

**Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Project  
Community Advisory Committee  
2016 Spring Meeting Minutes  
April 28, 2016**

**I. Welcome/Introduction**

Meeting attendance sign-in sheet attached.

**II. Review of Meeting Agenda**

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

**III. Discussion of Action Items from the April 30, 2015 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, ECORP, and County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (LADPR) will work together to combine the reported incidents from both the Mitigation Area and the Tujunga Ponds properties.** LADPR identified several homeless encampments on their property since the last meeting. LACDPW and ECORP will continue to coordinate with LADPR. *This action item is complete, but will be an ongoing task.*
- 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.** The updated incident map was distributed at the 2016 CAC meeting and will be posted to the Mitigation Area website. *This action item is complete, but will be an ongoing task.*
- 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.** There has been no update to this action item.
- 4. LADPR will contact Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to see if they are interested in educational outreach opportunities at the Mitigation Area.** LADPR made a list of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts organizations for the Crescenta Valley. LADPR mentioned that their next move would be to coordinate with Crescenta Parks District to see if they have any other student or youth organizations interested in educational outreach. *This action item is complete.*
- 5. ECORP's aquatic biologists will monitor the water flow rates of Haines Canyon Creek and report any changes detected.** ECORP's aquatic biologists measured flow rates during the native fishes study conducted in 2012 and 2015.

The rates were the same in both years around the upstream boundaries of Haines Canyon Creek, but the 2015 rates were lower around the downstream boundaries of the creek than they were in 2012. *This action item is complete.*

- 6. ECORP will find out if least Bell's vireo surveys are being conducted downstream of the Mitigation Area. ECORP will also search California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) to determine where the closest least Bell's vireo observation has been reported in relation to the Mitigation Area.** ECORP could not find out whether least Bell's vireo surveys are being conducted downstream of the Mitigation Area in 2015 or 2016. The nearest recorded least Bell's vireo observation within the CNDDDB was in Hansen Dam. *This action item is complete.*
- 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.** Trap 2 was kept in the same location in 2015 to ensure one additional year of low trap success before moving. Trap 2 was moved for the 2016 trapping year to a location near Big Tujunga Wash just south of the North Wheatland entrance. ECORP could not find out how many traps were placed at Hansen Dam. *This action item is complete.*
- 8. ECORP will send the schedule of weekend bilingual outreach site visits to LADPR so they can coordinate outreach efforts.** The 2015 bilingual outreach schedule was sent to LACDPW and LADPR prior to the first outreach event. The 2016 bilingual outreach was sent to LACDPW on April 20, 2016 and will be forwarded to LADPR prior to the first outreach event. *This action item is complete.*

#### **IV. Ongoing and New Discussion Items**

##### **1. Site and Security Issues**

- Residents have been noticing a lot of illegal fishing activity at the site recently. One resident has observed people carrying white buckets into the site using the South Wheatland entrance off of Wentworth Avenue. The meeting attendees asked if LADPR has the authority to issue tickets to offenders; however, LADPR does not have that authority. The issue of site patrolling was discussed because illegal fishing on site has been an ongoing problem. Ms. Driscoll stated that Park Rangers from the City of Los Angeles occasionally patrol the site.
- The group discussed the watershed in which the Mitigation Area resides and what the relationship of Haines Canyon Creek is to the Los Angeles River. LACDPW stated that Haines Canyon Creek is a tributary to Tujunga Wash, which is a tributary to the Los Angeles River.
- The group reported a large sink hole in the Mitigation Area just north of Gibson Ranch (near point #29 on the incident map). A tree fell over and a large hole was created where the root ball used to be. The hole has filled

with water from recent storms, creating a trail hazard. Furthermore, someone has dumped a wheelbarrow in the hole. ECORP and LACDPW will visit the area and make plans for maintenance.

## **2. Brown-headed Cowbirds and Native Riparian Birds**

The group inquired about the number of bird species that have been documented at the Mitigation Area. ECORP has documented approximately 130 bird species on the property since 2007. The group requested that LACDPW review the Hansen Dam Master Plan (2010) because there is a comprehensive avian species list in this document. The group also asked for LACDPW to check with Audubon Society about the species they have documented in the area.

The group also asked whether United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is currently conducting brown-headed cowbird trapping on the Hansen Dam property. ECORP will inquire about that.

## **3. Spring Newsletter**

The group stated that the recent announcement in the Spring 2016 newsletter about the revised route of the proposed E2 Alignment for the High Speed Rail (HSR) avoiding the Mitigation Area was misleading. They requested that the wording be revised. LACDPW agreed to revise the wording as soon as possible.

The group also had an issue with the site location verbiage on the back of the newsletter. LACDPW will revise this as well.

## **4. High Speed Rail Project**

The group expressed frustration about the project and requested that LACDPW develop a list of potential impacts resulting from the project to the Mitigation Area and submit it to the HSR. LACDPW stated it understands the group's concerns and is closely following the project, but LACDPW can only address issues that directly affect its facilities. LACDPW's concerns about the proposed project's impacts to the Mitigation Area were conveyed to the HSR Project Team, and the HSR Project Team moved the E2 Alignment out of the Mitigation Area.

The group discussed potential indirect impacts related to construction and operation to the Mitigation Area and was concerned about the degradation of the site due to these indirect impacts despite the relocation of the E2 Alignment out of the Mitigation Area. LACDPW stated it has received very little information from HSR Project Team on the design, construction, and operations of the proposed project, and is awaiting the CEQA document that should provide more information that can form the basis of substantive comments. LACDPW also stated that the new E2 Alignment is on USACE-owned land with similar wash habitat, and, based on LACDOPW's experience with these agencies, CDFW, USACE, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will therefore very likely bring up the same concerns and issues about the project to the HSR Project Team that LACDPW did when the proposed alignment was in the Mitigation Area.

The group requested contact information from USACE from Hansen Dam because they have had issues contacting representatives from USACE's environmental personnel but have had more success with their regulatory personnel.

Michael Cano (Los Angeles County Supervisor Antonovich's office) requested a comprehensive report of expected impacts to the Mitigation Area from LACDPW. LACDPW said it would convey the request to its Administration.

#### **5. Save The Big Tujunga Wash**

Residents notified LACDPW that they have formed an activist group called Save the Big Tujunga Wash and will be scheduling several programs to increase awareness over the next couple of months.

### **V. Current Status of Programs**

#### **1. Exotic Plant Eradication Program**

The first effort is scheduled for May 3 through 13, with a pre-activity survey on May 2 by two ECORP biologists. Site maintenance will also be conducted at this time (trail cleanup, etc.).

#### **2. Exotic Wildlife Removal/Monitoring**

LACDPW and ECORP are in the process of developing different exotic wildlife removal and monitoring methods for 2016 in an effort to be more effective at removing exotic species and improving conditions for Santa Ana sucker. The first aquatic wildlife removal effort will likely occur in May.

#### **3. Focused Wildlife Surveys**

Focused wildlife surveys were conducted in 2015. The next round of focused surveys will occur in 2018.

- Least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher were not detected.
- Arroyo toad was not detected.
- Native fish surveys: only Santa Ana sucker was detected; Santa Ana speckled dace and arroyo chub were not detected. A total of 119 sucker were observed during the May survey and only 17 were observed during the October survey. These numbers have drastically declined since the previous survey was conducted in December 2012, where 592 sucker were observed. Arroyo chub were last observed on site in 2013 and Santa Ana speckled dace were last observed in 2012. Possible reasons for decline include an increase in exotic species, drought, or other unknown factors.

#### **4. Water Quality Monitoring**

Results were normal for 2015 water quality sampling on site. The group inquired about developing a type of rating system to give an overall assessment of the water quality results to the community. ECORP will work with its water quality monitoring subcontractor to see if a 1 to 10 rating system can be developed. The next water quality monitoring will be conducted in October/November 2016.

#### **5. Trails Restoration/Maintenance**

The next trails assessment site visit will be conducted on May 2, 2016.

#### **6. 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.

**7. Water Lettuce Control/Monitoring**

No water lettuce has been observed in the ponds since the previous meeting. ECORP is continuing to monitor the ponds for presence of water lettuce.

**8. Brown-headed Cowbird Trapping**

The trapping for 2016 began on April 1 and will continue through June 30. Three of the four traps were placed in the same locations as previous years throughout the Mitigation Area. Trap 2 was moved to the western portion of the Mitigation Area because it was unsuccessful in past years (original location was around Cottonwood gate). To date, Trap 1 has captured one female, Trap 2 has captured one male, Trap 3 has captured 19 males and 47 females, and Trap 4 has captured 13 males and 23 females.

**9. Special Assessment**

ECORP biologists performed a site visit on January 18 following a period of heavy rains to document any damage to the site. Minor issues were documented and reported to LACDPW.

**VI. Schedule Next CAC Meeting**

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 28, 2017, 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. ECORP and LACDPW will visit the sink hole area along the trail north of Gibson Ranch and make plans for maintenance.
2. LACDPW and ECORP will review the Hansen Dam Master Plan (2010) and check with the Audubon Society for comprehensive regional avian species lists to compare to the species list for the Mitigation Area.
3. ECORP will find out if USACE is conducting brown-headed cowbird trapping on the Hansen Dam property.
4. LACDPW and ECORP will revise the wording in the HSR announcement on the first page of the Spring 2016 newsletter. They will also revise the verbiage on the back of the newsletter that describes where the Mitigation Area is located.
5. LACDPW will look into preparing a document that lists expected impacts to the Mitigation Area resulting from the revised E2 Alignment of the HSR.
6. ECORP will work with their water quality monitoring subcontractor to develop a 1 to 10 rating system to briefly summarize the results of the annual water quality monitoring.

**Figure 10-1.**  
**Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area**  
**Incident Map, April 2015 to April 2016**



Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area  
 L.A. County Park Parcel  
 Trails Area

**Violation Category**

<span style="border: 1px solid purple; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">#</span> Creek Obstructions	<span style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">#</span> Site Safety/Maintenance Issue
<span style="border: 1px solid pink; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">#</span> Homeless Encampment	<span style="border: 1px solid yellow; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">#</span> Trash/Dumping
<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">#</span> Prohibited	<span style="border: 1px solid lightgreen; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">#</span> Trail Obstructions
	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">#</span> Vandalism

**Violation ID and Description**

1 - Vandalism	29 - Cut tree
2 - Vandalism to Wheatland north fence	30 - Cut tree
3 - Fishing and alcohol drinking	31 - Cut tree
4 - Rock dam	32 - Cut tree
5 - Fallen tree	33 - Cut tree
6 - Trash	34 - Cut tree
7 - Down trees blocking trail	35 - Cut tree
8 - Homeless encampment	36 - Cut tree
9 - Rock dam and trash	37 - Cut tree
10 - Trash (pile of spray cans)	38 - Cut tree
11 - Rock dam and fire pit	40 - Trash and rock dam
12 - Rock dam, rope swing and trash	41 - Downed tree blocking trail
13 - Branch across trail	42 - Trail erosion
14 - Exposed roots and erosion	43 - Rock dam
15 - Homeless encampment	44 - 2 rock dams
16 - Cut tree	45 - Cans and painting on tree
17 - Cut tree	46 - Bike tracks
18 - Cut tree	47 - Swing
19 - Cut tree	48 - Rock dam, trash, fire circles
20 - Trash dumping	49 - Inundation from storm event
21 - Rock dam with fake grass	50 - Inundation from storm event
22 - Minor erosion	51 - Log blocking trail
23 - Minor erosion	52 - Erosion
24 - Horse circle	53 - Erosion
25 - Cut tree	54 - Horse circle
26 - Cut tree	55 - Horse circle
27 - Cut tree	
28 - Cut tree	

Location: N:\2010\2010-116 Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area\Maps\Meeting\_Maps\_and\_Analysis\2016-04-19\_Violations\BigT\_Violations\_20160419.mxd (MAG, DW) - dwagman 4/19/2016

