

# Tujunga Watershed 2003 Year-end Report

From the beginning, the **Tujunga Watershed Council** hit the ground running. 2003's accomplishments included national publicity of the Hansen Dam story, recognition of the lakes issue and support from elected officials and agencies including U.S. Senator **Dianne Feinstein**, U.S. Congressman **Brad Sherman**, State Assemblymember **Cindy Montañez**, City Councilmembers **Wendy Greuel & Alex Padilla** (et al), City Attorney **Rocky Delgadillo**, County Supervisor **Mike Antonovich**, the CA **Regional Water Quality Control Board**, CA's Environmental Protection Agency, Sierra Club, Audubon, American Rivers, the National Watershed Council & the nation-wide (Army) **Corps Reform Network**.



## Tujunga Watershed Council goes Downtown

12/5/2003 City Councilmember **Wendy Greuel** presents certificates of appreciation from the City of Los Angeles, in recognition of the **Tujunga Watershed Council & Stakeholders'** campaign to save Hansen Dam and its lakes.

L-R: Dennis Kroepin, Jerry Piro, Jose San Miguel, Wendy Greuel, Debra Baumann, Otis Wallace, Art Drucker, Mary Benson.

Additional certificate recipients not pictured: Margie Beeson, Fritz Bronner, Cile Borman, George Harrison, Bart Paul and Heidi Paul.

Also not pictured: **Many others** who took the time to write letters on behalf of Hansen Dam – **THANK YOU** (see other side, "It Takes a Village")

**In the Beginning...** Planning & Organization Committee met weekly, resulting in rapid production of **Bylaws, Charter, Mission, Goals** and incorporation as tax-exempt educational non-profit 501(c)3; **Board of Directors** (all volunteer) was established with broad spectrum of educational, professional and environmental experience; Board members engaged in **intensive self-education** through attendance at numerous civic, state, watershed & environmental workshops.

- **Aerial & ground photography** of Watershed area for documentation of baseline conditions and future reference;
- **Authorship** of numerous position papers documenting both historical background & existing conditions in northeast San Fernando valley;
- **Community Participation** ranging from assisting Project GRAD's workshops and Hansen Dam Clean-Up Day, to **Día del Caballo**.
- **Databases** created for tracking stats, photos, video, publications and other information pertinent to open space, wildlife habitat, water quality & environmental justice issues;
- **Documentary** ~ Produced video documenting vital role played by Hansen Dam lakes in fighting fires in the Northeast Valley in fall 2003;
- **Education / Press** ~ Authoring or facilitating publication of articles in newspapers; creation of brochures, press packets & educational materials;
- **Environmental Reference Library** ~ established & augmented daily (local & national);
- **Grassroots Activism** ~ Spearheaded Hansen Dam Lakes campaign; was invited to present evidence and testify before Water Quality Control Board regarding **Army Corps of Engineers'** illegal dumping (see *TujungaWatershed.org's Hot Topics page*);
- **Health & Safety Reporting** ~ When local officials did not take action, TWC contacted senior officials downtown, resulting in removal of numerous safety hazards from HD;
- **Networking** ~ Sharing best practices with local and national groups;
- **Outreach** ~ Via presentations to various neighborhood councils, city and civic organizations, consultations with developers, and via providing tours of the watershed for elected officials and agency representatives;
- **Recognition (National)** ~ Certificate of Appreciation from Sea World/Busch Gardens /Fuji Film's **2003 Environmental Excellence Awards**;
- **Safety /Incident Tracking** ~ created web links and Incident Report form with Grid of Hansen Dam basin, for purpose of documenting and tracking incidents or hazards;
- **Youth Essay Contest** – Created first annual Contest & awarded 2003 winner;
- **Website** created, and accompanying donor/volunteer database & distribution list.

## Other Achievements



**November 2003 - Retired City of L.A. Wildlife Officer Dennis Kroepin is interviewed for National Public Radio**

(Pictured behind Dennis is an issue requiring action in 2004 – the above 100-year-old trees and meadowland are the last such habitat remaining in Hansen Dam. This area with its combination of mature trees and surrounding low vegetation is used daily by raptors like hawks and owls. The trees and meadow are slated for destruction in 2004, as the Hansen Dam Sports Complex expands to a total of 13 new playing fields, parking lots and & concession stands.)

[www.TujungaWatershed.org](http://www.TujungaWatershed.org)

**Their Vision of a "lake"**  
 Square, concrete-lined,  
 oversized swimming pool  
 Cost = \$18 million (so far)



**Our Vision**  
 Preservation Costs Less Than Restoration



Your tax-deductible donations will help us do more in 2004. Please make checks payable to "Tujunga Watershed Stakeholders" and mail to:

To arrange a Tujunga Watershed educational presentation for your organization or school, call 818-486-0712

Or email: [web@TuijungaWatershed.org](mailto:web@TuijungaWatershed.org)

**Tujunga Watershed**  
**PO Box 176**  
**Sunland CA 91041**

**"It Takes A Village" – Thank you!**

In **addition** to those already acknowledged on page 1, the following individuals, agencies or organizations wrote letters or circulated petitions, or provided education, advice, support, encouragement or donations in 2003. (Apologies in advance for those who may have been missed!) Additionally, we'd like to acknowledge the media, without whom the Hansen Dam story could not have been so effectively communicated: thank you to the Foothill Sentinel, Los Angeles Daily News, Los Angeles Times, L.A. Weekly, and National Public Radio.

- |   |  |                                   |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Jim & Laurie Agnew                      | Teresa Ghezzi                            | Terry Olson                       |
| Eric Ahlroth                            | Guillermo Gonzalez                       | Jennifer Packer                   |
| Mike & Pat Anderson                     | Terri Grant                              | Rommel Pascual                    |
| Sheila Andrews                          | Cris Gresham                             | Katherine Paull                   |
| <b>Arroyo Seco Foundation</b>           | Cheryl Greslie                           | Sal Piscapo                       |
| Joan Bachand                            | Mary Griffin                             | <b>Pacoima Beautiful</b>          |
| Eric Balsam                             | Marlene Grossman                         | Duncan Pain                       |
| Vic Bapna                               | James & Andrea Gutman                    | <b>Project GRAD</b>               |
| Laura Barraclough                       | <b>Habitat Works</b>                     | Jesus Puentes                     |
| Claire Bartels                          | <b>HD Lakes Coalition</b>                | Michael Pujdak                    |
| Dawn Batchelor                          | Julie Harding                            | Aida Rodriguez                    |
| Charles Benson                          | Karen Harrison                           | Ann Rodriguez                     |
| Gregg Bilson                            | Marc & Royan Herman                      | Francisco Rodriguez               |
| Carla Bouchard                          | David Hernandez                          | Carol Roper                       |
| Lynette Bowry                           | Phyllis Hines                            | Christina Ross                    |
| Victoria Branch                         | Arnulfo Huerta                           | Kristine Sabo                     |
| Tim Brick                               | Felipe Huerza                            | <b>SF Rangers &amp; Sidekicks</b> |
| Gary Brown                              | <b>Foothill Trails District NC</b>       | Miguel Santiago                   |
| John & Susan Brunot                     | Lisa Hacker                              | Almendra Savay                    |
| Jennifer Burrows                        | Kandee Haertel                           | Annette Scherr                    |
| <b>CA Bay Delta Authority</b>           | Linda Jones                              | Ilsa Setziol                      |
| <b>CA Dept of Conservation</b>          | Pavel Jordan                             | <b>Shadow Hills POA</b>           |
| <b>CA Dept of Fish &amp; Game</b>       | <b>Kagel Canyon Civic Asso.</b>          | Rorie Skei                        |
| <b>CA State Parks &amp; Rec</b>         | Mary Kaufman                             | <b>Small Wilderness Area</b>      |
| Diego Cadena                            | Barbara Kempe                            | <b>Preservation</b>               |
| Stephen Cain                            | Greg Kendall                             | Nancy Snider                      |
| Elaine Canter                           | Albert Knight                            | Rosendo Solis                     |
| Julie Clark                             | Elektra Kruger                           | Robin Spurs                       |
| Kim Clark                               | <b>LVT Homeowners Asso.</b>              | George Stebbins                   |
| <b>Clean Water Coalition</b>            | <b>LVT Improvement Asso.</b>             | Rosalind Stewart                  |
| Ivan Cole                               | Teresa Lamb                              | Mary-Kate Stoeber                 |
| Roberta Cole                            | Stephanie Landregan                      | Michele Stone                     |
| Charlie Cook                            | Steve Larson                             | <b>Sunland-Tujunga NC</b>         |
| Karen Criswell                          | Andy Lipkis                              | <b>Sylmar Hang Gliders</b>        |
| Steve Crouch                            | Howard & Tama Lockwood                   | Barbara Tarnowski                 |
| Liselotte Crowell                       | <b>LA City Council's</b>                 | Rick Thomas                       |
| Pat Davenport                           | <b>LA River Adhoc Comm</b>               | <b>Tree People</b>                |
| Erwing Davis                            | <b>LA City DPW</b>                       | Dale Thrush                       |
| Mary Decker                             | <b>LA County DPW</b>                     | Michael Tou                       |
| Phil Doudar                             | Larry Markes                             | Bill Turner                       |
| Randy Drew                              | Cheryl Mabey                             | <b>Valhalla Water Association</b> |
| Heather Driscoll                        | Bill Mabie                               | <b>Valley Horse Owners Asso.</b>  |
| Marcia Drucker                          | Mark Mackowski                           | Thomas Van Cott                   |
| <b>Ducks Unlimited</b>                  | Al Martinez                              | William Van Erps                  |
| <b>East Valley Coalition</b>            | E.M. Martinez                            | Enrique Velazquez                 |
| <b>East Valley Feed &amp; Tack</b>      | Juan Martinez                            | Antonio Vellen                    |
| Joe Edmiston                            | Martine Martinez                         | Steve Veres                       |
| <b>Env. Justice Coalition for Water</b> | Rodrigo Martinez                         | Ann Marie Walbert                 |
| <b>Eq. Conservation Resource</b>        | Mary Martinez                            | Eleana Walters                    |
| Stevi Fielding                          | Sandy & Sue McGregor                     | Stephen Walters                   |
| Carol Ford                              | Sheila Mears                             | Christine Whittaker               |
| Patti Friedman                          | Mary Mullen                              | Bill Whittle                      |
| <b>Friends of the LA River</b>          | Stan Narywayko                           | Bryon Wong                        |
| Kimball Garrett                         | <b>Natural Resources Defense Council</b> | Gil Wong                          |
| <b>Glendale-LaCresenta VOICE</b>        | <b>North Valley Coalition</b>            | David & Tiffany Wrathford         |
|   |  | Sandra Yusta-Burrows              |

**Editorial on the Future of Hansen Dam**  
 Why citizens cannot afford to NOT get involved

In 1999 the LA Dept of Recreation and Parks (as required by Prop K) conducted a series of well-advertised workshops throughout the NE Valley. The overwhelming majority of 700 citizens who participated (from Arleta, Pacoima, Sylmar, Lake View Terrace, Sunland-Tujunga, and Sun Valley) expressed the following desire regarding development at Hansen Dam: "Do nothing. Leave It Alone."

Unfortunately, the "Powers That Be" (or, "Campaign Contributors to The Powers That Be"?) continue to seek development of the last significant habitat area that remains within the City of Los Angeles. Is that discouraging? Of course. When an agency seems to be just going through the motions, with no intention of allowing public input to change a pre-ordained course of action, that's not democracy – it's just a waste of everyone's time. But we prefer to look on the bright side: those workshops provided a valuable lesson. Having identified what doesn't work, we just need to switch tactics to something that DOES work.

If an agency isn't listening to its citizen stakeholders, then the discussion needs to be taken higher up, in a manner that produces positive results.

The population surrounding Hansen Dam is widely diverse culturally, ethnically, and economically, but we have this in common: **We** are the ones who really care about this area's best interests. To fulfill our duty and responsibility as citizens, we need to **get involved**. Now. Before it's too late.

There's an old saying: "All that is necessary for evil to flourish is that good people do nothing."

Where tens of thousands of current users see beauty and nature at Hansen Dam, other people see a vast vacant lot, without value except for its potential to yield construction contracts. Where many seek peace, spiritual renewal and a haven from the chaos and stress of city life, a few seek sweetheart deals and "pay-to-play" business opportunities. Even the basin's original purpose – flood control – has been compromised by tunnel vision and foolishness.

"It's for the kids." The Tujunga Watershed Council & Stakeholders is very concerned about the quality of life for all of Los Angeles' children – and for those children's children, and for those children's great-grandchildren. The stats are inarguable – Los Angeles doesn't have enough open space, and the children (and adults) are suffering.

However, the following is equally inarguable – developing Hansen Dam does nothing to improve the stats. The only way to rectify the shortage is by designating **new** land for parks, thereby increasing the overall percentage of open space, especially in the city's most desperately open-space-poor neighborhoods. "The kids" need parks and playing fields within **walking distance**.

Hansen Dam (raw & "un-improved") is one of the most POSITIVE features this city has. What other major metropolis has wildlife habitat of this size, scope and diversity within city limits, easily accessible to schoolchildren, yet providing fascinating views of Nature at its most primitive? Destruction of this rare wild jewel serves the best interests of no one, except those who profit financially from development.

The save-the-lakes campaign proved that citizens **can** make a difference – when they utilize their time and energy in positive, well-focused, well-informed directions that produce results.

So please, help us save ALL of Hansen Dam, not just the lakes!

Deb Baumann