

President's Message by Andrew Sears

Time for A New Vision for Silver Lake Boulevard

When Silver Lake Reservoir was first completed 1907, its engineering was a symbol of pride for the fledgling city. The grounds were landscaped with 2000 trees and opened to the public. A magnificent Silver Lake Parkway was envisioned as a commuter route stretching from Griffith Park, past the new reservoirs, to Wilshire Blvd.

Along the proposed parkway were stunted subdivision streets and an intermittent stream named Bimini Slough. In places, the stream was a stagnated garbage dump filled with refuse from the city brimming at its edge. In others, it flowed freely, reaching Ballona Creek and the Pacific Ocean. It was a hazard to most, but an oasis to biologists intent on documenting the flora and fauna native to Los Angeles.

Those who envisioned Los Angeles as a future world-class city saw the slough as an opportunity for a grand linear park. They imagined a road weaving its way southward alongside stream crossings and footpaths that meandered through woodlands dedicated to the enjoyment and study of wildlife and nature.

To see such a parkway today, one only need visit other major cities where they abound. But in Los Angeles, a small vocal minority opposed the parkway with the backing of real estate developer Colonel J. B. Lankershim, who wanted to build a railroad instead. For over 10 years, the city worked to educate this group on the project's benefits until WWI called up every dollar otherwise slated for municipal beautification.

Now that the reservoirs are being taken offline the DWP can once again realize the bonus potential of their property. They no longer regard it for its utilitarian value alone. Rather, they see it as a rare opportunity for a bird sanctuary and a lakefront open space in a city bursting at the seams.

After the parkway plan was abandoned, the boulevard was hastily rolled out without design. With sparse places to safely cross it might as well have become Lankershim's railroad. As it passes the reservoir, barbed wire tops a chain link fence. The secondary highway has become a speedway, increasingly dangerous as it slashes through the residential community. One obstacle to finally realizing the dream of a beautiful boulevard is the way it's viewed by transportation officials and the commuters who abuse it.

New concepts can include traffic-calming measures like landscaped bump-outs at intersections, to create a living, breathing, safer boulevard - from the new library (under construction at Glendale Blvd.), along the reservoir parks, the shops, clubs, galleries, restaurants and homes - all the way to the 101 Freeway. The boulevard connects our diverse, progressive population and the places that make Silver Lake remarkable. A unified plan will integrate all elements of our community so that it won't just be a clogged commuter artery. It'll be an actual boulevard where people can park and safely cross the street, or walk without competing against the traffic that so closely resembles a freeway.

Activism is part of our heritage. The Silver Lake Master Plan, now seven years old, was the first chance in over 90 years for this community to decide the fate of the reservoir property. Just four months ago, over seven hundred Silver Lakers donned "Open The Meadow Now" stickers on a glorious Saturday morning and entered the Meadow for the first time in 60 years. City Council President Eric Garcetti and Councilmember Tom LaBonge bring our neighborhood sublime gifts with their support of the Master Plan, the upcoming pedestrian path on Silver Lake Blvd, and the opening of the meadow. Our new State Assemblymember Paul Krekorian closely watches the progress. The Audubon Society and Sierra Club eagerly anticipate the day that Angelenos young and old can come enjoy the calm of nature and learn about wildlife habitats in our midst.

The reservoir nature preserves will soon be cause for celebration. But for safer crossings, our city and state representatives need support to realize a new City Beautiful boulevard that makes sense. Call them, write them, sign up at our website to be notified about workshops. Do what it takes to make your voices be heard. It's our neighborhood, our children, it will be our preserve, and it can be our boulevard.

What is CSSLR?

Formed in 1988, the Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs is a non profit, public benefit corporation dedicated to preserving the historical, aesthetic, ecological and recreational benefits of Silver Lake's open water reservoirs. For more information about CSSLR, the Silver Lake Master Plan or to volunteer your services, please contact us at webmaster@csslr.org or call our hotline - 323.259.3919.

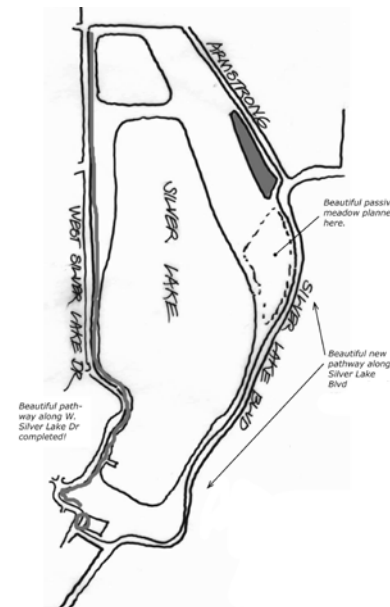
Thanks to Alert Communications of Pasadena for providing our hotline telephone service.

Path extension coming soon

By Mark Harvey

Phase Two of the Silver Lake reservoirs' pedestrian path is set to begin in the final months of 2007. The project, which will nearly complete the encircling of the reservoirs with a separated, pedestrian friendly path, was scheduled to begin in May, but was delayed to accommodate several protected nesting bird species found on the reservoir property: the Red Tailed Hawk, Black Phoebe, Barn Owl, and Bustit, observed during a bird survey. Each observed species required a 300-foot to 500-foot buffer zone for the six- to 10-week fledgling season. The Phase Two portion of the path runs along Silver Lake Boulevard between Armstrong Avenue to Van Pelt Place.

The new path will be constructed inside the reservoirs' existing perimeter fence on Silver Lake Boulevard. A new fence will be built between the path and the reservoir in the meadow area to protect the water supply. The existing bike lane and roadside buffer zone along the boulevard will remain unchanged. Construction planning began in October, 2005 and included the city's Department of Water and Power the Bureau of Engineering, the Board of Public Works, the L.A. Forestry Advisory Committee, the offices of City Council President Eric Garcetti and Councilmember Tom LaBonge, and the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council. Two Silver Lake community meetings were held in August and September of 2005 to collect residents' opinions. Funds for the path come from the city and state park bond money secured for the project by former State Assemblymember Dario Frommer.



It's your path, become a "Path Pal"

By Leslie Edmonds

Don't you just love the pedestrian path along West Silver Lake Drive and Armstrong? Hardly an hour goes by when there's not someone walking, running, pushing baby carriages, or strolling a dog somewhere around the reservoirs, arguably one of the great urban amenities of Los Angeles.

While our path is popular, it needs regular care and attention. To that end, CSSLR has created the community volunteer **PATH PAL** program to attend to the path's appearance, safety and usability. Our activities will include regular weeding events, installation of special trash cans to encourage litter pick-up, and periodic seminars to promote appreciation of the reservoirs' wildlife features and landmarks. We held our first weeding party April 28.

Our next event will be held from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, October 20. We will meet at the corner of Silver Lake Boulevard and Armstrong. Tools, trash bags, water and snacks will be provided.

For more information about our programs and to become a **PATH PAL**, please go to our website, www.csslr.org, and click on **PATH PAL**.



CSSLR members and Silver Lake residents weed along Armstrong Ave. April 28, 2007.



Making Waves

The Newsletter of the Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs
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Learn what **YOU** can do to:

- Make crossing Silver Lake Blvd safer
- Have your voice heard about the meadow
- Become a Path Pal

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Let's allow Silver Lake's ecology to go native

By Garry George, Executive Director, Los Angeles Audubon Society

Imagining what the Silver Lake Reservoirs' environment might become as it moves toward being removed from the city domestic water supply is exciting, and I'm pleased that Los Angeles Audubon Society is participating in that process.

To be sure, the reservoirs are man made, but there is a reason they are there: the location is a natural watershed. The centerpiece of the environment's ecology is clearly the two reservoirs. We've already witnessed wintering ducks, geese and other migratory birds stopping over in the chlorinated reservoirs. What might happen when they are no longer chlorinated? What might happen if there were native food sources in the lakes and reeds and rushes along the edges? What might happen if there were an island in the middle to protect Great Blue Herons and other shy nesters while we watch them from afar?

I imagine what the native plantings around the area might attract. Already, Red-tailed Hawks and Great Blue Herons nest in eucalyptus trees, and Black Phoebes and Bushtits nest in some of the non-native vegetation. I imagine how full of butterflies and birds the meadow might be if it were planted with native grasses. California native plant communities are preferred for California native insects, birds, and other wildlife. Their adaptive associations go back over hundreds of thousands, and maybe millions, of years. Chemicals from native plants are released in the air and travel on air streams until butterflies and other insects find them from miles away. Birds find the insects and native fruit. This is especially crucial twice a year when migration swells our populations of birds by tens of millions. Native insects and plants feed those birds on their stopovers. We get to see these glittering colorful songbirds for a day or two, and then they are gone for another six months. Birds are only one part of the ecosystem that Silver Lake residents (especially children) could enjoy.

The philosophy of landscaping with non-natives because they are faster or cheaper is an old and dead one for me. It has made Los Angeles a hodgepodge with no sense of place, a dead zone. It is worth the time and expense to create a native ecosystem, especially when it replaces a non-native one. I imagine this for Silver Lake reservoir, because now is the time to be dreaming about and investigating those possibilities. Now, while there is still time to plan it right and sustain it over time.

What's happening with the Meadow?

- The City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (BOE) will release early this fall its California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) initial study of the environmental impacts of opening the Meadow as a nature preserve to the public.
- The CEQA report will indicate whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or a Negative Declaration must be prepared for the Meadow (visit www.ceres.ca.gov/ for more information).
- During the CEQA document public review period, anyone may submit comments for the public record.
- A community meeting will be held after the release of the CEQA document to review and discuss the findings.
- Please visit www.csslr.org to keep posted on the Meadow.

Did you know:

For years CSSLR members helped the Audubon Society conduct its annual Christmas Bird Count on the Silver Lake reservoirs property. Among the birds identified were Canada Goose, Buffle Head, Heerman and Western gulls, Ruddy Ducks, American Coot, Ring-necked Duck, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail and Red-breasted Merganser. The local count, part of an international event that uses bird population changes as early indicators of environmental shifts, was suspended when stringent post 9/11 security measures eliminated access inside the fence. CSSLR looks forward to resuming the counts in the near future.

DWP water quality project timeline

By Maryann Kuk

More than a century after the Silver Lake and Ivanhoe reservoirs became a part of the Los Angeles municipal water system, the city's Department of Water and Power will remove them from the delivery system and allow these two bodies of open water to gradually revert to a more natural state. CSSLR is pleased that the DWP has decided to relocate the water supply to an underground tank just outside Griffith Park. CSSLR enthusiastically supports this move.

However, the water relocation project, which allows the city to meet new, more stringent state and federal water quality standards, will still require some construction in and around our neighborhood. Although the timeline will change, the DWP expects to take Silver Lake off-line in 2011 and Ivanhoe in 2014 after the project is finished. The DWP has agreed to maintain the existing water levels and will maintain the health of the water.

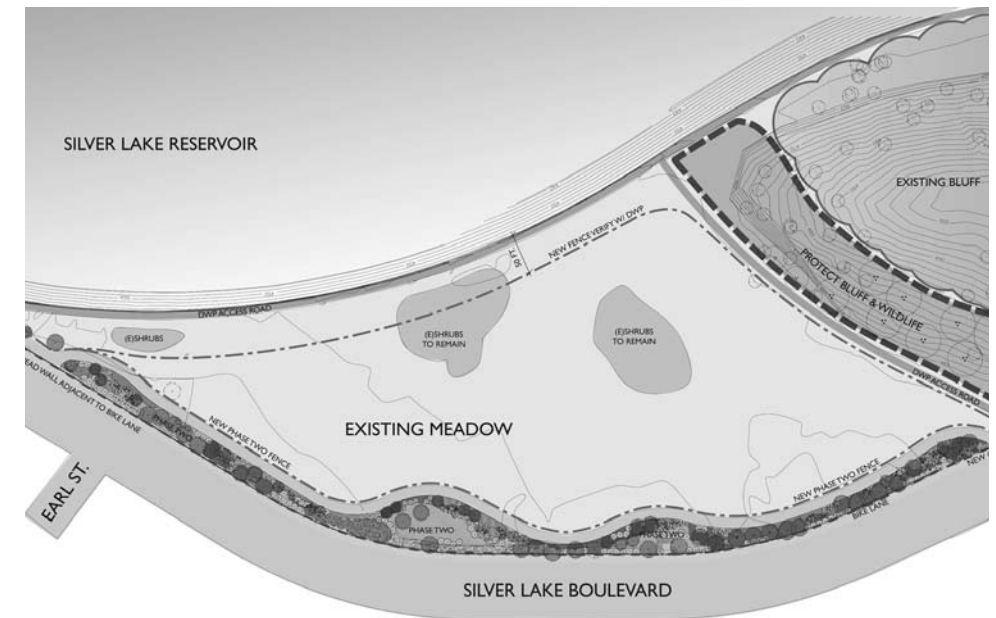
The DWP will construct a regulating station beneath the grassy slope at the intersection of West Silver Lake Drive and Castle near Westerly Terrace. This project will take six months and will run concurrently with the 2-year water conduit tunnelling under West Silver Lake Drive. There will be two access pits on West Silver Lake Drive, one near Armstrong and the second between Balmer and Castle. This two-year project will be disruptive to traffic.

WE NEED YOU to help make crossing SLB safer

By Leni Fleming

Anyone who stands on Silver Lake Blvd. waiting for a gap in traffic before darting across to the path knows how difficult the crossing can be. We need a marked safety crosswalk on Silver Lake near Cove or Earl, and CSSLR has been working to obtain one. Please help us persuade the Los Angeles Department of Transportation that pedestrian safety is as important as speedy traffic flow. **Contact DOT General Manager Gloria Jeff (gloria.jeff@lacity.org)** to voice your support for a marked and protected crosswalk on Silver Lake Boulevard.

Additionally, some community members have expressed concern regarding potential parking congestion after the Meadow is opened. Similar worries surfaced in anticipation of Phase I of the walking path along West Silver Lake Drive, Tesla and Armstrong. However, there is absolutely no evidence of any parking problems associated with the path. Most people using the path walk to the Reservoir, and we expect that to continue when the second half of the path opens next year. But those who choose to drive can still be accommodated. The east side of Silver Lake Boulevard between Duane and Glendale can hold nearly 80 cars. Still, CSSLR will continue to study the parking issue, and always welcomes community input.



Meadow rendering courtesy of Mia Lehrer & Associates

Meadow History & Future

Plans for the meadow along Silver Lake Boulevard to be opened to pedestrian and other passive recreation use has generated much debate and concern in the neighborhood. We have been asked to "Save the Meadow." But what is it exactly that we're being asked to preserve?

Did you know that the Meadow, an approximately 6.5 acre grassy area, was originally a shallow part of the reservoir that was "filled in" in the 1950's to improve circulation in the reservoir's water quality. Currently the meadow's lawn needs thousands of gallons of water and a machine-mowing 24 times every year.

CSSLR believes the meadow can be a much more important, interesting and integral part of the Silver Lake community. We believe the meadow can be a place where native plants from the "Sage Scrub" mosaic enhance native wildlife habitats, and thrive on natural rainfall, where rain seeps into the ground and improves the Ballona Creek watershed. It can be a place where our families walk, meet with one another and maybe a ranger, and where our kids touch our natural world with their own hands and learn that nature is with us everywhere.

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THE TIMELINE BELOW SUMMARIZES THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY CSSLR OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE SILVER LAKE RESERVOIRS.

1988/89	1989	1994/96	1997/98	1998	1999	2000	2003	2004/05	2006	2007	
<p>October 1988 DWP announces plans to cover Ivanhoe Reservoir</p> <p>November 1988 The Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs (CSSLR) is founded</p> <p>February 1989 CSSLR becomes a founding</p>	<p>member of the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs (CPOR) to work with other reservoir communities on their multi-million dollar water quality improvement projects</p> <p>March 1989 CSSLR and Silver Lake Residents Association (SLRA) successfully apply</p>	<p>to designate the Silver Lake and Ivanhoe Reservoirs L.A. Cultural-Historic Monument No. 422, a designation limited to the dams and the bodies of water</p> <p>February 1996 CSSLR & SLRA unite to develop Silver Lake Master Plan (SLMP)</p>	<p>Spring 1997 DWP enters agreement to develop SLMP</p> <p>Spring 1998 DWP General Manager S. David Freeman announces DWP-funded contract for Silver Lake Master Plan</p>	<p>Fall 1998 Mia Lehrer & Associates selected to create Silver Lake Master Plan</p> <p>March 1999 Reservoir Master Plan Workshop #1</p>	<p>May 1999 Reservoir Master Plan Workshop #2</p> <p>July 1999 Reservoir Master Plan Workshop #3 (550+ attendees at each of 3 meetings)</p>	<p>December 2000—DWP Board of Commissioners adopts Silver Lake Master Plan</p> <p>March 2001 Public presentation of completed Silver Lake Master Plan</p> <p>November 2001 Three CSSLR Directors, 1 SLRA Member and 12 others named</p>	<p>to Master Plan Steering Committee by City Council District 13 member Eric Garcetti</p> <p>November 2003 Community Workshop on path along W. Silver Lake Drive, Tesla and Armstrong is held with more than 500 attendees and 300 respondents to opinion survey</p>	<p>2004–2005 Construction of Phase 1 improvements</p> <p>Fall 2005 Community Workshops on Phase 2 Master Plan improvement (completion of path around reservoirs)</p>	<p>Fall/Winter 2006 Community Meetings on Phase 3 Master Plan improvements</p>	<p>March 2007 Council President Eric Garcetti announces that maintenance funding is secured for Phase 3</p> <p>April 2007 Open Meadow Day, first time in 60 years that meadow is open, hosted by Garcetti and Councilman Tom LaBonge</p>	<p>Fall 2007 Construction begins on pedestrian path completion</p>