

**Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Project
Community Advisory Committee
2013 Spring Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2013**

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 September 27, 2012 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. Grace Yu (LACDPW) and Mary Benson (City of Los Angeles District 7; CD7) will contact the following people for a City/County tour of the Mitigation Area: CD7 staff members, Sunland Tujunga staff members, and Gerald Rubicon. Mary will let Chris Stone (LACDPW) know who will be attending the tour of the Mitigation Area. Grace will give Mary some times that would work best for a site visit, preferably during a morning. Mary will contact Chris Arlington (SHPOA) to let her know if Foothill Mounted Patrol should be there during the site visit.** Grace Yu contacted Mary Benson and Councilmember Alarcon's office about conducting a visit but she received no responses. Felipe Fuentes will take over as the new Councilmember beginning July 1, 2013. Mary would like a site tour to be conducted regardless of who is elected because it is important to show the ecological and biological significance of the Mitigation Area to elected officials. Mary will contact Grace when CD7 is ready to schedule a tour. *This action item has been tabled and will be revisited upon CD7's initiation.*
- 2. Mary Benson will provide the name and contact information of the new LAPD officer assigned to patrol the Mitigation Area to the CAC.** Mary Benson reported that the new Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officer assigned to patrol the Mitigation Area is Officer Don Boone, the Senior Lead Officer from the LAPD Foothill station. Officer Boone has expressed interested in working with LACDPW to keep the Mitigation Area safe and he is willing to hike through it in order to patrol the site better. *This action item is now complete.*
- 3. Grace Yu will follow up with Flood Maintenance Division about blading or smoothing the access road from the North Wheatland entrance in order to provide easier access into the Mitigation Area for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) and LAPD.** Grace Yu has put in a work

order that has not been completed yet. Work is expected to be performed on the road within the next two weeks. *This action item is now complete.*

4. **ECORP will draft a Mitigation Area permit protocol.** Permit protocol has been drafted and ECORP will submit the draft to LACDPW for review on Friday, April 26, 2013. This document will serve as a starting point for LACDPW to decide what circumstances and events will require permits. Once the permit protocol has been finalized LACDPW will make the document available to the public. *This action item is now complete.*
5. **Mary Benson and Chris Stone will advocate scheduling more LAPD and/or LASD patrols of the Mitigation Area. Grace Yu will work with LAPD and LASD.** Grace Yu will contact Officer Boone to coordinate LAPD patrols of the Mitigation Area. Steve Carbahol of the LAPD Valley Traffic Off-Road Unit has also agreed to patrol the Mitigation Area. Additionally, Grace will coordinate with rangers at the Santa Monica Mountains Conservatory (SMMC) and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) about patrolling the Mitigation Area. Grace reported that the Los Angeles County Flood Maintenance Division will begin patrolling the site every Monday on a weekly basis. ECORP will be sending bilingual biologists beginning on Memorial Day weekend to educate the public to help prevent further problems associated with recreationalists at the site. ECORP's bilingual biologists will be conducting weekend visits throughout the late spring and summer with focus on holiday weekends, as those are the expected peak-use recreationist times during the summer.
6. **Grace Yu will formalize the CAC Meeting Membership list.** Grace Yu will continue to update and formalize the CAC Meeting Membership list.
7. **Terry Kaiser (ETI) will check the locks on all the LACDPW-owned Mitigation Area gates and record the locks he can identify to help LACDPW.** Terry Kaiser checked the locks on April 25, 2013. There are new Cat30 locks on the Mary Bell and Cottonwood Avenue entrances to the Mitigation Area. There have been problems with illegal dumping in the Mitigation Area and changing the locks should prevent any further problems. The turntable at the Foothill gate has a combination lock on it. The Wheatland entrance had locks on it from LA Parks and Recreation, the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Water and Power, and LACDPW. There is also a new Cat30 lock on an entrance to Big Tujunga Wash off of Christy Avenue west of the Mitigation Area; this area is not owned by LACDPW. *This action item is now complete.*
8. **Mari Quillman (ECORP) will contact Mike Linton at Vulcan Materials Company for information and possibly to obtain a boundary map of the Vulcan Materials Company properties along Foothill Boulevard.** A 4-acre lot located at the intersection of Wentworth Avenue and Foothill Avenue, across from the Angeles National Golf Club, belongs to Vulcan Materials Company. Vulcan is interested in giving the area to an entity so the lot could be made into a parking lot and access area to the Big Tujunga Wash for recreation. There would be room to park horse trailers. It would require developing some trail routes from this area. Vulcan would like to partner with a willing agency or organization in a

grant/restoration project which would serve as mitigation for a quarry down the street. However, Vulcan Materials Company has run into some issues with the project and they do not anticipate the project starting for another few years. Mari Quillman will check periodically with Vulcan and will report back when Vulcan is ready to begin. *This action item has been tabled until further notice.*

IV. Ongoing and New Discussion Items

1. Upcoming Events

- Terry Kaiser has an equestrian event scheduled for June 23, 2013. The event will include equestrian trails trials where one to two horses (with their riders) at a time will go through an obstacle at the Haines Canyon Creek crossing near the Wheatland entrance. This event was held last year as well. Terry will contact LACDPW for permitting.
- Friends of the LA River (FOLAR) will be doing a cleanup at Haines Canyon Creek at the flood control channel area on May 18, 2013. If anyone is interested they may contact Karin Flores. Hansen Dam will also be hosting their first volunteer cleanup effort in the near future. The Recreation and Parks Supervisor, Peggy Kelly, has more information.

2. Homeless in the Mitigation Area

There have been several homeless encampments found in the Mitigation Area lately, including one recently identified by ECORP biologists with a person and dog living in it. On March 30, 2013, under the Interstate-210 bridge north of the Mitigation Area, the City of Los Angeles conducted a homeless relocation and cleanup. Increased patrols should help prevent more homeless encampments from being established within and immediately adjacent to the Mitigation Area. Councilmember Alarcon along with the Department of Mental Health has a program to help homeless people with mental illnesses; the Councilmember's office should be contacted if there are any homeless people found with suspected mental illnesses.

3. Trail Cleanup Day

The 2013 Trail Cleanup Day is tentatively scheduled for September 21, 2013. LACDPW would like to work with Heal the Bay and be incorporated into their California Coastal Clean-up Day in order to have a larger turn out for the Trail Cleanup Day. LACDPW will have a meeting with Heal the Bay in May 2013. There will need to be a team captain who will have to attend regular Heal the Bay meetings in Santa Monica leading up to the event.

4. Big Tujunga Dam Sediment Removal

The LACDPW will be releasing a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document soon and are expecting to release a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) in mid-May 2013. The MND will be available for public review from mid-May to late June and there will be an informational meeting in late May. A map of the sediment placement associated with the project is on the LACDPW website. The project is slated to begin next summer but this is dependent on the storm events in 2013 and early 2014. It is anticipated that this project will only affect the water

course in the Tujunga Reservoir; flow in the Mitigation Area will not be affected by this project.

5. Charro Event Contact Info

ECORP has received the contact information for the Charreada (Charro) equestrian events and will keep up to date on events that happen in and around the Mitigation Area.

6. Trails Maintenance

Terry Kaiser would like to do a walk-through with ECORP biologists the next time there is a trail maintenance visit scheduled. During the last trails maintenance/monitoring visit the trails were cleared for pedestrians but not high enough for horses and riders. There is also a dense patch of poison oak approximately 300 to 500 feet north of the Wheatland entrance along the creek that needs to be removed. ECORP will contact their landscape contractor to schedule a visit to trim the poison oak.

7. Mitigation Area Signage

It was reported that the signs by the Tujunga Ponds have been tagged with graffiti and need to be replaced or cleaned. Grace Yu is looking into revising and replacing all Mitigation Area entrance signs and possibly installing trail signs.

Terry Kaiser offered to make trail signs for the Mitigation Area. Terry is chairman of California Trail Users Coalition, the group that makes rugged and durable U.S. Forest Service signs. It was suggested that signs be placed at each of the trailheads, major intersections, and unmarked entrances to the Mitigation Area to help keep people on existing trails. Terry suggested visiting Eaton Canyon to see examples of clear signage on the entrances to trails.

It was suggested that a sign be placed at the bottom of the levy and on the Water Trail at the western boundary of the Mitigation Area to signify the boundaries of the Mitigation Area.

8. California Department of Transportation

Mary Benson announced that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7 has acknowledged that the rectangular-shaped property on the northern part of the Mitigation Area located south and west of Foothill Boulevard is under their jurisdiction. This property/right-of-way includes the access road into the Mitigation Area from the Foothill Gate. Mary stated that Ed Toledo is the Caltrans District 7 Maintenance Supervisor for this parcel and would be the person to contact for Mitigation Area coordination. Grace Yu will coordinate with Caltrans for cooperation with recreational activity restrictions in the Mitigation Area as well as possibly placing additional Mitigation Area signage in this area.

9. Website

The Mitigation Area website has been recently updated and most of the Mitigation Area documents are available online. A larger update and redesign of the site will be done once all documents have been made available.

V. Current Status of Programs

1. Exotic Plant Eradication Program

The last removal effort of 2012 took place in mid-December. The first removal effort of 2013 occurred between April 10 and April 19, focusing on annual weedy species to remove plants before they went to seed. Water lettuce has not been observed in the ponds since the last exotic plant removal effort.

2. Exotic Wildlife Removal/Monitoring

A total of 2,439 individuals, consisting of 12 exotic aquatic species, were removed from Hanes Canyon Creek, Big Tujunga Wash, and the Tujunga Ponds, in 2012. The majority of the exotic aquatic species were removed from Hanes Canyon Creek. One new exotic aquatic species was observed in the ponds, the Mozambique Tilapia, a highly adaptable fish species native to Africa. The first removal effort of 2013 will take place in May.

3. Focused Surveys for Listed Wildlife Species

Native fishes surveys were conducted in December 2012. All three native fish species (Santa Ana sucker, Santa Ana speckled dace, and arroyo chub) were observed in the Mitigation Area. A total of 502 Santa Ana suckers were observed in Hanes Canyon Creek, which is a substantial increase from the 41 observed in 2009, the last time this focused survey was conducted. Populations of native fishes appear to be healthy in the Mitigation Area. Focused surveys are conducted every three years and thus will not be conducted in 2013.

4. Water Quality Analysis

No changes in water quality were observed in the 2012 water quality analysis; the water remains in good quality within the Mitigation Area. The 2013 water quality analysis will be conducted in fall or early winter.

5. Trails Restoration/Maintenance

A trails restoration/maintenance effort was conducted by ECORP biologists during the exotic plant removal effort earlier in April 2013. Due to recent high-wind events, a lot of branches had fallen across the paths. The landscape contractor's crews removed obstructions to clear existing trails. Trash and debris near the trails was removed and unauthorized trails surrounding the ponds were closed.

6. Public Outreach Program

The public outreach program in 2013 will begin in May, on Memorial Day weekend. ECORPs bilingual biologists will walk trails on the weekends as the weather gets warmer to speak with recreational users of the Mitigation Area.

7. Brown-headed cowbird Trapping

The trapping for 2013 began on April 1 and will continue to June 30. Four traps have been placed in the same locations as previous years throughout the Mitigation Area. All four traps have captured cowbirds to date.

8. Trail Cleanup Day

The 2012 Trail Cleanup Day occurred on October 20; there was a large turnout of

over 20 volunteers. Volunteers were able to split into several groups and cover most of the Mitigation Area. A special thank you goes out to Terry Kaiser for help organizing and delegating teams. The next Trail Cleanup Day has been tentatively scheduled for September 21, 2013.

9. 2012 Annual Report

ECORP submitted the 2012 Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Annual Report on April 9, 2013. LACDPW disseminated the report to California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, and posted it on the Mitigation Area website.

VI. Schedule Next CAC Meeting

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 2013, 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. Grace Yu will contact Officer Don Boone to coordinate LAPD patrols of the Mitigation Area.
2. Grace Yu will coordinate with the rangers at SMMC and MRCA about patrolling the Mitigation Area.
3. ECORP's bilingual biologists will keep in contact with the Charreada event coordinator to find out when the next event is occurring.
4. Grace Yu will coordinate with Caltrans on recreational activity restrictions and additional signage on or near the Caltrans property/right-of-way south and west of the Foothill Entrance.
5. ECORP will contact their landscape contractor to schedule a visit to trim the poison oak on the trails around the South Wheatland entrance.
6. ECORP will contact Terry Kaiser the next time they conduct a trails maintenance event so Terry can explain how high to trim branches for equestrian access on the trails.
7. Grace Yu will coordinate with Heal the Bay about incorporating the Mitigation Area's Trail Cleanup Day into their California Coastal Clean-up Day activities.