

May 1, 2019

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Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area Community Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes:

Melanie Morita,

This memo summarizes the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting held on Thursday, April 25, 2018, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Hansen Yard located at 10179 Glenoaks Boulevard, Sun Valley, CA 91352.

Meeting Minutes for CAC meeting April 25, 2019

I. Welcome/Introduction

Attendees:

Marlene Rador
Marylouise Eclman (FTDNC Equestrian)
Heather Driscoll
John Laue (STNC)
Gerardo Barrientas (SHPOA)
Julia Tarnawski (SHPOA)
Tim Wood (Chambers Group)
Paul Morrissey (Chambers Group)
Melanie Morita (Public Works)

II. Review of Meeting Agenda

III. Site Maintenance Issues from 2018 - Discussion of Action Items from 2018 CAC Meeting:

1. The group discussed sending out an email blast when ATVs will be used for onsite maintenance so that residents know the difference between recreational riders and Chambers Group staff.
 - a. We informed the group that ATVs are not proposed for exotic plant removal work.
2. The group discussed the need to replace two trashcans by the ponds near northwest Wheatland entrance, and to replace trashcans by the Cottonwood entrance.
 - a. This was resolved, the trashcans have been replaced.
3. The group discussed the need to remove the fire-melted porta-potty at the Cottonwood entrance.
 - a. This was resolved, the remnants of the burned porta-potty were removed.
4. Residents expressed interest in coordinating with Public Works and Chambers Group on volunteer opportunities as they arise.
 - a. Public Works and Chambers Group will provide email updates for volunteer opportunities.
5. Residents will help identify large bulky debris items to be removed and will contact Chambers Group/Public Works for removal.



- a. Ongoing as items are reported. Contact numbers for Tim Wood, Paul Morrissey, and Melanie Morita were shared with the group.

IV. Summary of 2018 Eradication Program

1. Exotic Plant removal: Approximately in May - December 2018.
 - a. Approximately 57 different exotic grasses/herbs/shrubs species and 8 different exotic tree species were identified treated with California approved herbicide or other treatment removal methods
 - b. In 2018, we used a more aggressive program for targeting and eliminating the large, non-native trees that create the dense overstory. Removal of these exotic tree species will create a more open canopy within the Mitigation Area, which will allow more sunlight to reach the native plant species growing beneath the canopy.
2. Exotic Wildlife Removal: March – July 31, primarily ponds and areas of Haines Creek where red swamp crayfish were located; August – December Haines Creek and ponds.
 - a. Approx. 5,000 crawfish, 400 mosquito fish, 700+ green sunfish, 1,200+ bluegill, 1,800 bass, and 1 tilapia were removed from the ponds and Haines Creek.
 - b. 3 natives – SAS, arroyo chub, and SA speckled dace – were observed throughout Haines Creek.
3. Water Quality
 - a. 3 sites had surface water, Tujung Ponds (2), Haines Creek (1); no water in Tujung Wash
 - b. No herbicides or pesticides were detected.
 - c. DO and pH were low likely due to ash/silts from the fire entering the creek
4. Trails Monitoring Program
 - a. Substantially more trail maintenance work was required in 2018 than in previous efforts due to the Creek Fire that burned through the Mitigation Area in December 2017.
 - b. New trail system will be established in 2019 based on concurrence from CDFW.
5. Annual Trail Cleanup Day
 - a. The Twelfth Annual Trail Cleanup Day was held on Saturday, November 3, 2018.
 - b. Less participation than in previous years, may be due to fire or less public engagement due to High Speed Rail alignment not proposed for this area.
6. Public Outreach
 - a. Summer months – pamphlets to educate visitors about illegal recreational activities: not staying on authorized trails, fishing, swimming, building dams, and wading. In rare cases, cooking, barbequing, and alcohol consumption were observed.

V. Current Status of Programs for 2019

1. Creek Fire Assessment and Site Recovery
 - a. Post-fire Tree assessment (December 2018)
 - b. Post-fire continuing invasive plant emergence



- c. Native plant recovery – vegetation and seed bank not burned too badly; good recruitment due to ash on ground
- 2. Fuel Reduction Activities
 - a. Vegetation trimming and removal of dead vegetation in an approximate 2.4 acre area to improve public safety and reduce the probability of loss of adjacent structures from potential fire.
 - b. Good response from group, concerns for future fires was communicated.
- 3. Snag Removal Program (LA City tree crews)
 - a. Completed this week.
 - b. Removal of dead trees that were considered a public safety risk. Many trees remained due to benefit of snags in the BTWMA.
 - c. Discussed the importance of woody debris as cover and shelter for many different animal species.
- 4. Exotic Plant Eradication Program
 - a. New methods for exotic plant eradication (no herbicides)
 - b. Targeted species and importance for eradication. Seeding times of non-native plants will determine which plants are targeted at any given time.
- 5. Exotic Wildlife Removal Program
 - a. Methods for exotic wildlife eradication
 - b. Targeted species and importance for eradication
 - c. Red-eared turtle and bullfrogs were observed
- 6. Brown-headed cowbird trapping for 2019
 - a. Methods for brown-head cowbird eradication
 - b. Importance for eradication at 4 traps
 - c. Least Bell's vireo (likely migrating through) heard at ponds on Wednesday near Tujung ponds.
- 7. Water Quality Analysis
 - a. Reasons for analysis
 - b. Sampling locations
- 8. Trails Restoration/Maintenance
 - a. Methods to reestablish trails and remove/repurpose burned/fallen debris
 - b. Damaged trees near trails
 - c. Efforts to prevent new, unauthorized trail creation by hikers and equestrians
- 9. Public Outreach Program
 - a. Educational brochure in English/Spanish provided to public on summer weekends (recently updated)
 - b. Focusing attention on the prevention (through Public Outreach) and removal of illegal rock dams



VI. Comments, Questions, and Answers

1. Group voiced concern about the stockpiling of woody debris within the BTWMA along portions of the creek and trails. They mentioned that some of the stockpiles were over 6 feet high.
 - a. No one from Chambers Group has observed these stacked piles of wood within the BTWMA. Could be from large flood events that pushed debris downstream of the BTWMA. Chambers Group delineates the trails with single branches. Chambers Group installs vertical mulching up to 3 feet to block unauthorized trails only.
 - b. We encouraged the group to identify any locations of concern on the map or Google Earth, and we will investigate and correct if necessary.
2. Group voiced concern with the use of herbicides that may affect horses.
 - a. Herbicides has recently been banned for Public Works projects; no herbicides will be used until further notice.
3. Group voiced concern about the removal of fish species, especially large-mouth bass (since some folks have been fishing there for decades) and red-swamp crayfish.
 - a. We discussed the predatory nature of bass, and how a single bass could effectively wipe out a generation of hatchling fish. We discussed the three native fish species found in Haines Creek, and that there are only 3 locations in the world where Santa Ana sucker reside. Some folks in the group did not know there were protected fish species in the creek.
 - b. We discussed the harm that red-swamp crayfish can do to a natural stream system, including the killing of small fish.
4. Group voiced concern about equestrian safety and trail establishment.
 - a. We discussed the new trail establishment, the importance to stay on authorized trails, the removal of snags for safety concerns, and the delineation of the trails with woody debris.
 - b. We discussed the option of installation of trails signs and information regarding the BTWMA at several locations including the Cottonwood, Wheatland, and Mary Bell entrances.
5. Group voiced concern regarding cowbird trapping.
 - a. We discussed the biology and historical migrations of cowbirds, and their effect on songbirds today due to nest parasitism. We discussed the general locations of the traps, and the importance of reducing nest parasitism on sensitive songbirds during the breeding season, including the positive effect trapping has had on the least Bell's vireo population over the past decade.
6. Group voiced concern regarding homeless encampments
 - a. We discussed the different law enforcement jurisdictions on and near the property, and the protocol for communication with Public Works and/or Chambers Group to identify and resolve the issue. Once the camp has been notified, there is an approximate 10-day period for the camp to dismantle and leave the premises.
 - b. Contact numbers for Public Works and Chambers Group were shared with the group.
7. Group voiced concerns about "dangerous dogs" owned by a few of the homeless camps under the 210 fwy, that the dogs are often not on leash and could harm both equestrian riders and the horses.



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- a. We discussed the need to contact Public Works immediately to resolve the issue if they see the dogs again. We will follow up regarding all homeless encampments and notify law enforcement.
8. Group invited PW to join them at other community meetings such as the Shadow Hills Riders/community group to educate the members about the BTWMA, land ownership, and why the rules in place are important.
 - a. Contact numbers were provided for future events.

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

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