

# Rio Hondo

## Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

### Meeting Minutes

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Tuesday, March 19, 2024  
1:00pm – 3:00pm  
Library Community Room  
321 S. Myrtle Avenue, Monrovia, CA 91016  
WebEx Meeting

#### Committee Members Present:

\*Jennifer Aborida, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)  
Tom Love, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Agency)  
Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster (Agency), Vice-Chair  
Dave Pierce, LA County Sanitation District (Agency)  
Brent Maue, City of Pasadena Public Works (Agency)  
\*Byran Matsumoto, Nature for All (Community)  
Jill Fosselman, Resident (Community)  
Mark Hall, Greater LA County Vector Control District (Community)  
Edward Belden, Monrovia Resident (Community)  
Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society (Community)  
David Dolphin, Alhambra (Municipal)  
Briget Arndell, Arcadia (Municipal)  
Jalaine Q. Verdiner (Municipal)  
\*Alex Tachiki, Monrovia (Municipal)  
Dawn Petschauer, Pasadena (Municipal), Chair  
Richard Watson, Richard Watson and Associates Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)  
Julie Millett, Richard Watson and Associates Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

\*Committee Member Alternate

#### Committee Members Not Present:

Sal Mendez, El Monte (Municipal)

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

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### **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Dawn Petschauer, Chair of the Rio Hondo (RH) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District) staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. District staff made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

### **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 20, 2024**

District staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Jill Fosselman motioned to approve, seconded by Member Brent Maue. The WASC voted to approve the February 20, 2024 meeting minutes with 10 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 5 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

### **3) Committee Member and District Updates**

Chair Petschauer shared an update on behalf of the City of Pasadena. A community meeting event will be held on March 21st on the Sierra Madre Boulevard Green Street Stormwater Capture Project Technical Resources Program (TRP) project. The TRP used Municipal funds for the design stage and the applicant will return for the SCW Program for construction funds in upcoming Call for Projects in July.

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Member Bryan Matsumoto noted the new SCW Program website update and observed how it is more accessible to the community. Member Bryan Matsumoto expressed desires to showcase projects through one-pagers or case studies on the new website.

District staff provided an update, noting:

- Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) Regional Program Annual Reports were due December 31st, 2023. Progress reports must still be completed even if there was no activity done on the project or if the Transfer Agreement has not been executed for projects. The last Quarterly Report was due on February 15th, and the next Quarterly Report is due May 15th.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) prepared a Biennial Report, also known as the SCW Program Progress Report, which includes a summary of the progress of the Regional Program, Municipal Program, and the District Program. On January 31st, the ROC voted to send the Biennial Progress Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board). The ROC will begin discussing next steps after the Board's Community Stakeholder appointments. More details can be found on the [SCW Program website](#) under the ROC webpage.
- Municipal Progress/Expenditure Annual Reports were due December 31st, 2023. Municipal Annual Plans are due in April 1st before the FY and the Annual Reports are due at the end of the year after the FY, on December 31st.
- Round 4 Regional Transfer Agreements and Addendums are available for download in the Transfer Agreement Module. District staff sent an email on January 24th with instructions on how to navigate the new module. Transfer Agreements will not be downloadable until the Infrastructure Program (IP) Project Developer contract information is uploaded. The new module is for projects included in Round 4 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) and future SIPs only. Projects from previous SIPs can submit documents via email.
- WASC Members whose job connects to specific projects should ask colleagues or consultants to attend WASC meetings to share about or advocate for those projects during SIP deliberations to ensure a fair and transparent process.
- Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) informed the WASC that the Regional Coordination team prepared the first Quarterly Funding Report, now available in the Resources section of the [SCW Program website](#). The Funding Report includes a high-level overview of recent funding policy highlights and a funding matrix that shares currently active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to the SCW Program Infrastructure Program Projects. This is the first of what will be provided quarterly for participants in the SCW Program. Watershed Coordinators are using this tool to support Project Developers seeking leverage funding.

#### 4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Julie Millett presented on recent activities. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Highlights include ongoing discussions with existing SCW Program project proponents regarding project status, as well as upcoming engagement events including the tour of Jeff Seymour Family Center on April 4, an Earth Day outreach event in Whittier on April 13, and attending the Summit for Equity and Resilience in Water on March 26 and 27.

#### 5) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Vice-Chair Kelly Gardner disclosed contact with a local consultant regarding California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance for SCW Program projects. The consultant requested that the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster make a statement concurring that none of the SCW Program projects currently comply with CEQA. Vice-Chair Kelly Gardner noted that the Watermaster does not hold that authority.

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Committee Members discussed project-specific CEQA compliance requirements. Chair Dawn Petschauer noted that the District submitted a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the County Enhanced Watershed Management Plan (EWMP).

Mike Antos noted that the role of the WASC is to recommend funding allocations. WASC recommendations will be presented to the Board, and once approved, the District will initiate Funds Transfer Agreements. District staff added that construction funds are not dispersed via a Funds Transfer Agreement until CEQA documentation is complete.

Vice-Chair Kelly Gardner asked if, in the case that a Design-only project was approved by the WASC, but does not pass CEQA, will funds be reimbursed back to the WASC? Mike Antos noted that once the SIP is approved by the Board and a Funds Transfer Agreement is signed, the Flood Control District becomes responsible for how funds are used by a project proponent and are not an element of the Committee's responsibility.

Upon inquiry, District staff clarified that part of the SCW Feasibility Study requests that the Project Applicant provide preliminary information on the status of CEQA and the anticipated level of environmental review. This information is not part of the Scoring Criteria and is reviewed by District staff.

#### **6) Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

#### **7) Presentations and Discussion Items**

##### **a) Scientific Studies (SS) Peer Review Summary (FY24-25)**

Chair Dawn Petschauer facilitated the discussion of the FY24-25 SS Peer Review Summary. The intent of this independent and rapid review was to provide an unbiased evaluation of the technical adequacy and robustness of each proposal. The SS Peer Review Summary is intended to be a resource for WASC decision making. The Peer Review Summaries can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

##### **i) Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity**

**Presentation by: Ali Sharbat (Cal Poly Pomona) and Mehrad Kamalzare (Cal Poly Pomona)**

Ali Sharbat and Mehrad Kamalzare provided an overview of the SS and reminded the WASC that two of the drywell sites are located within the RH Watershed. The goal of the SS is to identify best management practices (BMPs) for maintaining stormwater drywell capacity.

Upon inquiry, Mehrad Kamalzare informed the WASC that Traffic, Geology, and Soil Typology informed the selection of the drywell locations.

Chair Dawn Petschauer commented on the scale of the project, suggesting that a more controlled, local study can be designed to minimize variability before regional implementation across the watersheds. Ali Sharbat explained that the decision to conduct the study at a regional level was driven by additional project goals, including broader outreach, hosting technical workshops, and providing workforce training. As an academic institution, the study aims to engage a wider audience with its findings and recommendations. Mehrad Kamalzare added that including more watersheds in the study would help reduce costs, and mentioned that some watersheds have similar variables, such as soil typology. The methodology used to analyze these variables can be leveraged across multiple sites. If fewer sites were selected, the study's scope and observations would be more limited.

Upon inquiry, Ali Sharbat addressed the criticism to the technical approach mentioned in the peer review, explaining that the criticism is on the study's exclusion of water quality components. However, the study

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emphasizes infiltration capacity rather than water quality. Ali Sharbat also noted that the study has the capacity to include Water Quality Benefits, but some drywell owners expressed concerns about including that component. Mehrad Kamalzare added that if the WASC is interested in examining other aspects such as pollutants and Water Quality Benefits, the team would be capable of doing so.

Member Bryan Matsumoto raised concerns about the site owners' hesitation to include Water Quality Benefits, and questioned if the owners are reluctant to be held accountable for water quality outcomes. District staff informed Committee Members that the District receives Quarterly Reports that document project statuses and outcomes, which will also be made publicly available. Mike Antos added that in the context of BMP performance, it primarily involves a relationship between the project owner and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board). The Water Board imposes more structured reporting requirements. Post-construction updates will be reported to the SCW Program.

Upon request District staff agreed to investigate and verify which completed funded projects are undergoing post-construction monitoring.

Chair Dawn Petschauer noted that pollutants are a significant variable to consider, which could complicate comparisons across different drywells. Member Dave Pierce concurred and expressed concerns about variability and the ability to isolate infiltration rates from sediment loading. Ali Sharbat informed the WASC that pre-treatment could be incorporated if the project owners are interested. Sediment would also be examined, although not specific compounds that constitute the sediment. Mehrad Kamalzare explained that evaluating many dry wells would also help observe and document trends.

Member Dave Pierce suggested conducting a bench-scale study, potentially examining one or two sites that could be scaled up to real-world conditions before transitioning to a larger scale. Mehrad Kamalzare noted that there are no lab setups that accurately model real-world conditions.

Member Bryan Matsumoto inquired about drywell maintenance and its impact on infiltration. Ali Sharbat explained that drywells often clog, leading to a gradual degradation of infiltration facilities over time. The study aims to explore maintenance practices that can sustain an efficient infiltration rate. Mehrad Kamalzare added that while drywells are designed to survive for years, there is currently no singular guide for maintenance. The study's findings have the potential to inform better drywell design. Member Brent Maue stated that infiltration rate is usually reduced to a factor of three and proposed that reduction factors can be better adjusted to account for higher infiltration rates throughout the County.

Upon inquiry, Ali Sharbat confirmed that 24 drywell sites among the nine watersheds have been identified for the study. The process involves consulting drywell owners and construction companies to identify problematic sites for testing. The study focuses on recently installed drywells, using those infiltration rates as a baseline, and tracking each drywell's performance over a five-year period. Ali Sharbat also confirmed that the project would engage with project owners and Municipalities to solicit feedback.

Member Dave Pierce inquired about other maintenance practices the study will explore. Ali Sharbat explained that maintenance involves examining sediment chambers that require cleaning, conducting annual site visits for infiltration testing, and assessing water infiltration and sediment type during heavy rainfall. The study would use these findings to determine the appropriate cleaning frequency.

Member David Dolphin inquired whether project owners are currently adhering to manufacturer maintenance guidelines and if specifications could be modified. Ali Sharbat clarified that the study primarily involves observation and data collection. Suggestions for improvement may be shared during workshops and outreach events, and later, these enhancements could be proposed to drywell manufacturers.

Chair Dawn Petschauer voiced opinions that the study offers significant value but expressed reservations regarding its scale and variability. Chair Dawn Petschauer expressed that the study should be carefully designed in order to maximize the practical value derived from its findings.

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#### **b) Completed SS Update Presentations**

Chair Dawn Petschauer invited the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) to present an update on the following funded SS. Presentation slides for both SS can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

##### **i) preSIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration** **Presentation by: Turner Lott (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG)), Brad Wardynski (Craftwater), Thom Epps (Craftwater)**

Turner Lott provided an overview of the preSIP study and next steps, emphasizing its functionality, cost-effectiveness, and the collective advantages of examining all projects rather than isolating individual ones.

Upon inquiry, Brad Wardynski explained that the tool revealed opportunities to invest in multi-benefits for disadvantaged communities. However, evaluating those benefits in different ways was not included in the scope, but included in the District's Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS).

Member Bryan Matsumoto inquired about the process for including new proposals in the preSIP, as well as how Watershed Coordinators interface with the tool. Brad Wardynski explained that part of the recommendation to the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) Watershed Management Group (WMG) is to coordinate with the Watershed Coordinators to disseminate information back to the WASC. Additionally, each agency within the WMG can update data twice a year, ensuring that the public has access to up-to-date information on projects.

Chair Dawn Petschauer added that Pasadena is one of the participating cities in the ULAR WMG, and a similar approach has been implemented for Monrovia. Chair Dawn Petschauer shared that the model showed that Pasadena can significantly reduce cost when reducing pollutants versus water capture. The EWMPs consider an entire region, but due to varying city needs, project prioritization can sometimes be misaligned. Bruce Epps added that the preSIP is designed to evaluate ongoing projects and assess impacts to identify which projects should be prioritized to better meet clean water standards. Chair Dawn Petschauer shared an example, explaining how Pasadena projects may impact the City of Alhambra, which is located downstream to prevent overdesign.

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson asserted that the preSIP provides significant value to the SCW Program by examining entire watersheds rather than individual communities. Member Dave Pierce added that cost plays a crucial role in determining whether projects receive funding. Member Dave Piece acknowledged that if funding is not secured through the SCW Program, these projects may not proceed.

Member Ed Belden asked whether the 2024-2025 proposed Infrastructure Projects are reflected in the model. Brad Wardynski stated that the study concluded last fall. As such, the preSIP has not yet taken into account the next round of projects. However, all projects that have already received funding are included in the tool. Member Edward Belden inquired if there is a way to evaluate projects before the WASC considers adding them to the 2024-2025 SIP. Brad Wardynski explained that Municipalities would be able to add projects directly using the tool.

Chair Dawn Petschauer added that embedding the tool in the County Water Plan would lead to a quicker turnaround for improving water quality compared to a static plan. Chair Dawn Petschauer also stated that this approach reduced the City of Pasadena's costs by 90% when considering downstream projects.

Turner Lott mentioned that part of the SS' Project Modification Request (PMR) is requesting additional funding for the tool's annual maintenance. ULAR WMG agencies can now model proposed projects.

Member Tom Love asked how the WASC could work with the Watershed Coordinators to advise funding SIPs. Chair Dawn Petschauer shared that the tool is currently implemented in two WASCs and expressed hope that the County will also consider its implementation to avoid static plans.

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Member Daniel Rossman raised the question of whether the SCW Program is the appropriate entity to fund this tool, and instead proposing that engaging with the County might be more effective in encouraging adoption, rather than solely relying on funding data that may not be fully integrated into decision-making within the WASC.

Brad Wardynski stated that the purpose of the PMR and funding request is to ensure the tool remains operational and sustains momentum. Additionally, members of the technical advisory committee expressed a preference for keeping the tool active over the next couple years.

Member Edward Belden asked Chair Dawn Petschauer if the City of Pasadena would share results from the proposed Washington Park project. Chair Dawn Petschauer will verify with the District to arrange a presentation for an upcoming WASC meeting.

#### **ii) Fire Effects Study in the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) Watershed Management Area**

**Presentation by: Turner Lott (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG)), Brianna Datti (Craftwater), Matt Rich (WSP)**

Turner Lott, Brianna Datti, and Matt Rich provided a brief update on the Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed Management Area. The project started in October 2023 to better understand and isolate the impacts of fires on water quality and determine which stormwater management strategies are more resilient under increasing fires and climate change conditions.

Upon inquiry, Matt Rich mentioned that universities were engaged but have not been involved in the study.

Member Daniel Rossman asked if fire frequency was considered in the model. Brianna Datti explained that the model was based on static representation on fire and past literature, so there are limitations to how the model represents frequency.

Chair Dawn Petschauer highlighted the impact of the Woosley fire and asked how the data may impact how Municipalities are constructing projects. Brianna Datti explained that the intent of the modeling output is to identify more resilient BMP design. Matt Rich added that the purpose is to provide scientific background to address total maximum daily load (TMDL) and to engage with the Regional Board to approve the study's methodology.

When asked about precedent studies related to stormwater effects, Matt Rich explained that the Regional Board has certain water quality exceptions based on fires. There are plans to meet with the Regional Board to explore how the Industrial General Permit (IGP) exceptions could be relevant to Municipalities.

Member Edward Belden asked if the model looked at the impacts of smoke in addition to runoff from mountains. Brianna Datti responded that the study has limitations and does not fully represent atmospheric deposition. However, additional funding through the PMR can allow the study to explore different scenarios and incorporate atmospheric deposit. Upon further inquiry, Brianna Datti stated that sediment loading rates impacts infrastructure maintenance.

#### **c) Watershed Coordinator Overview of the RH Watershed Projects Presentations and TRP Project Status Update**

District staff noted that this item will be included in the agenda for the next WASC meeting due to time constraints.

### **8) Voting Items**

There were no voting items.

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#### 9) Items for Next Agenda

- a) RH Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the FY24-25 SIP
- b) Watershed Coordinator Overview of the RH Watershed Projects Presentations and TRP Project Status Update

District reminded the WASC that the SIP tool is available on the [SCW Program website](#). District staff will also send a reminder to the Committee Members to fill out the prioritization survey. District staff will also reach out to Project Applicants from the past who received earmark funds to confirm allocations. District staff will coordinate with Chair Dawn Petschauer to provide a presentation for the Washington Park.

District staff also informed the WASC that the next meeting will be extended half an hour to incorporate all the discussions prior to SIP deliberations, including Watershed Coordinator Watson's presentation. Updated presentations and meeting materials will be made available to the WASC before the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm.

#### 10) Adjournment

Chair Dawn Petschauer thanked the WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

RH WASC - March 19th, 2024

		Quorum Present			Voting Item			
Member Type	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 02/20/24 Meeting Minutes			
Agency	Julian Juarez		Jennifer Aborida	x	a			
Agency	Tom Love	x	Patty Cortez		y			
Agency	Kelly Gardner	x	Tony Zampiello		y			
Agency	Dave Pierce	x	Alysha Chan		y			
Agency	Brent Maue	x	Kris Markarian		y			
Community Stakeholder	Thomas Wong		Bryan Matsumoto	x	a			
Community Stakeholder	Jill Fosselman	x			y			
Community Stakeholder	Mark Hall	x	Mark Daniel		a			
Community Stakeholder	Edward Belden	x			y			
Community Stakeholder	Daniel Rossman	x	Liliana Griego		y			
Municipal Members	David Dolphin	x	Latoya Waters		a			
Municipal Members	Briget Arndell	x	Paul Cranmer		y			
Municipal Members	Jalaine Verdiner	x	Fernando Villaluna		y			
Municipal Members	Gloria Crudgington		Alex Tachiki	x	y			
Municipal Members	Sal Mendez							
Municipal Members	Dawn Petschauer	x	James Tong	x	a			
Municipal Members								
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member (RWA Planning)	Richard Watson	x	Julie Millett	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats	16			Yay (Y)	10	0	0	0
Total Voting Members Present	16			Nay (N)	0	0	0	0
Agency	5			Abstain (A)	5	0	0	0
Community Stakeholder	5			Total	15	0	0	0
Municipal Members	6				Approved	Not Approved	Not Approved	Not Approved



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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	P/A	Signature
Julian Juarez	Los Angeles County Flood Control District			
Tom Love	Upper San Gabriel District			
Kelly Gardner	Main San Gabriel Basin	kelly@watermaster.org	P	
Dave Pierce	Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts	dpierce@lacsds.org	P	
Brent Maue	Pasadena			
Thomas Wong	San Gabriel Valley MWD Division 3			
Jill Fosselman	Resident	jillf1970@gmail.com		
Mark Hall	Vector Control	mhall@glacvod.org		
Edward Belden	Resident	ebelden@gmail.com		
Daniel Rossman	The Wilderness Society		P	
David Dolphin	Alhambra			
Briget Arndell	Arcadia	BARDELLE@ARCADIACA.GOV		
Jalaine Verdiner	LA County Public Works	JVALINTRA@par.lacounty.gov	P	
Gloria Crudgington	Monrovia			
Sal Mendez	El Monte			
Dawn Petschauer	Pasadena	dpetschauer@cityofpasadena.net		

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	P/A	Signature
Jennifer Aborida	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	jaborida@pw.lacounty.gov		
Patty Cortez	Upper san Gabriel District			
Tony Zampielo	Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster			
Alysha Chan	Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts			
Kris Markarian	Pasadena			
Bryan Matsumoto	Nature For All	bryan@nfa.com		
Mark Daniel	Vector Control			
Liliana Griego	Friends of the Los Angeles River			
Latoya Waters	Alhambra			
Paul Cranmer	Arcadia			
Fernando Villaluna	LA County Public Works			
Alex Tachiki	Monrovia	alex@monrovia.org		
James Tong	Pasadena			
Richard Watson	RWA	r.watson@rwaplanning.com		
Julie Millett	RWA			

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	P/A	Signature
Ryanna Fossum	Stantec			
Mike Antos	Stantec			

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Mehrad	Kamalzare	Cal Poly Pomona	mkamalzare@cpp.edu
Ali	Sharbat	Cal Poly	sharbat@cpp.edu
Turpin	Loth	SGUCOG	tlott@sgucog.org
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Shaun	Peng	Cal Poly Pomona	stpeng@cpp.edu
William	Wu	Cal Poly Pomona	wwu1@cpp.edu
MATT	RICH	WSP	MATT.RICH@WSP.COM

\*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public