Santa Clara River
Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 20, 2024
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Santa Clarita City Hall
23920 Valencia Blvd. Valencia, CA 91355
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:
Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Ali Elhassan, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (Agency)
Steve Cole, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency)
Francisco Guerrero, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Hunt Braly, Poole & Shaffery (Community)
Sandra Cattell, Sierra Club (Community), Vice-Chair
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Santa Clarita Valley Community Hiking Club (Community)
Bruce Hamamoto, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Councilmember Laurene Weste, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
Oliver Cramer, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
Damon Letz, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
*Heather Turpin, TreePeople (Watershed Coordinator, Non-voting member)

*Indicates Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:
Jerrid McKenna, City of Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services (Agency)
Mary Johnson, Agua Dulce Town Council (Community)
Ivan Volschenk, Evolve Business Strategies (Community)
Darin Seegmiller, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Chair

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sandra Cattell, Vice-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. District staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 6, 2024.

Public Works staff presented the previous meeting minutes. Member Ali Elhassan motioned to approve the meeting minutes from March 6, 2024. The motion was seconded by Member Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel. The Committee voted to approve the March 6, 2024 meeting minutes with 13 votes in favor, 0 votes in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte disclosures.

4. Committee Member and Public Works Updates

The were no Committee Member updates.

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

- Round 6 Call for Projects will defer Infrastructure Program (IP) projects until Summer 2025.
  Scientific Studies (SS) and Technical Resource Program (TRP) applications can still be submitted by the July 31 Call for Projects deadline. This is in alignment with the recent report by the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' (Board) subsequent motion on Progress and Adaptive Management of the SCW Program. The deferral will enable Public Works to prioritize critical efforts informed by all recent reports, recommendations, and discussions with the ROC and key interested parties, while also allowing prospective applicants the opportunity to refine and enhance their project proposals, leverage additional funding, and engage more deeply with the community.
- In alignment with Board Supervisor Horvath's motion Accelerating Implementation of the SCW Program, the SCW Program has initiated Watershed Planning efforts to facilitate regional and watershed-based planning that identifies project opportunity areas and refines Population Indicators (i.e., targets) that will support strategic investments. This effort will build upon past and ongoing work, incorporate meaningful community input, and leverage available data and best practices to create useful, transparent, and accessible plans and tools.
- At the July/August WASC meetings, the SCW Program Team will kick off facilitated Watershed Planning engagement workshops with the WASCs. At subsequent meetings, the SCW Program team and WASCs will continue Watershed Planning discussions. In November, the SCW Program Team will share the Initial Watershed Plans Framework, and mid next year will conclude with development of the final Initial Watershed Area Plans for each Watershed Area. Following, specific and more detailed Adaptive Plans will be developed. A new SCW Program Watershed Planning Section has been created to lead the work.

5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Heather Turpin shared an update highlighting Watershed Coordination team efforts. Watershed Coordinator Turpin shared an update highlighting events held in May, project updates, and Contract Year 4 Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (CY4SOEP). Presentation slides are available on the SCW Program website and attached.

Member Hunt Braly requested more information regarding the Santa Clara Valley (SCV) Eco Alliance. Member Erskine-Hellrigel is part of the Eco Alliance and will send more information to the SCR WASC.

6. Public Comment Period

Public Works staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting and uploaded them to the SCW Program website. No public comment cards were received.

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Annelisa Moe (OurWaterLA) highlighted the need for clearer community engagement paths and sufficient time for community members to provide input on watershed planning efforts. Moe suggested Watershed Coordinators lead the engagement process, emphasizing collaboration on the plans. The approach involves moving forward promptly and avoiding meeting cancellations as seen in other WASC groups and adhering to established community engagement and outreach methods.

Jacqueline Ayer (Acton Town Council) discussed concerns raised during the Summit for Water Equity and Resilience regarding potential projects outside Santa Clarita, specifically in rural areas where projects may not qualify for SCW Program funding due to difficulty in achieving Water Quality Benefits points. Ayer suggested employing nature-based solutions to control runoff and flooding in rural areas. Ayer suggested an assessment of opportunities for hardscape removal in rural communities for parcel owners that contribute taxes into the program but may be outside of SCW Program's criteria.

Vice-Chair Sandra Cattell inquired about SCW Program eligibility criteria and the availability of water quality monitoring data. Member Bruce Hamamoto emphasized Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) compliance for pollutants and the importance of monitoring stations, stating that priority is given to areas near these stations with higher levels of pollutants. Upon inquiry, Member Oliver Cramer noted that expenses for monitoring stations and ongoing maintenance typically costs around $100,000 to $200,000 for installation and maintenance, and an annual cost of around $400,000 to $500,000 for staff monitoring. The Committee discussed potential opportunities to expand upstream monitoring wells.

Member Laurene Weste expressed concern about rural residents contributing to SCW Program funds without receiving equitable benefits. Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) noted that the Scoring Criteria emphasizes Water Quality points based on pollutant reduction and cost-effectiveness. Fossum additionally referenced the potential for Scoring Criteria to change as the Program is adaptively managed. Watershed planning efforts may provide an opportunity for the WASC to elevate the goals prioritized by community members. Public Works staff stated that any changes to scoring requirements will have a public comment period of 30 days, and it is suggested that members of the public who wish to provide their input should attend the meetings and express concerns. Vice-Chair Cattell stressed the need for specialized standards in rural areas like Acton, particularly for testing surface water.

7. **Discussion Items**

    a) **FY24-25 Santa Clara River Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP)**

Watershed Coordinator Turpin presented the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (FY24-25) SCR SOEP to the Committee. Presentation slides can be found on the SCW Program website.

Vice-Chair Cattell suggested the addition of two State parks be reflected in the SOEP: Vasquez Rocks Natural Area and Placerita Canyon Nature Center.

    i) **Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

    b) **Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary FY2023-24 Q1 and Q2**

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Public Works staff presented the Quarterly Report Summary for FY2023-24 Quarters 1 and 2, including project updates from Newhall Park Infiltration (hereby referenced as Newhall Park), Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvement's Project (hereby referenced as Pico Canyon Park), and Hasley Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project (hereby referenced as Halsey Canyon Park).

Jacqueline Stone (Public Works, Stormwater Quality Division) provided a detailed status update on Hasley Canyon Park. Stone outlined key achievements such as funding awards and community engagement activities with Castaic, local school districts, and LA County Department of Parks and Recreation. The project has completed environmental impact and site assessments. The project's concept report was approved in November 2023, marking the start of the design phase under a Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) method aimed at improving efficiency in project delivery. Construction is expected to begin in June 2026 and will conclude in August 2027.

Pico Canyon Park's concept report is nearing final review, with ongoing evaluations by consultants to determine the feasibility of combining the project with Jake Kuredijian Park Stormwater Improvements Project.

Member Braly inquired about the $2.9 million dollars of SCW Program funds not yet expended for Halsey Canyon Park, contrasting with spent cost share funds. Stone explained that cost share funds typically cover initial project phases like the Preliminary Concept Report (PCR) and feasibility studies, while SCW Program funds are typically reserved for larger construction expenditures. The total project cost was identified as $21.4 million dollars, underscoring ongoing financial planning and allocation strategies.

i) Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

8. Public Comment Period

Ayer clarified that Los Angeles County Waterworks District 37 already operates two monitoring wells at the far west end of Acton. These wells are upstream of the drinking water sources served to residents, and additional monitoring of groundwater quality is likely not a priority. Ayer claimed that the current criteria of SCW Program funding primarily focuses on surface water quality compliance rather than groundwater quality. Ayer urged proactive public involvement in the development of Scoring Criteria changes.

Member Hamamoto clarified the differences between monitoring wells used by Waterworks District 37 for groundwater monitoring and surface water sampling done by Los Angeles County.

9. Voting Items

a) Approve FY24-25 Santa Clara River Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP) (as needed)

Vice-Chair Cattell requested that the approval of this voting item include the amendments suggested during discussion. Member Steve Cole motioned to approve, seconded by Member Weste. The FY24-25 SCR SOEP was approved with 13 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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10. Items for Next Agenda

    a)   Initial Watershed Planning Discussion.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 18 from 1:00 – 3:00pm at Santa Clarita City Hall. Member Weste requested that an upcoming agenda feature discussion on invasive species management efforts for Arundo and Tamarisk. Public Works staff noted that the Watershed Coordinator will assist with this discussion and agreed to bring it on as a discussion item in future meetings.

Public Works additionally shared that the WASC will receive a presentation from Regional Coordination on WASC Roles and Responsibilities and vote for Chair and Vice-Chair positions at a future meeting.

11. Adjournment
Vice-Chair Cattell thanked the WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

| | | | | | | | Voting Items |
| | | | SANTA CLARA RIVER WASC MEETING - JUNE 20, 2024 | | | | (see meeting minutes for additional details) |

SANTA CLARA RIVER WASC MEETING - JUNE 20, 2024

Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 3-6-2023 Meeting Minutes	Approve the FY24-25 Santa Clara River Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP)
Agency	District	Julian Juarez	x	Jennifer Aborida		y	y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	Ali Elhassan	x			y	y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency	Steve Cole	x	Rick Viergutz		y	y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Francisco Guerrero	x	Christopher Lapaz		y	y
Agency	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	Jerrid McKenna		Susan Nelson			
Community Stakeholder	Poole & Shaffery	Hunt Braly	x			y	y
Community Stakeholder	Agua Dulce Town Council	Mary Johnson					
Community Stakeholder	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	Sandra Cattell**	x	Diane Trautman		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Evolve Business Strategies	Ivan Volschenk					
Community Stakeholder	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	x	Heidi Webber		y	y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y	y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y	y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y	y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Councilmember Laurene Weste	x	Tyler Pledger		y	y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Oliver Cramer	x			y	y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Damon Letz	x	Dan Duncan		y	y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Darin Seegmiller*					
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	TreePeople, Inc.	Amanda Begley		Heather Turpin	x		
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	13	13
Total Voting Members Present		13			No (N)	0	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	0	0
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	13	13
Municipal Members		6				Approved	Approved

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN

Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Ali Elhassan	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	aelhassan@scvwa.org	P	
Allen Ma	LA County Public Works	ama@dpw.lacounty.gov	A	
Amanda Begley (non-voting)	TreePeople	abegley@treepeople.org	N/A	
Bruce Hamamoto	LA County Public Works	bhamamo@dpw.lacounty.gov	P	
Christopher Lapaz	LA County Sanitation Districts	christopherlapaz@lacsd.org	A	
Councilmember Laurene Weste	Santa Clarita	lweste@santa-clarita.com	P	
Damon Letz	Santa Clarita	dletz@santa-clarita.com	P	
Dan Duncan	Santa Clarita	dduncan@santa-clarita.com	A	
Darin Seegmiller	Santa Clarita	dseegmiller@santa-clarita.com	P	
Diane Trautman	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	d.trautman@icloud.com	A	
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	zuliebear@aol.com	P	
Francisco Guerrero	LA County Sanitation Districts	fguerrero@lacsd.org	P	
Heather Turpin (non-voting)	TreePeople	hturpin@treepeople.org	N/A	
Heidi Webber	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	hwebber50@gmail.com	A	
Hunt Braly	Poole & Shaffery	hbraly@pooleshaffery.com	P	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN

Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Ivan Volschenk	Evolve Business Strategies	ivan@evolvebizstrat.com	P	
Jennifer Aborida	FCD	jaborida@dpw.lacounty.gov	A	
Jerrid McKenna	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	jmckenna@santa-clarita.com	P	
Julian Juarez	FCD	jjuarez@dpw.lacounty.gov	P	*(signature)*
Mary Johnson	Agua Dulce Town Council	maryjohnson767@gmail.com	P	
Oliver Cramer	Santa Clarita	ocramer@santa-clarita.com	P	*(signature)*
Rick Viergutz	Santa Clarita Valley GSA	rviergutz@scvwa.org	A	
Sandra Cattell	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	sumcatt@yahoo.com	P	*(signature)*
Steve Cole	Santa Clarita Valley GSA	scole@scvwa.org	P	*(signature)*
Susan Nelson	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	snelson@santa-clarita.com	A	
Tyler Pledger	Santa Clarita	tpledger@santa-clarita.com	A	
Haley Lawton	Santa Clarita	Hlawton@santa.clarita.gov		*(signature)*
LaureNe Weste	City Santa Clarita	LWeste@santa clarita.gov		*(signature) Weste*

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN

First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Jacqueline Ayer		Acton Town Council	

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

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Webex Attendees
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Alberto Grajeda	Diego Carrizo	Justin Jones - LACPW	Safe Clean Water LA
Alex Aguirre	Enrique Perez	Mark Hall GLAmosquito	Safe Clean Water LA - Presenter
Allen Ma - LA County PW	Erum Razzak - LARWQCB	Melania G.	Santa Clarita City Hall
Annelisa Moe she/her	JENNIFER ABORIDA	Pablo Forni	lynne plambeck
Chris Lapaz	Jacqueline Stone LACPW	Rob Garcia	
Dan Duncan	Josephine Gutierrez	Ryanna Fossum, Regional Coordination	