

# Santa Clara River

## Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



### Meeting Minutes

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Thursday, December 19, 2024  
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
Santa Clarita City Hall  
23920 Valencia Blvd. Valencia, CA 91355  
WebEx Meeting

#### Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Agency)  
\*Najwa Pitois, Santa Clarita Water Agency (Agency)  
Steve Cole, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency)  
\*Christopher Lapaz, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Agency)  
Mary Johnson, Agua Dulce Town Council (Community)  
Sandra Cattell, Sierra Club (Community), Vice-Chair  
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Santa Clarita Valley Community Hiking Club (Community)  
\*Allen Ma, Los Angeles County (Municipal)  
Laurene Weste, Santa Clarita (Municipal)  
Oliver Cramer, Santa Clarita (Municipal)  
\*Dan Duncan, Santa Clarita (Municipal)  
Darin Seegmiller, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Chair  
Amanda Begley, TreePeople (Watershed Coordinator, Non-voting member)

#### Committee Members Not Present:

Jerrid McKenna, City of Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services (Agency)  
Hunt Braly, Poole & Shaffery (Community)  
Ivan Volschenk, Evolve Business Strategies (Community)

\*Committee Member Alternate

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

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#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Darin Seegmiller, Chair of the Santa Clara River (SCR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members, provided an overview of the meeting agenda, and called the meeting to order.

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff gave a brief WebEx tutorial. Public Works staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. A quorum was established.

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 17, 2024**

Public Works staff presented the previous meeting minutes. Member Oliver Cramer motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 17, 2024, seconded by Member Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel. The Committee voted to approve the October 17, 2024, meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 4 vote in abstention, 0 opposed, and 1 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

#### **3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure**

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

#### **4. Committee Member and Program Updates**

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:



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- The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY 23-24) Quarterly Report 4, covering April through June 2024, was due on August 15. Project Developers should address any comments and resubmit as soon as possible. The FY 23-24 Annual Report, for July 2023 through June 2024, is due on December 31. In 2025, the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program is transitioning from quarterly reports to mid-year reports. The Mid-Year Report, previously known as the Q1 and Q2 reports, covers July 2024 through December 2024, and will be due on February 15, 2025.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) met on December 11. More information can be found on the [ROC events webpage](#).
- The FY 22-23 Watershed Area Regional Program Process (WARPP) Report for SCR is available on the [SCW Program website](#). The WARPP is intended to be an extension of the Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP), which is a 5-year plan allocating funding for projects, studies, and concepts. This year's WARPP Report provides a summary on the progress of the projects, studies, and concepts funded in the first 3 years of SIPs, covering FY 21-22 through FY 22-23. The first WARPP Reports were drafted last year and served as a reference for the development of the SCW Program Biennial Progress Report, which was approved by the ROC in January 2024. This year's WARPP Report has been updated to align with the structure and format of the Biennial Progress Report. At the November 13 ROC meeting, the ROC reviewed the nine newly drafted WARPP Reports, and more information can be found in the [Meeting Minutes](#). Public Works staff will collect any input, feedback, or request from WASCs to improve future WARPP Reports. The next WARPP Report will cover FY 23-24 and is anticipated for next year.
- The 2024 Municipal Transfer Agreements are currently being processed and executed by Public Works staff. Disbursements are currently scheduled for end of December. Cities must comply with all reporting requirements to receive the fifth disbursement.
- The Los Angeles County Flood Control District is partnering with the Water Foundation to administer the Safe, Clean Water Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program. The program will support educational and community efforts related to stormwater and urban runoff capture in Los Angeles County. Applicants may submit proposals from now until May 31, 2025. Proposals will be reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis. For more information, visit the [Water Foundation's website](#).

Public Work's Watershed Planning staff provided updates, noting that the second Watershed Planning workshops were conducted with all nine WASCs to confirm that WASC members perspectives shared during the first workshops were understood correctly, solicit additional feedback, and preview the Watershed Planning Framework and Initial Watershed Plans. The Watershed Planning Framework is now completed and available on the [SCW Program website](#).

The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment Survey and a Frequently Asked Questions document have also launched and are available on the [SCW Program website](#). For more information, Watershed Planning staff can be reached at [watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov](mailto:watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov).

#### 7. Discussion Items

##### b. Discussion on Invasive Species in the Santa Clara River Watershed

This Agenda Item was moved before Agenda Item 5.

Bruce Orr (Stillwater Sciences) presented on the Santa Clara River Watershed-Wide *Arundo donax* Management Program (WWAM). Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Laurene Weste suggested that this presentation be given to WASC members who are absent. Member Weste commented that information about WWAM is critical to understanding issues in this Watershed Area and expressed the need to prohibit selling *Arundo* and *Tamarisk* in California.

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Upon inquiry, Orr clarified that Arundo removal may impact sediment erosion, but that erosion would follow a more natural pattern. Orr added that Arundo has a shallow underground distribution of rhizomes and does not produce viable seed, so Arundo is typically introduced to an area by human planting or erosion of rhizomes upstream.

Member Steve Cole mentioned that the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency is working with the WWAM group and has retained a consultant to study how Arundo is managed in other watersheds. Member Cole offered to share additional information about this effort with this WASC in the future.

Chair Seegmiller inquired if any projects funded by the SCW Program involve Arundo removal and expressed an interest in identifying projects that have an invasive species removal component. Orr shared that WWAM has relied on other funding sources and mentioned that the WWAM research group may investigate Water Quality benefits of Arundo removal. Watershed Coordinator Amanda Begley shared that although projects with Arundo removal may struggle to quantify Water Quality benefits in their Project Applications to the SCW Program, invasive species removal has been identified as a priority by this WASC.

Member Weste emphasized the agricultural significance of the Santa Clara River and commented that Arundo and Tamarisk are threats to the river's ecosystem health.

Chair Seegmiller proposed that the WWAM research group provide an update to the WASC in six months and requested that the presentation be made available to absent WASC members.

#### **i. Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

#### **5. Watershed Coordinator Updates**

Watershed Coordinator Amanda Begley presented on the 2024 Calendar Year Quarter 2 Report highlights, November activities, and upcoming events. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Erskine-Hellrigel suggested a possible location for the upcoming Watershed Tour with the Steelhead Trout Coalition.

#### **6. Public Comment Period**

Lynn Plambeck (Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment) expressed the need for Project Proponents to conduct robust public outreach to avoid community member opposition to projects funded by this WASC.

#### **7. Discussion Items**

##### **a) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentation**

##### **i) Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS)**

Natalie Ouwersloot (Foothill Municipal Water District) and Christopher Tull (California Data Collaborative) presented on the Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County, which is a tool that plans to integrate advanced data analytics with artificial intelligence for site distributed stormwater capture and filtration projects. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Najwa Pitois clarified with Tull and Ouwersloot that the DROPS tool evaluates an area's feasibility for groundwater recharge based on slope of site, existing impervious area, proximity to existing stormwater infrastructure, groundwater basin, infiltration rate, soil type, aquifer type, and other factors. Ouwersloot added that the DROPS tool also intends to consider proximity to contaminated sites, based on feedback received from another WASC.



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Upon inquiry, Tull explained that the DROPS tool could incorporate data from existing Watershed Management Plans if datasets are available digitally. Otherwise, the DROPS tool could be used to inform the next iteration of Watershed Management Plans.

Chair Seegmiller confirmed with Tull that the DROPS tool could be used by Project Developers to identify potential project locations, and inquired how the DROPS tool would take into consideration the unique aspects of each Watershed Area. Ouwersloot explained that the DROPS tool does not aim to prioritize potential projects in a Watershed Area, but to evaluate areas for potential projects based on existing datasets.

Upon inquiry, Ouwersloot clarified that the SS is only seeking funds for one year. Tull elaborated that the DROPS team is evaluating funding options to cover the cost of maintaining the DROPS tool in the long-term.

Vice-Chair Sandra Cattell mentioned that this WASC has a smaller pool of funding allocated each year compared to other WASCs, so the SS proposal's requested funds represent a larger percentage of this WASC's funding compared to other WASCs.

Public Works staff provided additional context that all SS applications will undergo peer review, which will be completed by February 2025. The Project Applicants will be invited back to a future WASC meeting to answer additional questions based on that peer review.

#### **ii) Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

#### **c) WASC Update to the Regional Oversight Committee**

Chair Seegmiller announced that each WASC Chair has been invited to provide a five-minute update on their respective WASC at the January 8 ROC meeting. Member Cramer proposed that the Chair discuss the topic of balancing data requested of Project Developers in the required SCW Program Reports and administrative burden. Chair Seegmiller mentioned that the SCR WASC update will likely include a status update on the Via Princessa Park and Regional BMP Project and a summary of this meeting's discussion on invasive species. Chair Seegmiller will provide an account of what was shared during the January ROC meeting at the next SCR WASC meeting.

#### **i) Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

### **8. Voting Items**

There were no voting items.

### **9. Items for Next Agenda**

The January meeting has been cancelled, and the next meeting will take place on Thursday, February 20, from 1:00pm – 3:00pm. Items on the next agenda include:

- a) Scientific Study Peer Reviews

### **10. Adjournment**

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

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Ali Elhassan	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency		P	
Allen Ma	LA County Public Works		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Amanda Begley (non-voting)	TreePeople		WC	<i>[Signature]</i>
Amber Rodriguez	Santa Clarita		A	
Bruce Hamamoto	LA County Public Works		P	
Christopher Lapaz	LA County Sanitation Districts		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Damon Letz	Santa Clarita		P	
Dan Duncan	Santa Clarita		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Darin Seegmiller	Santa Clarita		P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Diane Trautman	Santa Clarita Sierra Club		A	
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation		P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Francisco Guerrero	LA County Sanitation Districts		P	
Haley Lawton	Santa Clarita		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Heather Turpin (non-voting)	TreePeople		WC	
Heidi Webber	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation		A	

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Hunt Braly	Poole & Shaffery		P	
Ivan Volschenk	Evolve Business Strategies		P	
Jennifer Aborida	FCD		A	
Jerrid McKenna	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services		P	
Julian Juarez	FCD		P	<i>Julian Juarez</i>
Laurene Weste, Councilmember	Santa Clarita		P	<i>Laurene Weste</i>
Mary Johnson	Agua Dulce Town Council		P	<i>M. Johnson</i>
Najwa Pitois	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency		A	
Oliver Cramer	Santa Clarita		P	<i>O. Cramer</i>
Rick Viergutz	Santa Clarita Valley GSA		A	
Sandra Cattell	Santa Clarita Sierra Club		P	<i>S. Cattell</i>
Steve Cole	Santa Clarita Valley GSA		P	<i>Steve Cole</i>
Susan Nelson	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services		A	
Tyler Pledger	Santa Clarita		A	

Santa Clara River

Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting

PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
ROY	MARSON	BOUQUET CYN WATERSHD <sup>COMMIT</sup>	
Christopher	Tull	California Data Collaboration	
Natalie Duwersloot		Foothill MWD	
Lyne Plank		SCOPE	

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

**Webex Attendees**  
**Santa Clara River WASC Meeting**  
**December 19, 2024**

Bruce Orr

Carlos Preciado

Daria Antonova - LACPW

Erum Razzak

Jason Pepito

Jenny Chau

SCWP Staff - Larry Tran

Vicki Friesen

Josephine Gutierrez

Luis Perez SCW WP

Ryanna Fossum

SCR WASC

SCWP Anthony Barreras

SCWP Larry Tran

SCWP SCR WASC Host