

Scoring Committee

Meeting Minutes



February 1, 2022
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Bruce Reznik, LA Waterkeeper (Nature-Based Solutions/Water Quality), Chair
Dave Sorem, Mike Bubalo Construction Co., Inc (Water Quality)
TJ Moon, LA County Public Works (Water Quality), Vice Chair
David Diaz, Active SGV (Community Investments)

Absent Committee Members:

Kirsten Schwarz, UCLA (Water Quality/Community Investments/Nature-Based Solutions)
Matt Stone, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (Water Supply)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

District staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx. Bruce Reznik, Chair of the Scoring Committee, welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 10, 2022

District staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Member David Diaz, seconded by Vice Chair TJ Moon. The Committee voted to approve the January 10, 2022 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update:

- Under the Regional Program, Transfer Agreements for Round 1 Projects are almost complete, and those for Round 2 are in the process.
- The updated Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) tool has been distributed to all WASCs. All approved Infrastructure Program projects will show up on the SIP Tool.
- For the Municipal Program, Annual Plans are due April 1 to the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCW) email. Annual Plans are required for Municipalities to receive the Municipal Program revenue. Annual reports were due Dec. 31 and can be submitted on the SCW module.
- Applications for the [Low-Income Senior-Owned Special Parcel Tax Exemption](#) and [General Income-Based Tax Reduction](#) are due May 1, 2022. More information can be found on the [SCW website](#).
- On January 11, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act. BOS is reviewing their position every 30 days.

Chair Reznik provided an update on Accelerate LA (ARLA), a group that is developing a series of recommendations to enhance the SCW. A formal report on recommendations has been posted online at www.accelerateLA.org/SCWP.

4. Public Comment Period for Non-Agenda Items

Chair Reznik opened the floor for public comments.

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Annelisa Moe (Heal the Bay), on behalf of the OurWaterLA coalition, provided an overview of two letters (attached) that were submitted to the Scoring Committee and the District that include recommendations about community engagement and nature-based-solutions.

5. Discussion Items:

a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Chair Reznik noted that Ms. Moe sent the two aforementioned letters to Chair Reznik and Vice Chair Moon.

Vice Chair Moon met with the project proponents of the Stormwater Treatment and Reuse (STAR) System Hacienda Park Project, located in City of La Habra Heights, to review the scores given to the project on January 20, 2022. The project proponents are based in Australia, so they were not able to attend the Scoring Committee meeting. The proponents acknowledged that there is no irrigation system, so there should be no points awarded for that. They will resubmit the project in July.

b) Meeting Items

Chair Reznik initiated a discussion on establishing a regular meeting time for the Scoring Committee by summarizing the responses received from Committee Members using the scheduling poll. Chair Reznik proposed meeting on the second Monday of every month from 3 pm to 5 pm. There were no objections from the committee members. District staff will send out calendar reminders for future meeting dates.

6. Public Comment Period for Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

7. Voting Items:

- a) Send all projects with passing scores from the January 10, 2022 Scoring Committee meeting to their respective WASCs
 - i) Angeles Mesa Green Infrastructure Corridor Project Fulton
 - ii) West Los Angeles College Soccer Field Basin Dry Well Project
 - iii) Artesia Park Stormwater Capture Project
 - iv) Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern

A motion to approve Agenda Item 7a was made by Member Dave Sorem, seconded by Vice Chair Moon. The Committee voted to approve the motion (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

8. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting will be Monday, March 14, 2022, 3:00 – 5:00 PM. See the SCWP website for meeting details.

The next agenda will include the following items:

- a) Assessment of previous submissions
- b) SCWP/Scoring Improvements (Scoring Criteria, Application Process/Project Module)

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Chair Reznik asked the Committee to review the ARLA recommendations. Vice Chair Moon asked how the Scoring Committee should consider the ARLA recommendations. Chair Reznik and District staff shared information about how the ARLA recommendations are one stakeholder contribution that will be considered by the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) effort currently underway. There are other efforts underway that will also provide contributions to the MMS, including the US Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) Best Management Practices (BMP) Study in partnership with the Stormwater Planning Division of LA County Public Works, the Nature Conservancy's Proposal for Monitoring, and the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) BMP study. The goal of the MMS study is to determine the extent to which SCW is meeting its programmatic goals. The MMS study, led by DRP Engineering, is expected to be completed mid to late 2023.

9. Adjournment

Chair Reznik thanked Committee Members and District staff and adjourned the meeting.

SCORING COMMITTEE MEETING - February 1, 2022

	Quorum Present		Voting Items	
Member Type	Member	Voting?	01/10/22 Meeting Minutes	Voting Agenda Item 7a
Water Supply	Matt Stone			
Water Quality / Community Investments Benefits / Nature-Based Solutions	Kirsten Schwarz			
Community Investments Benefits	David Diaz	x	Y	Y
Nature-Based Solutions / Water Quality	Bruce Reznik	x	Y	Y
Water Quality	Dave Sorem	x	Y	Y
Water Quality	TJ Moon	x	Y	Y
Total Non-Vacant Seats	6	Yay (Y)	4	4
Total Voting Members Present	4	Nay (N)	0	0
		Abstain (A)	0	0
		Total	4	4
			Approved	Approved

Other Attendees
Annelisa Moe
Bryce Lee
Christine McLeod
Conor Mossavi
Daniel Apt
I EC
Maggie Gardner
Mahliya Puriticacion
Mary Breckell
Oliver Galang
Ryan Jackson
Shahram Kharaghani
Sonali Abraham
Susie Santilena
Trevor Davis
Wendy Dinh
Melina Watts
Cesar Roldan



September 9, 2021

To: Scoring Committee Chair Bruce Reznik (bruce@lawaterkeeper.org)

Scoring Committee Vice Chair TJ Moon (tmoon@dpw.lacounty.gov)

CC: Matthew Frary (MFRARY@dpw.lacounty.gov)

Kirk Allen (KALLEN@dpw.lacounty.gov)

From: OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team (ourwaterla@gmail.com)

RE: OurWaterLA recommendations to the Safe, Clean Water Program Scoring Committee concerning Nature-Based Solutions Scoring Criteria.

The Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) aims to protect water quality within our communities and provide new sources of water for current and future generations. In pursuing this programmatic vision, the County also committed to working towards 14 goals in the SCWP Implementation Ordinance, including the goal to “prioritize nature-based solutions” with the stated “preference for native vegetation.” If designed properly, using healthy soil and vegetation, nature-based solutions (NBS) provide myriad ecosystem benefits as well as community investment benefits (CIB), particularly in comparison to traditional grey infrastructure. Therefore, OurWaterLA (OWLA) continues to advocate for the differentiation between vegetated and non-vegetated NBS (with a preference for vegetated NBS), and for scoring criteria that reflects that differentiation (Attachment 1). Unfortunately, there were many examples during Round 2 when high NBS scores were coupled with low CIB scores.¹ We would like to revisit a conversation about altering the definition and scoring criteria for both CIB and NBS to address this issue, but in the meantime, we must revisit how we approach the 15 NBS points under the current scoring criteria to ensure that the SCWP keeps the promise made to the public to “prioritize nature-based solutions” with a “preference for native vegetation.”

Concerns with the current Scoring Criteria for NBS:

- Implements natural processes or mimics natural processes to slow, detain, capture, and absorb/infiltrate water in a manner that protects, enhances and/or restores habitat, green space and/or usable open space = 5 points
- Utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation = 5 points
- Removes Impermeable Area from Project (1 point per 20% paved area removed) = 5 points

The first bullet point, assessing whether a project “implements natural processes or mimics natural processes to slow, detain, capture, and absorb/infiltrate water in a manner that protects, enhances

¹ One example is the Salt Lake Park Cistern Project, which received 15/15 NBS points, but only 5/10 CIB points. Salt Lake Park is an existing park, so no *new* open space has been created by this project. Another example is the 28th Street Storm Drain Infiltration Project, which received 13 NBS points, but only 2 CIB points because the project only proposed to add 3 trees, which could not effectively reduce heat island effect on their own.



and/or restores habitat, green space, and/or usable open space,” already provides an opportunity to allocate 5/15 points to both vegetated and non-vegetated NBS. Under the current definition of NBS, this allows nature-mimicking projects to score a minimum of 5/15 points in this category. Nature-mimicking projects are often designed to capture or retain water, getting the project water supply points as well, but still receiving some NBS points even if it does not offer the myriad ecosystem benefits and CIB that vegetated NBS projects do. Only 6% of projects from Round 2 did not qualify for these initial 5/15 points. This means that it is very difficult (though not impossible) for projects to not receive any NBS points. On the other hand, there does exist a stringent threshold for a project to receive any water quality or water supply points.

The second bullet point, assessing whether a project “utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation,” offers a lot of flexibility as to what may qualify as “utilizing natural material” and does not require the use of native or any other type of vegetation. Without a sliding scale, projects are often automatically awarded the full 5 points for this category, even when only minimal natural material is used. As a result, 91% of projects in Round 2 received a NBS score of 10 or more points (out of a total possible 15 points), with 48% receiving exactly 10/15 points. This means that the final score for a project is not able to reflect the stated “preference for native vegetation,” or even differentiate between vegetated and non-vegetated NBS in any way.

The third bullet point, assessing whether a project “removes impermeable area from projects,” uses a sliding scale that allows for a clear representation of how much impermeable space a project removes. However, as stated above, there were many examples during Round 2 when high (11-15) NBS scores were coupled with low CIB scores, indicating that the original intent behind the prioritization of NBS – to invest in and benefit our communities – is not accurately reflected in current project scores.

OWLA Recommendations

We recommend that any points awarded under bullet point 3 of the NBS scoring criteria (“removes impermeable area from projects”) be only allocated for *new permeable space created* by the project. If a project is built below an existing park, that does not create any *new* permeable space, even if some surface improvements are proposed.

Additionally, if a project creates new permeable space through the use of, for example, permeable pavement, but does not offer any use of vegetation, it should not be given a full 15/15 NBS points. Therefore, **we also recommend a sliding scale for point allocation under bullet point 2 of the NBS scoring criteria** (“utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation”).

This sliding scale could allocate 1 point for using soil but no vegetation, 3 for using soil and vegetation, 4 for using soil and native vegetation, and 5 for using soil and a variety of native vegetation. This will, of course, require that the project proponents provide more information to the Scoring Committee so they can make this determination. We urge the County to advise project proponents as soon as possible to provide this information to the Scoring Committee.

Members of the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) are tasked with selecting projects for funding that will achieve the 14 SCWP goals, including the goal to “prioritize nature-based solutions” with the stated “preference for native vegetation.” Project selection is not based on project scores, but



project scores have the potential to provide a lot of information during this decision-making process. However, in Round 2, 48% of projects received a NBS score of exactly 10/15 points. This provides little information to the WASC about which projects will better achieve the goals to prioritize NBS or to prioritize native vegetation. Using the OWLA proposed sliding scale would result in a wider range of point allocation from 0 to 15, rather than 91% being between 10/15 and 15/15, and 48% being exactly 10/15. This wider range of scores will provide additional information to the WASC members to allow for a more informed decision-making process, and it will improve transparency for the members of the public who voted to approve, and now fund, the SCWP.

Thank you for considering these recommendations, and for all of the work, time, and expertise that you contribute to the SCWP. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with the County Flood Control District and the Scoring Committee to achieve successful implementation of the SCWP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Belen Bernal".

Belen Bernal

Coalition Coordinator

OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team



ATTACHMENT 1

Revised Definitions

Community Investment Benefits (CIBs): Benefits created in conjunction with Stormwater Capture and reduced Stormwater and Urban Runoff pollution projects, as stated in AB 1180. CIBs include but are not limited to creation and enhancement of parks and wetlands, or creation or restoration of habitat and wetlands; improved public access to recreation and open space or providing enhanced or new recreational opportunities; greening of schools or public right-of-way; flood control; improved public health; reduction of urban heat island effect; carbon reduction/sequestration; improved air quality; green waste reduction/diversion.

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS): Projects that manage Stormwater by: relying predominantly on soils and vegetation to slow, detain, and absorb water; infiltrate water to aquifers; and filter pollutants out of water and air. In the context of urban stormwater management, NBS are practices that use natural systems and processes to treat and manage stormwater runoff. Processes include soil filtration and/or infiltration, or physical and biological treatment using vegetation and/or soils and their biomes. Either or both may be used. As such, NBS can be vegetated or non-vegetated, and may include removing or increasing permeability of impervious surfaces, utilizing spreading grounds, strategically protecting undeveloped mountains and floodplains; creating and restoring riparian habitat and wetlands using bioretention basins (e.g. rain gardens), bioswales, soil enhancement through composting and mulching and, and tree and vegetation planting, with preference for native species; and creating parkway basins.

Vegetated Nature-Based Solutions (NBS): A subset of NBS that include both healthy soil and vegetation as a primary component of their design. The soils and vegetation may be a critical component of the treatment process or installed primarily for habitat and/or aesthetic purposes. Designed properly, vegetated NBS offer abundant co-benefits including but not limited to improvements in air quality, water quality, public health, habitat and ecosystem health, and biodiversity, as well as reduction in heat island effect, and sequestration of carbon.

Non-Vegetated NBS (Non-Vegetated NBS): Another subset of NBS that do not include vegetation but do include soil filtration and/or infiltration. Typically, this would occur beneath the surface as is the case with, for example, infiltration galleries, or permeable paving systems that are unlined. Non-vegetated NBS do not convey the broad co-benefits of vegetated NBS and should be considered as a middle ground between NBS and gray stormwater solutions.

Threshold Score: The threshold score must include at least 5 points from Section C. Community Investment Benefits and 5 points from Section D. Nature-Based projects.



Revised Scoring Criteria (Regional)

C. Community Investment Benefits

10 points	<p>Community Investments – 2 points for achieving at least 1 of the following community benefits, 5 points for achieving at least 4 of the following community benefits, 10 points for achieving 7 of the following community benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Creation and enhancement of parks and wetlands, or restoration of habitat and wetlands;2. Improved public access to recreation and open space or providing enhanced or new recreational opportunities;3. Greening of schools, streets;4. Flood control;5. Improved public health;6. Reduction of urban heat island effect;7. Carbon reduction/sequestration;8. Improved air quality;9. Green waste reduction/diversion;10. Education
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D. Nature-Based Projects

15 Points	<p>Points will be awarded for nature-based projects as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Percentage of project footprint converted from impermeable surface to climate appropriate vegetation:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) 25%-49% - 1 pointb) 50%-74% - 2 pointsc) 75%-99% - 3 pointsd) 100% - 4 points2) Percentage of project footprint covered by new, native vegetation:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) 5%-14% - 1 pointb) 15%-24% - 2 pointsc) 25%-34% - 3 pointsd) 35%+ - 4 points3) Include a number of different/distinct native plant species and type to ensure appropriate diversity and composition:
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 11-20 different/distinct native plant species newly planted – 1 point b) 21-30 different/distinct native plant species (total) newly planted across at least 2 distinct classes (groundcover, shrub, tree) – 2 points c) 31-40 different/distinct native plant species (total) newly planted across all three classes (groundcover, shrub & tree) – 3 points d) 41-50 different/distinct native plant species (total) newly planted across all three classes (groundcover, shrub & tree) – 4 points <p>4) Have an appropriate monitoring and maintenance plan in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 3-5 years – 2 points b) More than 5 years – 4 points |
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Note – There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ for ideal nature-based projects. Project proponents are strongly encouraged to take into account specific community needs in designing projects. For example, in areas prone to flooding, native trees with strong root systems that absorb a significant amount of water may make the most sense; in areas particularly impacted by heat island effect, trees that maximize shade might be most appropriate; and areas highly impacted by poor air quality should consider low VOC-emitting trees...or some combination of all of these in areas impacted by all these concerns.



September 10, 2021

To: Scoring Committee Chair Bruce Reznik (bruce@lawaterkeeper.org)
Scoring Committee Vice Chair TJ Moon (tmoon@dpw.lacounty.gov)

CC: Matthew Frary (MFRARY@dpw.lacounty.gov)
Kirk Allen (KALLEN@dpw.lacounty.gov)

From: OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team (ourwaterla@gmail.com)

RE: OurWaterLA recommendations to the Safe, Clean Water Program Scoring Committee concerning Local Support Scoring Criteria.

The OurWaterLA Coalition (OWLA) has [advocated](#) for better distinguishing good community engagement in the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) in order to move from a paradigm of simply pushing information out to one where projects are developed with meaningful community input and true community ownership. In the [past round](#), the Scoring Committee gave either 0 or 4 points depending on whether there was at least one letter of support from an NGO/CBO. We offer the following recommendations to the Scoring Committee to more accurately and consistently evaluate SCWP projects' community support. Our recommendations are not intended to suggest that local support and community engagement can be achieved by checking boxes, but to provide a sense of how projects could be scored systematically.

Project scoring for local support:

- 0-4 points: The Project demonstrates strong local, community-based support and/or has been developed as part of a partnership with local NGOs/CBOs.

Information available in feasibility studies for evaluation of local support:

- "Prior activities" - Please describe any prior outreach and engagement conducted for this project.
- "Table of support" - The following table details the support by local, community-based organizations for the project.

Based on the information available in SCWP feasibility studies, we recommend the Scoring Committee allocate 0-2 points for prior activities and table of support then combine them to determine the final local support score of 0-4 points. We recommend the following scoring matrix:



	0 points	1 point	2 points
Prior activities	Lack or deny community access to decision-making processes (e.g., closed-door meetings, public notices, fact sheets)	Gather input from the community (e.g., surveys, focus groups, public comment, interactive workshops)	Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into project and integrate community members as key decision-makers (i.e., community advisory committee, community-driven planning)
Table of support	No letters of support from NGOs/CBOs	1-2 letter(s) of support from NGOs/CBOs	3+ letters of support from NGOs/CBOs and community advisory committee; MOU with NGOs/CBOs

As [highlighted](#) by the Scoring Committee, “strong local, community-based support” must include concrete evidence of meaningful support or collaboration(s) established prior to application. We recommend the following guidelines for documentation:

- There should be evidence that prior activities were accessible and community members were involved.
- Letters of support and memoranda of understanding should be from NGOs/CBOs that organize or represent community members that are/will be impacted by the project.
- They should include background on the organization and how long they have worked in the local community.
- They should also include a statement from the NGO/CBO that the project sponsor has integrated the organization into the planning/design process.

Thank you for considering these recommendations, and for all of the work, time, and expertise that you contribute to the SCWP. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with the County Flood Control District and the Scoring Committee to achieve successful implementation of the SCWP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Belen Bernal".

Belen Bernal
Coalition Coordinator
OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team