiser and 30 copies to Chris Arlington. She will also send an electronic version to Mary Benson.

Valerie De La Cruz provided the copies and Elektra Kruger of Shadow Hills Property Owners Association was able to obtain copies from Chris Arlington. Valerie will continue to provide copies upon request.

5. Chris Arlington will distribute the April 2011 newsletters to other Shadow Hills Property Owners Association (SHPOA) affiliates.

Chris Arlington distributed the copies.

- 6. Terry Kaiser will correct the LACDPW web link he added to the ETI website. Valerie De La Cruz will add the ETI link to the LACDPW community website (www.eticorral20.com).**

ETI link currently leads to the broader LACDPW website. Valerie De La Cruz will send the Big Tujunga link to Terry Kaiser and Elektra Kruger.

- 7. ECORP will include an announcement in the September Big T 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.**

This announcement will be included in the spring 2012 newsletter.

- 8. Valerie De La Cruz will coordinate a tour of the Mitigation Area for County and City Officials.**

Grace Yu will schedule a site tour for County and City officials through Mary Benson of the City of Los Angeles, District 2. The tour will be scheduled after the water lettuce removal is completed. Ten staff members from Councilmember Krekorian's office will likely attend.

- 9. Greg Benavides will provide Valerie De La Cruz with a photo of the problem trail at the north end of the Cottonwood area where equestrians are taking their horses down the steep hillside. Valerie De La Cruz will work with Flood Maintenance Division to determine a method to close that trail. Terry Kaiser stated that he would be willing to help with a design for the closure.**

Ben Smith of ECORP will follow up with this item and will send photos to Valerie De La Cruz and Grace Yu.

- 10. Officer Larios (County Animal Care and Control) will notify Valerie De La Cruz two weeks prior to when LA County Animal Care and Control will be doing an enforcement sweep through the Mitigation Area. Valerie De La Cruz will then send out a notification to the community about the scheduled date.**

Valerie De La Cruz has not received notice or a response to a follow up e-mail to Officer Larios. The best assumption is that these sweeps have not occurred within the Big T Mitigation Area.

- 11. Officer Larios will tell his officers to shut off their ATVs when approaching equestrians on the trail and to make sure the officers talk to the riders.**

Valerie De La Cruz will follow up with Officer Larios via e-mail and will notify Elektra Kruger.

- 12. ECORP's Biological Monitors will direct the Natures Image crews to target the poison oak and Italian thistle that is encroaching on the trails.**

This was done during the exotic removal effort in September 2011.

13. ECORP will notify Valerie De La Cruz about the date of the next maintenance event in the Mitigation Area. Valerie will send a notification to the community about when the crews will be on site.

ECORP notified LACDPW and will continue to notify when these events will occur. LACDPW passes the notices on to the various email recipients.

14. ECORP will prepare an article about why trees and vegetation should not be cut during the bird breeding season and they will prepare text for an email addressing the same subject. These will be provided to Valerie De La Cruz for review and then they will be provided to Chris Arlington for the SHPOA newsletter and email blast to the SHPOA members. These will also be provided to Terry Kaiser so he can send them out to the ETI members.

ECORP prepared an article and sent it to Valerie De La Cruz and Cindy Rowlan at LACDPW. Article will be reviewed and distributed appropriately.

15. 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 prior to sending it to Chris Arlington and Terry Kaiser.

ECORP is in the process of preparing the text for the email blast. It will be provided to LACDPW for review and distribution.

16. Greg Benavides will provide specific training to Natures Image's crews regarding the proper behavior when they encounter a horse and rider during their maintenance activities.

Greg Benavides did provide the training to Natures Image's crews and the crews have since been exhibiting appropriate behavior when encountering equestrians.

17. Greg Benavides will determine when the next equestrian event will occur at Gabrielino Park and he will provide that information to Valerie De La Cruz. LACDPW and ECORP will then discuss the possibility of conducting outreach at that event. LACDPW and ECORP will also discuss possible outreach to the large groups of equestrians who gather on the weekends at the feed store on Sheldon Street.

Greg Benavides was not able to find a schedule of events occurring at Gabrielino Park. According to Mary Benson, Hansen Dam Equestrian Center is a more likely location for events and she will e-mail a schedule to Mari Quillman at ECORP. Greg Benavides did provide the English/Spanish information flier to the Sheldon Street tack store so it would be available to the equestrians. Mary Benson suggested putting the flier up at the liquor store across the street so the dog walkers would see it. ECORP will provide the fliers to the liquor store during the next public outreach visit.

18. Valerie De La Cruz will contact Vector Control to find out additional information about the aerial treatment that is planned in May.

Valerie De La Cruz called and left a message with Vector Control but she did not hear back from them. She assumes the aerial treatment was completed. ECORP will provide

the text for an email blast that will include asking site users to report mosquito infestations and problems with the trail. The email blast will also include the graffiti hotline number.

- 19. Valerie De La Cruz will contact the graffiti abatement group and get them out there to do graffiti removals. The primary targeted areas are the following: near the north Wheatland entrance, along the Haul road, and along the road that leads to the ponds (under the 210 freeway). Graffiti can be reported to the Graffiti Hotline by calling (800) 675-4357 (option 2) or by visiting www.dpw.lacounty.gov and follow the "Stop Graffiti" link.**

Valerie De La Cruz will coordinate a meeting on site with Andrea Gutman or Terry Kaiser to complete this item.

- 20. ECORP will coordinate with Terry Kaiser to look at the potential cult sign located near the north Wheatland entrance. Following the site visit, ECORP will provide Valerie De La Cruz with photos and a suggestion for methods to remove the sign.**

Greg Benavides met with Terry Kaiser to look at the sign and they removed it while they were there.

- 21. LACDPW will discuss the possibility of putting on a vegetation trimming workshop for equestrians and other site users who hike the trails.**

A workshop will be tentatively scheduled for spring 2012.

- 22. Terry Kaiser volunteered to use his GPS unit to map the locations of all of the minor trails used by equestrians. If he has time to do the mapping, then he will provide the GPS data to ECORP so it can be incorporated into the trails map.**

ECORP has not heard from Terry Kaiser regarding this task. ECORP will follow up with Terry Kaiser to see if he is still willing to provide GPS data of the minor trails in the Mitigation Area.

- 23. LACDPW will decide if they want to go forward with installing trails signs that indicate open and closed trails and directions. If necessary, ECORP will provide LACDPW with information on where the Bureau of Land Management has their trails signs fabricated.**

ECORP provided photographs of the signs used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to mark trails in open areas on BLM lands. Mari provided sample sign photo. LACDPW will discuss whether or not to put trails signs in the Mitigation Area.

- 24. ECORP's Biological Monitor will direct the Natures Image crews to pick up the old habitat restoration area signs when they conduct the next maintenance event at the site.**

ECORP will follow up to make sure that the signs are removed.

25. Terry Kaiser will fill out a construction permit application on the County's website for the internal gate at the south Wheatland entrance and he will provide his proposed design. Valerie De La Cruz will notify Terry Kaiser whom to contact in the County's Construction Division about the proposed gate.

LACDPW has not yet received a permit application from Terry Kaiser for the proposed gate installation.

26. Valerie will check into the possibility of LACDPW offering a signed certificate to kids who help out with the trails cleanup day in the Mitigation Area. Officer Larrios will send Valerie De La Cruz information on the ROP's community service hours certification program.

Valerie De La Cruz has not yet received information from Officer Larrios. Elektra Kruger and Mary Benson will forward an email to Sunland Tujunga Village Christian School and Sun Valley High School. The email will need to include an indemnification form for parents of children under 18 to sign.

27. LACDPW will provide an email notification about the October Trails Maintenance Day to the community approximately two weeks before the scheduled date of October 15, 2011 with an alternative date being October 22, 2011.

The trails maintenance day schedule has changed and now the maintenance day is planned for November 5, 2011.

IV. New Discussion Items

Animal Safety Issues

A horseback rider on the haul road was recently attacked, but not injured, by a pitbull and Doberman that, although leashed, escaped from their owner. It was reported that two pitbulls formerly running loose in the Mitigation Area were captured by Animal Control.

Homeless Issues

Los Angeles skid row homeless people obtained an injunction on June 23 against LAPD confiscating and destroying their property. Homeless people in the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area and ponds formerly received a two week notice to vacate. Right now LAPD is not conducting homeless interventions. According to Mary Benson, approximately 70-80 homeless people live in Big Tujunga Wash. Councilmember Krekorian is working with authorities and charitable groups to offer services to the homeless. A homeless connect day offering health assessments, flu shots, and a place to sleep is planned for sometime before the end of the year. Usually only about 10% of the homeless people come out for these events. The Tamayo property, located on the north side of the Mitigation Area, and an area between I-210 and Kristy Street have encountered homeless encampments. Property violations, such as unsightly trash or allowing homeless encampments on a private parcel, are set to change from a misdemeanor to an infraction that carries a fine. Valerie will try to

coordinate with CALTRANS to fix the hole in their fence on the north side of the west Tujunga pond because it is being used as a travel path between Caltrans' property and the Mitigation Area.

Staff Change at LACDPW

Valerie De La Cruz will be moving to another assignment within LACDPW and Grace Yu will transition into the project manager position during the next couple months for the Big Tujunga Mitigation Area.

V. Current Status of Programs

Exotic Plant Removal

Exotic plant species removal activities were conducted between September 12 and 20, 2011. The work crew consisted of ten men the first day followed by five men for the remainder of the removal period. In addition, ECORP's monitoring biologists, Ben Smith and Phil Wasz, conducted the full time monitoring during the exotic plant removals. The bulk of the plants removed from the Mitigation Area consisted of arundo, castor bean, and tree of heaven. Most of the Tree of Heaven plants were seedlings or saplings, although one large tree was killed by girdling it. Tamarisk, a potentially invasive non-native plant, was removed from along Big Tujunga Wash. Non-native plants that will require additional treatment include: African fountain grass that is currently dormant and needs to be treated with herbicide during its active growth period in the spring and early summer; annual weeds, such as summer mustard, that will germinate in the spring; and any arundo that re-sprouts from removal areas or that washes in during winter floods. Non-native Umbrella sedge, which occurs throughout the riparian area, is not as invasive or harmful to native habitat as many of the other non-native species that were removed. So, the umbrella sedge was left in place. Additional activities included maintenance along the trails and removal of eight rock dams in the creek. Low branches that were obstructing the trails or that might represent a safety hazard for equestrians were targeted during the maintenance. In addition, poison oak that was encroaching on the trails was also targeted during the maintenance.

Water Lettuce Removal

Water lettuce removal began on September 13, 2011 with a group of volunteers from the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation using rakes and pitchforks. The volunteers have been concentrating their removal efforts in east pond. Nature's Image has been working in the west pond using a boat with a motor, a seine net, and reachlift. The bulk of the water lettuce has been cleared from the west pond and Nature's Image anticipates starting on the east pond on Monday, October 10, 2011. Nature's Image will have filled five 40-yard dumpsters by the end of the week, bringing the project total to 14. Branches were trimmed from the trail along the north side of the ponds to provide access for a tractor to transport water lettuce from the east pond to the dumpster location in the parking area west of the west pond. The water lettuce removal effort will be ongoing until the bulk of the water lettuce is physically removed from the Tujunga ponds.

VI. Discuss and Schedule for the Next Trail Maintenance Day

The next Trail Maintenance Day is scheduled on November 5, 2011 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. The event will be cancelled if rain is forecasted. LACDPW will provide trash bags, gloves, water, and snacks.

VII. Schedule Next CAC Meeting

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 26, 2012, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Hansen Yard, 10179 Glen Oaks Boulevard, Sun Valley, CA 91352.

VIII. Action Items

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.
2. Valerie De La Cruz 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.
3. Valerie will send the Big Tujunga website link to Elektra Kruger and Terry Kaiser.
4. ECORP will include the Big Tujunga website address in the announcements section of the upcoming Big Tujunga Wash Line newsletter.
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.
6. Valerie De La Cruz will coordinate a tour of the Mitigation Area for County and City Officials. Councilmember Krekorian would like 10 people from his office to attend. Valerie will schedule through Mary Benson once the water lettuce removal is finished.
7. Ben Smith will provide Valerie De La Cruz 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. Valerie De La Cruz will work with Flood Maintenance Division to determine a method to close that trail.
8. Valerie De La Cruz will check on the correct phone number people should call for dog problems in the Mitigation Area.
9. Valerie De La Cruz 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.

10. ECORP will notify Valerie De La Cruz about the date of the next maintenance event in the Mitigation Area. Valerie will send a notification to the community about when the crews will be on site.
11. Mari Quillman will email the article about why trees and vegetation should not be cut during the bird breeding season to Valerie De La Cruz. 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.
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 the Valerie De La Cruz will provide it to Chris Arlington and Terry Kaiser.
13. Mary Benson will email the schedule for events at the Hansen Dam Equestrian Center so that ECORP can coordinate a public outreach at this venue. As part of the expanded public outreach program that occurs during the summer months, ECORP will conduct outreach to the large groups of equestrians who gather on the weekends at the feed store on Sheldon Street. In addition, ECORP will put up flyers for the dog walkers that stop at the liquor store across the street from the feed store.
14. Valerie De La Cruz will continue following up with Vector Control to find out additional information about the schedule for mosquito treatment within the Mitigation Area.
15. Valerie De La Cruz will coordinate a meeting on site with Andrea Gutman or Terry Kaiser regarding graffiti abatement.
16. ECORP will send the text of an email blast to Valerie De La Cruz 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.
17. LACDPW will discuss the possibility of putting on a vegetation trimming workshop for equestrians and other site users who hike the trails. This may be scheduled during the spring of 2012.
18. 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.
19. LACDPW will decide if they want to go 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.
20. Ben Smith will follow up to ensure the old habitat restoration area signs have been removed.
21. Valerie De La Cruz 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. Valerie

De La Cruz 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.

22. Mari Quillman will send Valerie De La Cruz information for the email announcement of the November 5, 2011 trails maintenance day.