

# Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



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Thursday, April 4, 2024  
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM  
LA County Sanitation District – Conference Room E&F  
1955 Workman Mill Rd  
Whittier, CA 90601  
WebEx Meeting

## Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)  
Tom Love, Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District (Agency)  
Francisco Guerrero, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)  
\*Jason Casanova, Council for Watershed Health (Community)  
\*David Marquez, Urban Semillas (Community)  
David Diaz, Active SGV (Community)  
Fernando Villaluna, Los Angeles County (Municipal), Vice-Chair  
Michael Sledd, Glendora (Municipal)  
Julie Carver, Pomona (Municipal), Chair  
Matthew Hudson, Industry (Municipal)  
Romany Basilyous, Baldwin Park (Municipal) (online)  
\*Gerardo Lopez, West Covina (Municipal)  
James Cortes, Day One (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member) (online)

\*Committee Member Alternate

## Committee Members Not Present:

Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin (Agency)  
Sean Woods, Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation (Agency)  
Stephanie Sandoval, Duarte (Municipal)

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

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## **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Julie Carver, Chair of the Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District) staff facilitated Committee Member introductions. A quorum was established. District staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial and direction on submission of public comments to the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program website.

## **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 22, 2024**

District staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Member Tom Love motioned to approve, seconded by Member Julian Juarez. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 vote in abstention, 0 votes opposed, 2 absent at time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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

District staff provided the following updates:

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- A new website for Los Angeles County's SCW Program has been launched. The updated website represents a significant step forward in the Program's commitment to transparency, accessibility, and collaboration. The updated website includes new features and enhancements such as the Resource Library, Search feature, and Calendar. Any bookmarks saved from the old site will now direct users to the correct location on the new site.
- The Regional Coordination team prepared the first Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Q3 Quarterly Funding Report and Matrix, now available on the [SCW Program website](#). The Funding Report includes a high-level overview of recent funding policy highlights and includes a funding matrix that shares currently active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to SCW Program infrastructure projects. This is the first of what will be provided quarterly for participants in the SCW Program.
- Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) added that the Funding Memos were originally produced only for the Infrastructure Program (IP) projects. Quarterly funding reports, as well as a database with funding opportunities will support project developers in identifying more funding opportunities. Upon inquiry, Fossum noted that funding distributions for SCW Program projects to-date can be found in Watershed Area Regional Program Progress reports.
- FY23-24 Quarterly Report 2 was due February 15. 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 the project. The next Quarterly Report is due on May 15.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) submitted the Biennial Progress Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board). The ROC will begin watershed goal-setting sessions this month. More information can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).
- In March, the Director of Public Works submitted a SCW Program Status Report to the Board, which expands upon the insights provided in the "Accelerating Implementation of the SCW Program" Board Motion Report and is informed by the Biennial Report, an audit commissioned by the Director, and the Board's recommendations. Additionally, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Lindsay Horvath for "Progress and Adaptive Management of the SCW Program" which calls for a report back in 90 days. These items can be found on the SCW Program website under the Resources tab.
- On March 19, the Board approved the appointment and reappointment of ROC, Scoring Committee, and some WASC community stakeholder seat Members. No USGR Members were part of the appointment.
- Annual Plans were due April 1. Municipal Annual Plans are due in April before the FY and the Reports are due at the end of the calendar year in December.
- Round 4 Transfer Agreements and Addendums are available for download in the Transfer Agreement Module. Emails sent out on January 24 include checklist instructions on how to navigate the new module.
- It is important for the WASC and the work of the Regional Program to remain transparent and fair. WASC Members whose job connects them to specific projects should ask colleagues or consultants to attend WASC meetings to share about or advocate for those projects during Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) deliberations and should avoid using their position as WASC Members to advocate for project from their home entities.
- Finalized, synthesized review summaries for each Scientific Study (SS) application have been shared with the WASC and posted on the [SCW Program website](#). The SS applicants were invited to attend and answer questions from the WASC.

Member David Diaz requested clarification as to why Quarterly Reports are due even if the project has not executed a Transfer Agreement. District staff stated that project efforts could begin even if the Transfer Agreement was not executed, as some project funding may be used to reimburse incurred costs. Member Love clarified that if no work has been completed, the Quarterly Report can be used to confirm project status.

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## 4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator James Cortes presented on recent updates. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Watershed Coordinator Cortes highlighted the following past events:

- Community presentation on “Water and Community Knowledge: Lessons from the Upper San Gabriel River” on March 7. The watershed-wide event highlighted community engagement efforts conducted in the region to date. The webinar was recorded and a copy was sent in the monthly newsletter.
- Presentation at Best Start El Monte/South El Monte to Spanish speaking community members about the SCW Program
- Tour of the Jeff Seymour Family Center in El Monte to educate the community about the SCW Program’s goal to target more projects at schools.

Watershed Coordinator Cortes announced the following upcoming events:

- A resource booth, in collaboration with the Rio Hondo Watershed Coordinator, at the Earth Day 2024 event with Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts in Whittier on April 13.

Watershed Coordinator Cortes also highlighted the community feedback regarding rain shelters, the negative impacts of artificial turf and how a study of the impacts could be a potential candidate for a SCW Program SS, and how projects will ensure there is a plan for adequate operations and maintenance (O&M). Watershed Coordinator Cortes relayed that community members are worried about park safety and asked if the program has certain safety requirements for projects.

## 5) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

## 6) Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, loaded them to the SCW Program website, and displayed them on-screen. The comment cards can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Ali Sharbat (California Polytechnic, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona)) summarized and expressed support for the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS. Sharbat emphasized support for the study and how the SS will contribute with workforce training and contribution to the body of science this study will add. Sharbat noted that the study will only take 1% of the annual budget.

Alan Fuchs (Associate Dean, Research and Faculty Advancement, Cal Poly Pomona) provided insight on benefits of the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS. Fuchs’ office is in full support of the study and noted that the SS is important to the local surface water industry. Fuchs emphasized how the SS fosters collaboration and teamwork and noted how Cal Poly Pomona is a minority serving institution, with a high ranking for social mobility. Fuchs noted that Cal Poly Pomona faculty had collaboratively submitted the SS proposal.

## 7) Discussion Items

- a) Upper San Gabriel Rivers (USGR) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP Tool)**

District staff summarized the information available for the WASC to make SIP deliberations and presented

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the ranking worksheet completed by WASC Members. No Members recommended excluding any projects up for deliberation.

District staff reviewed the current funding available and presented the SIP review for the scenario “PMR + All Considered Projects.” The scenario resulted in \$2.9 million of remaining funds for FY24-25 if the PMR and all projects were funded. The Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefit Project had delayed \$10 million of funding originally allocated for FY24-25 to FY25-26.

District staff reminded Committee Members that SCW Program guidance recommends allocating 80% or less of the watershed’s budget each year.

Budgeted year FY24-25 utilized 84% of the budget and all other years were below 80%. Member Love supported funding the “PMR + All Considered Projects” scenario even with the exceedance in the first year. District staff noted that projected years should be less than 80% utilization and that the budgeted year can be slightly higher because the anticipated Regional Program funds collected is more accurate for the current year.

Member Love noted that the SCW Program includes procedures and guidelines for individual residents to appeal the special parcel tax based on the impermeable area of each parcel.

Member Matthew Hudson asked how many projects funded by the USGR WASC had been completed. District Staff noted that zero projects have completed construction, but that many of the SCW Program’s early projects were funded for design only and should be ready for construction soon. District staff is notified when ribbon cutting ceremonies occur and construction begins.

The Committee noted that Barnes Park will have a construction meeting next week and Pedley Spreading Grounds will be going out to bid in the next few months.

## **i) Infrastructure Program (IP)** **(1) Finkbiner Stormwater Capture Project Construction Phase ([linked here](#))**

Upon inquiry, Oliver Galang (Craftwater Engineering) confirmed that the project is at 90% design and CEQA is completed. Galang additionally clarified that the City of Glendora has not secured any leveraged funding.

Member Jason Casanova asked why artificial turf was selected, given the community’s concerns around artificial turf. Galang clarified that artificial turf was selected due to its drought resistance and the City’s request to mitigate O&M costs. Galang added that the City may be open to alternatives to the artificial turf.

Member Casanova noted that one of the benefits of the IP project is zinc removal and that rubber used in artificial turf also has high levels of zinc, compounding the problem. Galang noted that the local runoff impacted by the turf will remain in the facility as it would be captured and sent to cartridge filters, which would settle the solids in a settling basin to be vacuumed out.

Member Casanova expressed the opinion that the SCW Program should not fund any artificial turf and asked if the City is open to using natural turf instead. Member Michael Sledd confirmed that the City would be open to natural turf.

Member Casanova added that artificial turf must be replaced approximately every 10 years. Member Juarez asked about cost savings related to natural turf. Galang noted that there would not be a significant life cycle cost difference between artificial versus natural turf and added that additional usage rules are needed with artificial turf (e.g., dogs and non-water beverages are prohibited). Members noted that there are alternatives to using rubber crumb, such as dirt, and that there is a preference to not use the rubber crumb anywhere.

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Watershed Coordinator Cortes added that community members do not want to see any artificial turf, given that the negatives effects outweigh the positive. Watershed Coordinator Cortes urged project proponents to remove artificial turf from the design. Member Casanova noted that the WASC should add a caveat to only include the project in the SIP if the project proponents are willing to remove artificial turf.

## **ii) Scientific Studies Program (SS)**

### **(1) [Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity](#)**

Vice-Chair Fernando Villaluna asked if study proponents had identified the number of drywells to be used in the SS. Sharbat noted that Task 1 of the study will be the identification of drywells. Sharbat anticipates five sites for the USGR watershed.

District Staff noted that the SCW Program Ordinance requires that no more than 5% of the overall 5-year budget can be used to fund SS. If this study is recommended for the SIP, the SS will make up 5.1% of the budget. District staff shared that the SIP can be recommended with the 0.1% overage and sent to the ROC for approval.

## **iii) Project Modification Request**

### **(1) [Fairplex Stormwater Capture Project at Ganesha Park](#)**

Member Diaz stated that there is a significant change to the original project as the IP project will now be located at Ganesha Park, not at the Fairplex. Member Diaz added that for other grant applications, when project locations change, a new application process for the project is triggered. Member Diaz asked in what instances would a significant project change require a new project application. District staff clarified that the WASC may choose whether or not to approve the PMR.

Fossum briefed the WASC on the multiple paths the WASC could take to ensure projects with PMRs align with the SCW Program goals. If the PMR is denied, the project will have to deliver the scope as originally proposed. If the proponent is unable to do so, the WASC may remove the project from the SIP and request the proponent reapply. Member Diaz noted that the WASC's decision may constitute a precedent for what project proponents can expect in the future.

Fossum clarified that the Fairplex Stormwater Capture Project funding has already been disbursed. If the PMR is denied, the District will work to navigate decisions about funding that has already been disbursed. The original Fairplex Stormwater Capture IP Project received \$2.9 million in FY21-22.

Vice-Chair Villaluna requested that project proponents respond to concerns from the WASC regarding the change in location. Galang noted the project is further downstream of the original project and that project proponents conducted a simulation of both locations to compare them and noted that Water Quality Benefits remain the same. Additionally, Galang noted that the new location, in a public park, would be better for the local community. Galang clarified that the original project was a partnership, and that Fairplex changed their priorities which was outside of project proponents' control.

Galang added that if the PMR was rejected, the project would be delayed 1 to 1.5 years. Galang noted that the project would serve a disadvantaged community in the City of Pomona.

Vice-Chair Villaluna noted that the funding has already been disbursed. Galang noted that while all the funding has been disbursed, it has not all been used. Galang clarified that the design was at a stopping point when the change of location was determined, so there are remaining funds for design at Ganesha Park if the PMR is approved. The project has not spent more money since the decision to change the project's location.

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Member Casanova asked if there are already retrofits planned at the park. Galang noted that facility enhancements at Ganesha Park are a top priority for the City of Pomona and the local community.

## **8) Public Comment Period**

There were no additional public comments.

## **9) Voting Items**

- a) Approve the final Fiscal Year 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the USGR Watershed Area and approve submissions to the Regional Oversight Committee for review**

Member Casanova requested that a caveat be added to the SIP approval motion, that funding is approved for the Finkbiner Stormwater Capture Program Construction Phase and that natural turf is strongly recommended for the project rather than artificial turf.

Member Love motioned to include Finkbiner Stormwater Capture Program Construction Phase Project in the Stormwater Investment Plan and be strongly encouraged to consider natural turf. The motion was seconded by Member Hudson. The WASC voted to approve the motion with 10 votes in favor, 2 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

District staff clarified that the Watershed Coordinator contract budget approval is included in the SIP approval, and the WASC is not currently choosing a new Watershed Coordinator. A new Watershed Coordinator selection process will begin in late 2024.

Member Hudson motioned to approve Scenario "Final" as the final FY24-25 SIP funding recommendations for USGR Watershed Area, including the Watershed Coordinator budget, and advance to the ROC for review. The motion was seconded by Member Gerardo Lopez. The WASC voted to approve the motion with 11 votes in favor, 0 vote in abstention, 0 votes opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

## **10) Items for Next Agenda**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 23, 2024 from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. See the SCW Program website for more details.

Member Love introduced Jennifer Agular as the alternate for the Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District (Agency).

## **11) Adjournment**

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

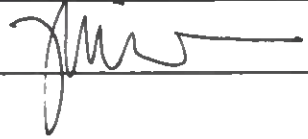

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Julian Juarez	FCD		P	
Jennifer Aborida	FCD		A	
Tom Love	Upper San Gabriel District		P	TL
Jennifer Aguilar	Upper San Gabriel District		A	Jenifer Aguil-
Kelly Gardner	Main San Gabriel Basin		P	
Tony Zampiello	Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster		A	
Francisco Guerrero	Sanitation Districts		P	
Christopher Lapaz	Sanitation Districts		A	
Sean Woods	Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation		P	
Clement Lau	Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation		A	
Drew Ready	Council for Watershed Health		P	
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health		A	
Miguel Luna	Urban Semillas		P	
David Marquez	California Consulting, INC		A	
David Diaz	Active SGV		P	

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Wesley Reutimann	Active SGV		A	
Fernando Villaluna	Los Angeles County		P	
Joseph Venzon	Los Angeles County		A	
Michael Sledd	City of Glendora		P	
Sandy Costandi	Covina		A	
Julie Carver	Pomona		P	
Nicholas Delgado	City of Diamond Bar		A	
Matthew Hudson	Industry		P	
Don Nguyen	El Monte		A	
Romany Basilyous	Baldwin Park		P	
Shari Garwick	San Dimas		A	
Stephanie Sandoval	Duarte		P	
Mario Flores	Bradbury		A	
Paulina Morales	West Covina		P	
Gerardo Lopez	West Covina		A	



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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
James Cortes Rivera	Day One			

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Mehrad	Kamalzare	Cal Poly Pomona	[Redacted]
Anthony	Ortega	City of Pomona	
Ali	Sharbat	Cal Poly	
Fatemeh	Shahzad		

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

## Attendance

### USGR WASC - April 4th, 2024

Andrew Kim	James Cramsie
Anna Philipp	Janet RL CASC
Brianna Datti	Jennifer Aborida
David Warren	Jenny Chau
Drew R	Joe Venzon - LA County
Ed Suher CASC	Jon Abelson
Edna Robidas	Katie Harrel CWE
Edna Robidas - TPL	Kelly
Eric Bonilla - LACFCD	Larry Tran - LACFCD
Gurjot Kohli   Stantec	Mark Hall GLAmosquito
J Cramsie	Melanie Hu
James Cortes	Romany Basilyous
Sandy Costandi - Covina	Ryanna Fossum Regional Coordination
Sofia Cardenas	SCWP USGR WASC-1
janet L	SCWP USGR WASC-2
Imarshall	Samantha Torres