

Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, November 3, 2021
2:00pm - 4:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

*Rami Gindi, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Art Castro, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
*John Huynh, LA Dept. of Water and Power (Agency)
Alfredo Magallanes, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Agency)
John Luker, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (Community)
Max Liles, (Community)
Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)
Yazdan Emrani, Glendale (Municipal)
Patrick DeChellis, La Cañada Flintridge (Municipal)
Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
Christine Peters, Los Angeles (Municipal)
*TJ Moon, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
*Brent Maue, Pasadena (Municipal)
Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Clarasophia Gust, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Carlos Moran, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)
Max Podemski, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice-Chair

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River WASC, welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

The District conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. District Staff also provided a Spanish translation of the tutorial.

Note that the roll call item was moved to later in the agenda.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 6th, 2021

The District provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes, by Member Yazdan Emrani. Member Patrick DeChellis seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the October 6th, 2021 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Upon reminder from District Staff, Chair Villegas invited committee members to make self-introductions. Chair Villegas established quorum.

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no committee member updates.

District Staff provided an update:

- Funds transfer process is initiated; currently setting up transfer agreements for the newly approved projects.
- All Infrastructure Program projects for ULAR were reviewed by the Scoring Committee. Three projects were scored. The remaining projects require the submission of additional information and will return to the Scoring Committee to be scored at a later date.
- District provided comments to the quarterly reports. Resubmittals were due October 31. Resubmittals will be summarized by the District and presented to WASC for feedback. Next quarterly reports are due November 15 for the Infrastructure Program and Scientific Studies Program. A summary of the reports will be presented to WASC.
- On October 7, the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) received an implementation update presentation from District staff regarding the progress of the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP). The update was well-received. The slides are available on the SCWP website, under the ROC webpage.
- The Board of Supervisors are acting under the authority of a new bill (AB 361) that was signed into law effective October 1 which authorizes public committees to continue meeting without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing every 30 days and will act to cover all the commissions and committees under their authority.
- The County is also preparing for in-person meetings in the future, but a date for returning to in-person meetings has not been set yet. The Board is requesting vaccination proof from County workers; the District will be sending an email about this to SCWP team in the near future.
- Committee members who do not have designated alternates for WASC meetings should work with District Staff to identify alternates and initiate the onboarding process. Committee members should provide 60 day-notice to District Staff if they plan to step down.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Clarasophia Gust, Adi Liberman and Carlos Moran provided an update:

- The ULAR Watershed Area was divided between the three Coordinators so that those looking to connect with the Coordinators have a designated point of contact. The Coordinators clarified that they work collaboratively across the whole Watershed Area.
- Project concepts are being identified and developed.
- Watershed Coordinators have been working with Technical Assistance Teams and City Council Districts to support and identify project opportunities.
- An eNewsletter and social media presence has been developed for local stakeholder education efforts.
- A database of interested parties and community events is being developed as a resource for the community.

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- Watershed Coordinators have been collaborating with other regional coordinators and identifying opportunities to advance watershed-wide education efforts.
- Watershed Coordinators will continue outreach to cities and Council Districts, participate in community events, attend water equity training programs, and work on the eNewsletter and social media presence for the ULAR Watershed Area.

Member Veronica Padilla-Campos thanked the Watershed Coordinators for the thorough update and requested a progress report and map on projects located in disadvantaged communities. Chair Villegas clarified that the projects for the map would include those from the past two rounds of projects and thanked the Watershed Coordinators for their work.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

No ex parte communications were disclosed.

6. Public Comment Period

See Meeting Minutes Attachments for submitted public comment cards.

Brad Wardynski (Craftwater Engineering) provided an update on a Scientific Studies Program project, Maximizing Impact of Minimum Control Measures, that was presented at the previous WASC meeting. The project received a letter of support from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Lauren Venu Roth (3Rwater) expressed support for the Scientific Study proposed by SEITec and the Community-Centered Optimization of Nature-Based BMPs Starting with the Gaffey Nature Center Facility Scientific Study. The data that will be collected at the Center will be important for optimizing nature based BMPs. The project also provides opportunities for community engagement and growing the green infrastructure workforce.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items:

a) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentation

i) Community-Centered Optimization of Nature-Based BMPs Starting with the Gaffey Nature Center Facility

Presentation by Dr. Shahriar Eftekhazadeh. This study aims to optimize: 1) plant varieties and species and 2) the design and O&M of nature-based biofiltration BMPs, with a special focus on the community.

Member Padilla-Campos asked if the project team includes a dedicated member who will be doing the outreach and whether the project includes a specific outreach plan that shows when the community will be engaged. Dr. Eftekhazadeh clarified that there is budget for community outreach in the first stages of the project and called on Deborah Deets, who is a City of LA Sanitation District (LASAN) Landscape Architect and has been involved in the project. Deets noted that the scientific study will focus on educating the community on green infrastructure to empower community members to join the workforce. The focus is not necessarily on community outreach, although resources and a dashboard will be available to the public. Member Padilla-Campos suggested that if the project gets approved, the Watershed Coordinators will be a great resource for the study.

Chair Villegas asked if SEITec, a private business that Dr. Eftekhazadeh works for, was the project applicant. Dr. Eftekhazadeh noted that the SCW program encourages non-municipal applicants to apply for the SCWP, with the requirement that there is support from a municipality, specifically for operation and

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maintenance. Dr. Eftekhazadeh clarified that SEITec is collaborating with LASAN and that SEITec is the project applicant. Chair Villegas will follow up with Dr. Eftekhazadeh on this question.

Watershed Coordinator Moran noted that the project site is located in a hot, dry area of the Valley which differs significantly from the cooler areas near the coast and asked how the different climate characteristics will be addressed in the study. Dr. Eftekhazadeh noted that the variability will be accommodated for and asked for Deets' input. Chair Villegas paused the Q&A and noted that the WASC needs clarification on who the project applicant is and whether the project is an LASAN project, as the Chair received conflicting information about the application. Dr. Eftekhazadeh will follow up with Watershed Coordinator Moran to address the question.

b) Technical Resources Program (TRP) Presentations

i) San Fernando Calles Verdes

Presentation by Matt Baumgardner (City of San Fernando), Katie Harrel (CWE) and Cindy Villegas (TreePeople). The project will maximize the City's stormwater capture, water quality, water supply, and flood control potential. Potential project sites have been identified for further evaluation.

Member Art Castro expressed interest in supporting the project, as it is located in the San Fernando Groundwater Basin and in LA Department of Water and Power's service area.

ii) Camino Verde Pocket Park Regional Stormwater Capture Demonstration Project Regional Pathogen Reduction Study

Presentation by H. Ted Gerber (City of South Pasadena) and Cameron McCullough (JLHA). The City is requesting a feasibility study for the diversion, capture and infiltration or use of regional stormwater flows at Camino Verde Pocket Park.

Chair Villegas asked whether the project is publicly owned. Gerber noted that the project is located on a public parcel and is public owned; the park is currently not very developed and the project aims to improve the park.

Member Max Liles asked if the channel is unlined and whether there will be any pretreatment prior to stormwater capture storage. McCullough noted that there is not much data available on the channel, although it looks like there is water flowing; pretreatment options will be based on how the stormwater will be used. Gerber noted that the City has thought of using the stormwater as irrigation, although there are other ideas that will be considered in the feasibility study.

8. Public Comment Period

Francisco Romero (Public Member) was glad to see the various projects and involvement of the Watershed Coordinators and noted that the meeting included useful discussion to take to the East Los Angeles community. Romero also noted that the watershed action community book mentioned in the Watershed Coordinator update is an excellent tool that should be advertised, as it is highly effective in engaging community members of all ages, from kids to parents.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

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10. Items for Next Agenda

- Presentations for Infrastructure Program

Chair Villegas noted that presentations will be on the agenda for December 1, January 5, January 20, February 2, and February 17. After presentations, there will be a discussion on preliminary rankings for the stormwater improvement plan (SIP).

11. Adjournment

Chair Villegas thanked WASC members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

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		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 10-6-2021 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Genevieve Osmena		Ramy Gindi	x	a
Agency	Water Agency	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	x	y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	Paul Liu		John Huynh	x	y
Agency	Sanitation	Alfredo Magallanes	x	Michael Scaduto		y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	x	Javier Solis		y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	x	Sergio Rascon		
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna		Yvette Lopez-Ledesma		
Community Stakeholder	Environment	John Luker	x	Wendi Gladstone		y
Community Stakeholder	Business	Max Liles	x			a
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos	x	Felipe Escobar		y
Municipal Members	Glendale	Yazdan Emrani	x	Edward Hitti		y
Municipal Members	La Canada Flintridge	Patrick DeChellis	x			y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	x	Barbara Romero		y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Max Podemski		Ackley Padilla		
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Christine Peters	x	Rafael Prieto		y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Mark Lombos		TJ Moon	x	a
Municipal Members	Pasadena	Kris Markarian		Brent Maue	x	y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	x			
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Council for Watershed Health	Clarasophia Gust	x			
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran	x			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	11
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	3
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	14
Municipal Members		6				Approved

Attendees

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Patrick DeChellis	Jason Casanova	Mark Hall	Ernesto Pantoja
H. Ted Gerber	CJ Caluag - LACFCD	Jessica Quach	Kelsey Reed
Gregor Patsch	Teresa Villegas	Jennifer Arnold	Melissa Guerrero
Sarai Bhaga	Lauro Alvarado	Jesenia Maldonado	Ramy Gindi (A)
Alynn	Michael Scaduto	Alfredo Magallanes	john huynh
Max Liles	Rebecca Rasmussen	Luis Garcia	Wendi Gladstone
Edward Hitti	Mayra Cabrera - LACFCD	Clarasophia Gust	Brent Maue
Tanya Sullivan	Trevor Davis	Yvana H	Deborah Deets
matthew baumgardner	Johanna Chang	Amanda Zeidner	Cathie Santo Domingo
Conor Mossavi	William O'Braitis	katie	Megan Kung
christine peters	Capucine Hernandez	Adi Liberman	John Luker
TJ Moon	Tori Klug	Maria Ramirez	Katie Harrel
Yaz Emrani	Kevin Chang	Lorena Matos	Jon Ball
Chad Helmle (Craftwater)	Justin Jones - LACFCD	Cameron McCullough	Lauren Roth Venu
Shant Oganessian	shahram kharaghani	Ryan Edgley	Cindy Villegas
Rafael Piamonte	Jeannette Hernandez	Dawn Petschauer	Jennifer Amarant
Darin Son (Note Taker)	Thuan Nguyen	Mike Antos	ilene ramirez
Alynn Sun	Art Castro	Carlos Moran	Jessica Medina
Rafael Prieto	Shahriar Eftekhazadeh	John Scott	Brad Wardynski
Nayiri Vartanian	David Pineda	Susie Santilena	Francisco Romero
Veronica Padilla			