

DRAFT
Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Bank Project
Community Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2007 Meeting
Hansen Yard 6:30 to 8:30 pm

I. Welcome/Introduction

1. Welcome
 - a. Attendance list – attached to minutes
2. Review of Agenda

II. Site Maintenance Issues and Discussion of Action Items from Previous Meeting

1. Site Safety – Belinda Kwan stated that the public should continue to call the Los Angeles Police Department to report any illegal activities within the Mitigation Bank. The numbers are (877) ASK LAPD or (877) 275-5273.
2. Website – No changes to the website from the last meeting (www.ladpw.org)
3. General Site Signage – At the last meeting, sample signs were reviewed. Chris Stone stated that the outstanding issues include (1) what “no’s” to include on the signs and (2) the portion of the municipal code that will be enforced. There is a need to cover all of the important illegal activities, but if the signs are too busy or there are too many “no’s” then the signs won’t be effective. Legal review is currently under way to determine what portion of the municipal code applies to LADPW property on which some recreation is allowed. A straight “no trespassing” won’t work because there are some allowed public uses on the site. Mary Benson suggested there may be some state laws (perhaps Regional Water Quality Control Board regulations) that may apply. Terry Kaiser suggested that there may be a benefit to having some sort of cross-over enforcement or MOU with Parks and Rec. They are building a ranger station at Hanson Dam and they now have quad runners to respond to off road areas.
4. Kiosks- DPW tried to remove the kiosk near Cottonwood in June, but there were nesting birds using the kiosks. The nesting season is over in September, and they will finish removing the kiosk soon. Mary Benson suggested combining this day with a trails cleanup day in which the debris washed into the Mitigation Bank by the recent rains could be cleaned up.
5. Cottonwood Area as a Staging Area – Terry Kaiser is still investigating using the Cottonwood area as a staging area in case of a fire or other emergency. DPW reminded the group that CDFG wants minimum use of the Mitigation Bank.

III. Current Status of Programs

1. General – ECORP Consulting began work on the project in July.
2. Exotic Plant Removal – Nature’s Image will take out all exotics in a particular area at a time, instead of by species. Mari Schroeder will notify the group if areas need to be temporarily closed. Isolated patches of exotic plants may not be removed if removal

may cause too much damage to beneficial species. CDFG permit needs to be updated to use chemicals. Terry requested that poison oak be removed 4-5 feet from edge of trails (this task may be part of trails maintenance).

3. Exotic Wildlife Removal – Todd Chapman reported that ECORP biologists have been out twice since beginning the contract in July. They have used seine nets and frog and turtle traps, and have done snorkel surveys. Many exotic fish have been removed. They also caught some Santa Ana suckers. No turtles were caught. Algae made it difficult to see during snorkel surveys and to pull nets. They may modify their methodology to do the removals in the winter when there is less algae. ECORP will take samples of the hair grass to be evaluated by the ECORP botanist to determine if it is native. However, even if it is native, it is out of control. Todd Chapman reported that the number of frogs and turtles are significantly reduced from past years. During recent visits, they were mostly dealing with fish (including goldfish) and crayfish.
4. Riparian and Upland Restoration Areas – The most recent planting was too late in the year. Terry Kaiser reported that some cuttings have started to bud with the recent rainstorm. Todd Chapman reported that he noticed that some people are pulling the “sticks” out of the ground, not realizing that they may be dormant cuttings. Mary Benson stated that more public outreach and education may help this problem. B. Kwan stated that the DPW newsletters have stopped. Mary Benson suggested that either the DPW newsletter should start again, or regular articles could be placed in the neighborhood association newsletters. Mari Schroeder stated that part of the new contract is to start the newsletter again. Andrea Gutman stated that maybe the newsletter could be posted on the site also.

Nature’s Image has been watering the cuttings and have been evaluating what survived the Summer heat and what needs to be replanted. Replanting will occur in January or February if there is rain. If there is no rain, planting may not occur.

5. Water Quality – MWH will continue to conduct water quality sampling and analysis. Water quality sampling has not occurred since the last meeting, but will occur soon. Very little change from past results (which have all been similar) is expected.
6. Trail Usage and Maintenance – ECORP biologists have walked all of the trails in the Bank and have assembled a list of maintenance items. Poison oak encroaching on the trails is a general problem. Other problems include low branches and a fallen tree behind Gibson Ranch. Andrea Gutman mentioned a big log creating a hazard to horses at a water crossing between Cottonwood and the ponds. Terry Kaiser offered to ride the trails and GPS problem areas. There has been no recent trail maintenance. ECORP’s contract is for trail maintenance four times per year and on request (e.g. a tree blocking a trail).

CDFG has requested mapping of the trails, and that the trails wider than 5 feet may be deducted from mitigation bank credits. DPW is currently surveying the trails. In general only the haul road and a few trails are wider than 5 feet. Mari knows of other banks where recreation (trail use) is allowed. She will research and write a letter with defensible arguments for negotiation. There was a general concern that if the trails are closed, then illegal uses will increase.

Terry Kaiser to send Mari a copy of his base map. Terry would like the DPW to help fund the purchase a new aerial for a base map from CC Curtis. They fly the area in March of each year. B. Kwan will get a new aerial as part of the existing survey contract,

or they can order a new aerial for a vendor. Terry would prefer an electronic map on CD and can pay the difference between a hard copy and electronic copy.

7. Graffiti and Other Unauthorized Uses- There have been several incidents during site visits since ECORP's contract began in July. Todd Chapman observed a person release an animal from a trap in the area off Wentworth. An ECORP biologist was bitten by a pit bull. The person with the dog seemed to be living on the site, although a similar dog was spotted in the yard of an adjacent house. A group of BBQers was observed near Wentworth. Mari will investigate with Nature's Image the possibility of using native plants (cactus, poison ivy) in selected areas to discourage use. Terry reported that a mountain lion was spotted in the area and crossing Wentworth by two people (two separate reports). Terry has noticed increases in mountain bike use in the National Forest that may migrate to the Mitigation Bank. Mary stated that some maps show the Bank trails as off-road bike trails. Andrea noted that there is graffiti on all of the rocks along the haul road. Terry will investigate rental of a power washer with a boiler. Mari stated that the graffiti removal and method will have to be approved by CDFG, but it is not likely to be a problem given the location of the graffiti (haul road).
8. Gibson Ranch – C. Stone stated that the issues are almost resolved. The Ranch will exchange property to the east for the arena property at a 1:1 ratio. The paperwork is expected to be completed in a couple of months.

IV. Next Trail Maintenance Day

1. The next trail maintenance day will be in conjunction with the kiosk removal. Chris Stone will send an email. Todd Chapman would like to re-establish a rock dam clearance day. No specific date was established at this meeting. Andrew Hennigan distributed information on the Tujunga Wash Cleanup Day on October 27. This event is not within the Bank.

V. Schedule Next CAC Meeting

1. The next CAC meeting is scheduled for March 27th, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Hanson Yard.

VI. Comments, Questions, and Answers

1. There were no additional issues raised.