



SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

**For the
North Santa Monica Bay
Watershed Advisory Steering Committee**

By Melina Sempill Watts
Watershed Coordinator, Safe Clean Water L.A.

November 10, 2022

Photo and Logo, Los Angeles County



**Mark Hovatter,
Head of Operations,
LAUSD:
“The Pony Problem”**



Photo from Wikimedia



1. Facilitate Community Engagement in SCWP

- Coordinated:
 - **Nature Based Solutions Success Stories Conference**
Thursday 11/17 9:00 a.m. – 12:30
 - Optional: Lunch at Adobe Cantina
 - **Agoura Hills and Calabasas Creek Site Tours**
Thursday 11/17 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 - **Santa Barbara Creeks Division Site Tours**
Friday 11/18 9:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Joined coordinators led by Mikaela Randolph to present to Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation
- Attended Malibu Lake Centennial, Agoura Hills 40th Anniversary and Center for Watershed Health 25th Anniversary Dinner
- Interviewed Alex Farassati, Nadine Salas, Erica Gies and Jessica Hall for articles for upcoming Nature Based Solutions Success Stories conference and events
- Suggested Erica Gies as speaker to Malibu Public Library



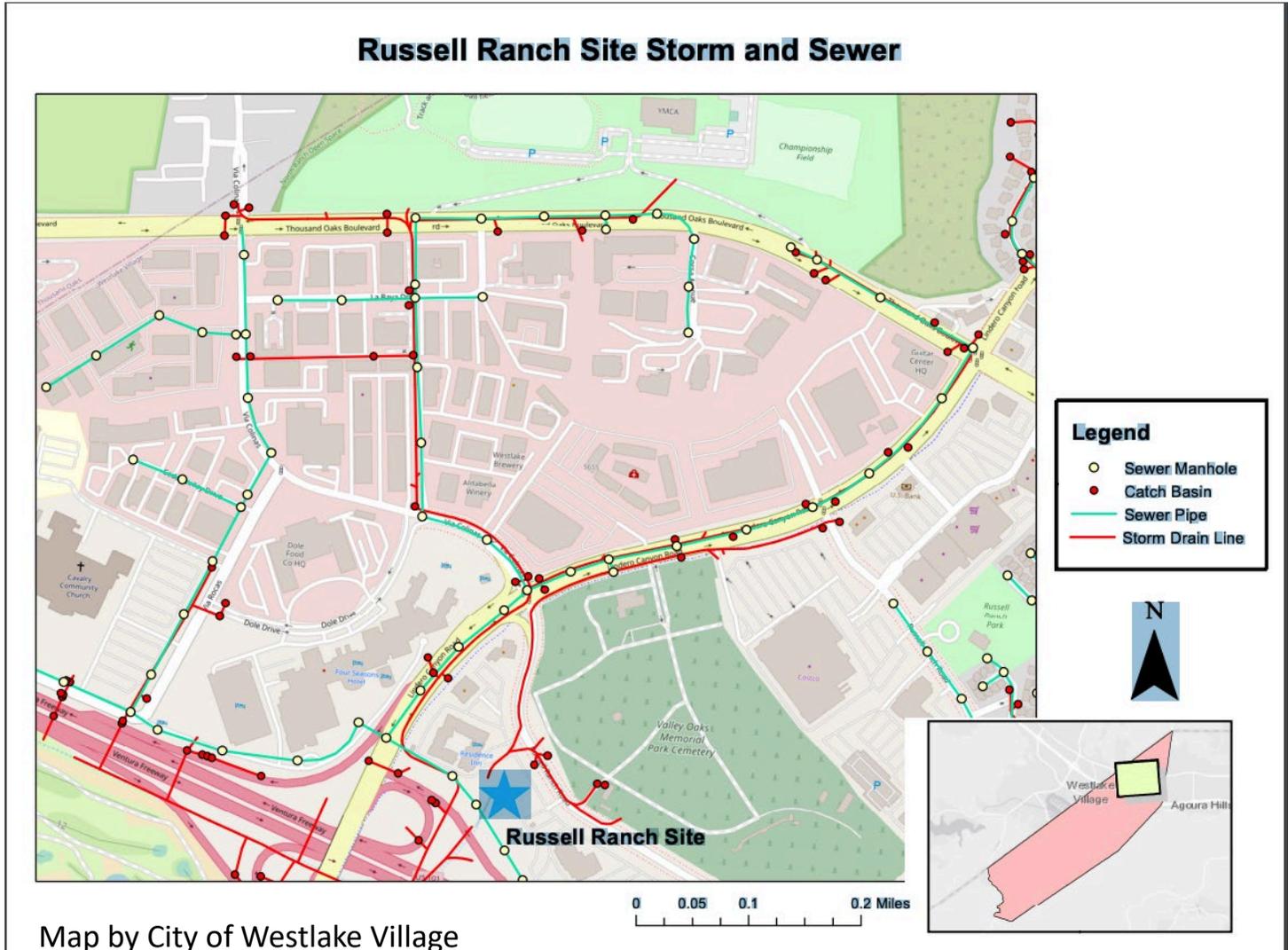
Photo by Watts

2. Identify and Develop Project Concepts

- Reached out to multiple stakeholders to consider building underground cisterns and writing a multi city multi agency Measure W application.
- Asked if they want to manage collaborative Measure W application; Malibu-Las Virgenes COG does not, nor does LA County Public Works, nor does LVMWD, no cities have said yes, and ARLA cannot.
- Asked Austin Toyama if SMMUSD wants to do MWD Innovation Conservation grant; they are too busy
- City of Westlake Village says cisterns idea is gaining traction...not quite ready for Measure W.
- Connected with ARLA, RCDSMM, WBMWD, LVMWD to explore Urban Drought application, still possible, due January 31.
- Gus Meza, Terri Alex and Craig Jones built 6 cisterns into their successful IRWM application.
- LAUSD let me write draft MWD Innovation Conservation Grant for cisterns at Topanga Elementary School.

3. Work with Technical Assistance Teams

Helped Westlake Village City Staff with presentation template for talk about TRP application.



4. Facilitate Identification and Representation of Community Priorities

- Pursued Madelyn Glickfeld's brilliant idea that we create a multi agency / multi city application to fund underground cisterns; Roxanne Hughes' insight, right idea but too early on; we need to see more cisterns in place first
- Suggested presentation on proposed SCWP Credit Trading Program
- Shared Alex Farassati's insight that the ARLA cistern study include O and M costs; ARLA states this is already in place
- Requested update on status of construction / implementation at Gates Park at request of stakeholders



Photo by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works



5. Integrate Priorities Through Partnerships and Extensive Networks

- Supported ARLA in work to create a study that will assess viability and costs of large-scale deployment of cisterns across LMVWD footprint, Upper San Gabriel River Watershed and Long Beach
- Suggested inclusion of Clark Stevens, RCDSMM in the ARLA cistern study; set meeting with him + ARLA Team
- Attended Center for Watershed Health 25th Anniversary celebration
- Attended Agoura Hills 40th Anniversary Celebration
- Attended Malibou Lake Centennial



Photo
by Watts

6. Cost-Share Partners

- Wrote draft grant for Metropolitan Water District Conservation Innovation application on behalf of Los Angeles Unified School District for Topanga Elementary School project
- Gus Meza, West Basin Municipal Water District stated that inclusion of 6 cisterns, 2 in Topanga, 2 in Malibu and 2 in Calabasas, in collaborative IRWM application inspired by conversations with coordinator, total amount within larger grant is for \$48,000
- Working to see if ARLA, RCDSMM, possibly WBMWD, can develop an Urban Community Drought Relief Grant, due January 31
- Staying connected with TreePeople to make sure SEP application is submitted after they bring on new staffer to manage Native Plans Kit project inspired by Dave Roberts
- Reached out to Megan Cooper, California State Coastal Conservancy on behalf of project at City of Calabasas, the Las Virgenes Creek Restoration, Phase III

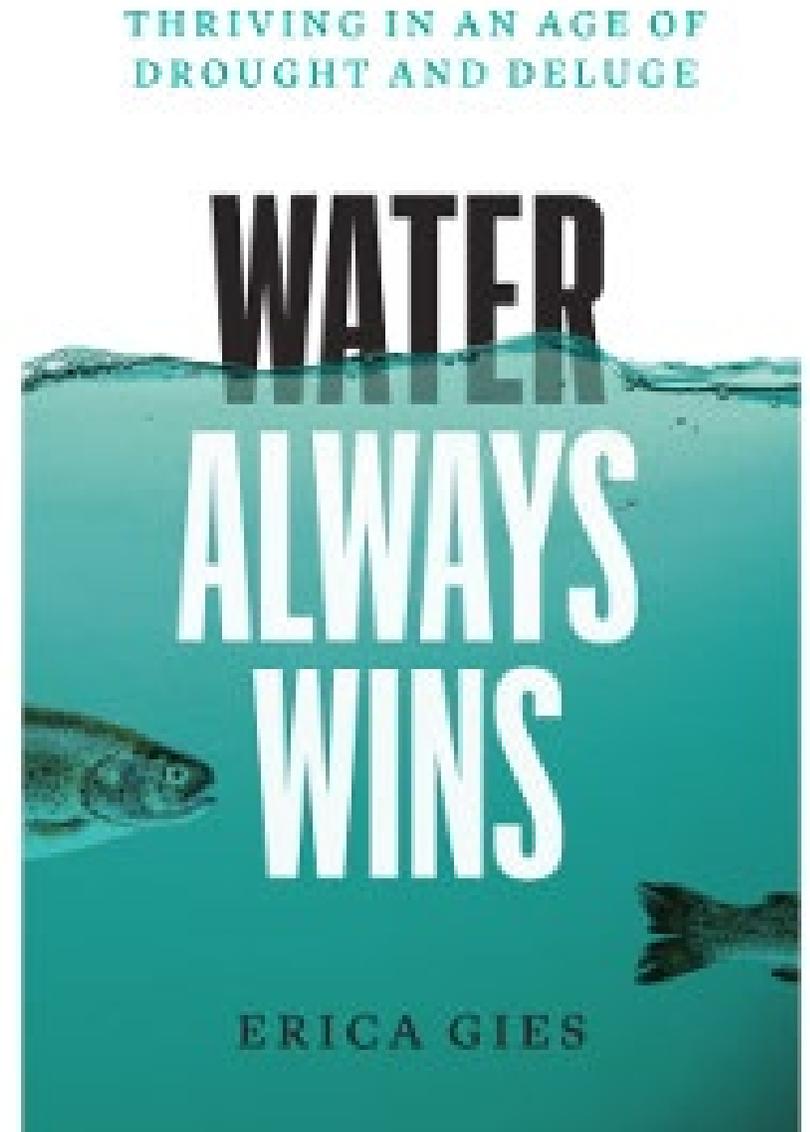


7. Leverage Funding

- Wrote draft grant for Metropolitan Water District Conservation Innovation application on behalf of LAUSD for Topanga Elementary School project
- Gus Meza stated, Inclusion of 6 cisterns in IRWM app. inspired by conversations with coordinator.
- Shared insights on \$500 million in available funding from Megan Cooper of the California Coastal Commission with State Parks and City of Calabasas
- Approached Wildlife Conservation Board to request funding for Las Virgenes Creek Restoration Project, Phase III with Alex Farassati
- Asked Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District if they would like to apply for Metropolitan Water District Conservation Innovation funding; they're too busy
- **Explored cisterns pricing with a number of vendors, key take home: whatever the cistern costs, double it when you include shipping**

8. Local Stakeholder Education

- Nature Based Solutions Success Stories Conference *online*
Thursday, November 17, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30
Keynote, Erica Gies on the Hyporheic Zone and Thorton Creek Restoration
 - Lunch at Adobe Cantina 12:40 – 1:40
- Agoura Hills and Calabasas Creek Restoration Sites Tour, in person
Thursday, November 17, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Santa Barbara Creeks Division Tour, in person, in person
Friday November 18, 9:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Wrote articles on four (4) different speakers at events for local papers
 - Author, Erica Gies, *Water Always Wins*
 - Jessica Hall, *Lost Streams of L.A.*
 - Nadine Salas, Poet and Conservationist
 - Alex Farassati, City of Calabasas



9. Watershed Coordinator Collaboration

- Attended monthly Watershed Coordinator event
- Worked carefully with lead, Mikaela Randolph, Michelle Struthers and Nancy Shrodes to support presentation on Measure W and Watershed Coordinator program to Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission



Photo by Watts

Measure W: Collaborative Application Update



Photo
by Watts

The concept: a multi agency / multi city application for underground cisterns
ARLA study will pinpoint best case scenario outcomes for locations
Updates from L.A. County Department of Flood Control will help stakeholders consider efficacy of this approach as Gates Canyon project progresses
Key issue: who manages the grant application and project implementation?

Asked, but declined:

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works / Flood Control, Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Government, various cities, ARLA cannot

Any entities ready to commit projects?

Under discussion: Lost Hills Sheriff's Station, LAUSD

Not willing to commit at this time but may change:

Westlake Village, Calabasas, Agoura Hills, SMMUSD

One insight, entities that are “on the fence” may be more interested in above ground projects rather than below ground projects

All eyes on:

1. Topanga Elementary School cistern projects
2. IWRM 6 Cisterns
3. ARLA Study



Measure W Application: Increasing Open Space

Mini-history review:

Acquisition of both Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve and King Gillette Ranch were funded in large part by the argument that preserving these regions from development would PREVENT water quality impairments caused by development. Improving water quality pre-emptively is worth funding.

Measure W

→ Goal 3 from the Safe Clean Water Program,

“Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.”

Watershed Coordinator is actively looking for open space acquisition opportunities with MRCA either as a solo applicant, and/or, possibly with California Department of State Parks, National Park Service and Westlake Village.

Insofar as I know, this would be the first Measure W Application going towards an open space purchase.