

**Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Project
Community Advisory Committee
2014 Spring Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2014**

I. Welcome/Introduction

Meeting attendance sign-in sheet attached.

II. Review of Meeting Agenda

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

III. Discussion of Action Items from the September 26, 2013 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) will contact Wesly Hernandez (Assistant to Councilmember Felipe Fuentes) to advertise Trail Cleanup Day.** The 2013 Trail Cleanup Day was cancelled due to high winds and not rescheduled. *This action item is now complete.*
- 2. Terry Kaiser will contact Grace Yu about areas that should be focused on during the upcoming Trail Cleanup Day.** The 2013 Trail Cleanup Day was cancelled due to high winds and not rescheduled. Instead, Terry Kaiser (ETI) met with ECORP biologists on April 18, 2014 to show which areas of the trail system need the most maintenance. *This action item is now complete.*
- 3. ECORP will update the incident map prior to the next CAC meeting.** An incident map for incidents reported in the Mitigation Area between October 2013 and April 2014 was provided. ECORP will continue to provide updated incident maps at each CAC meeting. *This action is now complete.*
- 4. Grace Yu will contact the Flood Maintenance Division about clearing vegetation between the Mary Bell entrance and Gibson Ranch on Mitigation Area side of Wentworth Avenue.** Terry Kaiser met with the Flood Maintenance Division and the overgrown vegetation issue was addressed. *This action item is now complete.*
- 5. ECORP will research the maintenance required for fish screens in case LACDPW decides to pursue the installation of screens at the outlet of the West Pond to prevent tilapia from entering Haines Canyon Creek.** Information on fish screen installation and maintenance was provided to LACDPW concerning tilapia entering Haines Canyon Creek. *This action item is now complete.*

IV. Ongoing and New Discussion Items

1. Trail Cleanup Day

The 2013 Trail Cleanup Day, originally scheduled for October 5, 2013, was cancelled because of high winds. Due to drought conditions and an increase in organized community cleanup events throughout the year, it was determined that the Mitigation Area was fairly clear of trash and debris. Therefore, this event was not rescheduled. Terry Kaiser suggested that a summer Trail Cleanup Day might be a better option. The event could possibly be held in July or August, towards the end of the breeding bird season. LACDPW will discuss this further with ECORP Consulting (ECORP).

2. Mitigation Area Email Address

The Mitigation Area now has its own email address, BTWMA@dpw.lacounty.gov, for site users to report issues at the site. Both Grace Yu and Melanie Morita (LACDPW) currently have access to this email as will any future LACDPW project managers. Visitors of the Mitigation Area are encouraged to use this email to report incidents.

3. Councilmember Fuentes Visit to the Mitigation Area

The community walk with Councilmember Fuentes in April 2014 was postponed and will be rescheduled later in the year.

4. 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.
- Two homeless encampments were found this past week during exotic plant removal activities. ECORP will map the locations of both encampments and send them to LACDPW to address. One homeless camp was located north of Gibson Ranch in approximately the same location that one was reported in late 2013.
- Two fishermen were noticed on site in the past few weeks. Fishermen have been typically observed in the mornings near the ponds. The two fishermen were reported to be complaining that they weren't catching anything.
- Terry Kaiser reported that a trail adjacent to Big Tujunga Wash along the western boundary of the Mitigation Area is being eroded away, which has resulted in the trail being undercut. ECORP will send biologists out to the Mitigation Area to locate and assess the undercut trail.
- ECORP biologists noted yucca stalks being cut in the upland area again this year. ECORP will find out from their biologists if the stalks were cut while the plant was in bloom or if the stalk was already dried up when severed.
- The CAC was advised to call 911 for emergencies at the Mitigation Area. If a minor incident is observed, then the Sheriff's Department should be contacted.

Once the incident has been reported to the Sheriff's Department then LACDPW should be notified so they can conduct follow up on the incident.

5. Streambed Alteration Agreement Renewal

The Streambed Alteration Agreement expired on March 31, 2014. LACDPW is working with CDFW on the renewal requirements.

6. Equine Advisory Committee

The Equine Advisory Committee received a grant from the National Parks group to conduct a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping effort of trails associated with the area north and east of Foothill Blvd. Mary Benson requested GIS data of the trails within the Mitigation Area from LACDPW. LACDPW will work with Mary Benson to obtain the requested files.

7. Community Cavalry

Officer Don Boon, who organized the Community Cavalry in the past, is no longer the Senior Lead Officer for the Mitigation Area. A new lead has not yet been appointed. Captain Malinowski, with the Foothill Community Police Station, has taken over the Community Cavalry for the time being, and is the best person to contact regarding the cavalry. The Community Cavalry is under the wing of Los Angeles Police Department.

The Foothill Mounted Patrol has been officially adopted by the Los Angeles Fire Department. Los Angeles Police Department could no longer provide insurance for the Foothill Mounted Patrol, but because they are now under the Fire Department they are covered by the City of Los Angeles' insurance plan. Rene Herrera would be the contact for the Foothill Mounted Patrol.

8. Future CAC meetings

CAC meetings will now occur on a yearly basis instead of semi-annually. Meetings will be held in the spring of each year. Newsletters will continue to be produced twice a year. If the CAC has any items that need to be addressed, they should contact LACDPW using the new Mitigation Area email address.

V. Current Status of Programs

1. Exotic Plant Eradication Program

One effort is currently being conducted for April 2014; work began on April 21 and will continue through April 29, 2014. The last exotic plant removal effort was conducted December 16 through 18, 2013. The next effort is scheduled for mid-July 2014. Trail maintenance will also be conducted at this time.

2. Water Lettuce Control/Monitoring

Water lettuce has not been observed in the ponds since the previous CAC meeting. ECORP is continuing to monitor the ponds for presence of water lettuce.

3. Exotic Wildlife Removal/Monitoring

The first of four efforts was conducted April 7 through 9, 2014. The second effort will occur April 29 through May 2, 2014 to avoid algal blooms that affect visibility in

the ponds during the summer months. Tilapia were not observed during the first removal effort in April 2014. ECORP is continuing to monitor the ponds for presence of tilapia.

4. Water Quality Monitoring

Results were normal for 2013 water quality sampling on site. The next water quality monitoring will be conducted in November 2014.

5. Focused Surveys

Focused wildlife surveys have not been scheduled for 2014.

6. Brown-headed cowbird Trapping

The trapping for 2014 began on April 1 and will continue through June 30. Four traps were placed in the same locations as previous years throughout the Mitigation Area.

7. Trails Restoration/Maintenance

A site visit was conducted on February 19, 2014 to assess damage made to the Mitigation Area by a small fire near the Mary Bell entrance. The fire broke out over President's Day weekend (February 15 through 17, 2014) and the cause was unknown. The biologists mapped the burn area and documented the plant species affected. The area will be monitored for exotic plant growth.

A trails assessment site visit was conducted on April 18, 2014. Problem areas identified included poison oak encroachment on trails and narrowed trails from vegetation overgrowth. ECORP biologists are currently working with their landscape contractor to clear blocked trails and trim back poison oak from trails during the exotic plant removal effort currently underway.

8. Public Outreach Program

The public outreach program will begin Memorial Day weekend (May 24 through 26, 2014). ECORP's bilingual biologists will conduct site visits to speak with equestrian and non-equestrian site users on weekends, including holidays.

VI. Schedule Next CAC Meeting

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2015, 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 will discuss the possibility of moving the Trail Cleanup Day to a late summer date with ECORP.
2. ECORP will send the locations and coordinates of the homeless encampments found in the Mitigation Area to LACDPW.
3. LACDPW will work with ECORP and CDFW to renew the Streambed Alteration Agreement.

- 4.** Grace Yu will inform the CAC of the rescheduled community walk with Councilmember Felipe Fuentes.
- 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.
- 6.** LACDPW will work with Mary Benson to provide GIS data for the trail system at the Mitigation Area.
- 7.** ECORP will confirm with its biologists if yucca stalks are being cut before they flower or after they have dried up.