

Santa Clara River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



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

Committee Members Present:

*Jennifer Aborida, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Steve Cole, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency)
Francisco Guerrero, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Jerrid McKenna, City of Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services (Agency)
Hunt Braly, Poole & Shaffery (Community)
Mary Johnson, Agua Dulce Town Council (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)
*Dan Duncan, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
Darin Seegmiller, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Chair
Amanda Begley, TreePeople (Watershed Coordinator, Non-voting member)

Committee Members Not Present:

Ali Elhassan, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (Agency)
Ivan Volschenk, Evolve Business Strategies (Community)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

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. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established. Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program Watershed Planning staff made self-introductions.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 18, 2024

Public Works staff presented the previous meeting minutes. Member Hunt Braly motioned to approve the meeting minutes from July 18, 2024, seconded by Vice-Chair Sandra Cattell. The Committee voted to approve the July 18, 2024, meeting minutes with 13 votes in favor, 1 vote in abstention, 0 opposed, and 1 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

4. Committee Member and Program Updates

There were no Committee Member updates.

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) voted to advance the SCR Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) for approval during the August 14 ROC meeting. Vice-Chair Cattell attended the meeting to address any questions related to the SIP. A tentative date for Board consideration is set for October 22.
- The next ROC meeting is scheduled for October 9, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 pm.
- In accordance with the Levine Act (SB 1439), Project Developers and Watershed Coordinators receiving funds through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 SIP received an email requesting the completion of a Campaign Contribution Declaration Form by September 3. This form mandates the disclosure of any contributions made to a County officer within the past 12 months. The form should be completed as soon as possible and will aid in the Board's approval of the SIPs.
- The Business Relations and Contracts Division released the Watershed Coordinators Request for Statement of Qualifications on August 27. Proposers had the opportunity to attend the Proposers' Conferences on September 12 and September 16. The deadline for submitting Statements of Qualifications is September 30 at 5:30 pm. Additional information will be provided in the upcoming SCW Program Implementation email for September.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff within Public Works provided an update on Watershed Planning and shared that the first Watershed Planning workshops were held at all WASCs. The Watershed Planning Team, consisting of SCW Program Watershed Planning staff within Public Works and consultants, will return to WASCs in October or November for an additional engagement session.

Feedback has been received from Committee Members on existing data, including from previously funded projects and the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS), in addition to local and regional plans. This data will be compiled and synthesized to begin identifying Watershed Area Needs and Opportunity Areas. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff clarified that these Watershed Plans are not project-specific, and Watershed Plans are intended to guide applicants, WASCs, and other interested parties through Population Indicators and Opportunity Areas. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff shared that the Watershed Plans are being developed alongside the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment, which will gather feedback from the community-at-large across the SCW Program area. The Assessment builds off previous engagement efforts with the community, including surveys conducted by Watershed Coordinators and previous countywide efforts.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff added that there will be engagement with other organizations, such as OurWaterLA (OWLA), Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, Rebuild SoCal Partnership, and municipalities. The SCW Program Watershed Planning Team is also soliciting feedback from the ROC and the Scoring Committee to refine definitions and common language used by the SCW Program. For inquiries regarding ongoing watershed planning efforts, SCR WASC Members can email watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

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5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Amanda Begley presented on August activities and upcoming events. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Watershed Coordinator Begley mentioned that a grant application for the United States Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program in Phase 1 was submitted for an Arundo removal project, but an award was not received. An invitation was extended for a debrief to receive feedback. A submission for Round 2 has been made, with future notifications anticipated.

Upcoming events include the River Rally on September 21, the ROC meeting on October 9, and the next SCR WASC meeting on October 17.

a. Summary of Scientific Study Submission

Watershed Coordinator Begley provided a summary of the SS submitted to the SCR WASC in Round 6. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Watershed Coordinator Begley noted that all submitted projects are currently undergoing a completeness review by the SCW Program team. The Call for Projects submission period closed on July 31, and the SCR WASC received one SS called Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County Scientific Study. Foothill Municipal Water District is the project developer of the SS, requesting \$442,000 across multiple watersheds.

Member Braly inquired about the SS presented and how this current submission differs from previously approved studies from County and city entities. Chair Seegmiller confirmed that the application is a separate study from previously evaluated and funded projects. While one study focused on bacteria and another addressed dry wells, this new project aims to create a mapping exhibit for potential projects. The WASC is not being asked to make a funding decision until the SIP development process in future months. Prior to the SIP being programmed, the study proponent will be invited to present to the WASC and share further details.

Upon inquiry, Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) clarified that the study submitted a Year 1 funding request of \$442,000 across multiple watersheds within County, with a request of \$49,000 from the SCR WASC. Vice-Chair Cattell inquired about the study being within all of Los Angeles County, stating that the SCR WASC only covers about half of the northern part of Los Angeles County. Member Jerrid McKenna requested that the study proponent share more information about the study area and pilot program at an upcoming WASC meeting.

6. Public Comment Period

Public Works staff compiled all comment cards by 5:00 pm the day before the meeting. There were no public comments.

7. Discussion Items

a) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Co-Chairs

Chair Seegmiller inquired if any Committee Members wished to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair. Vice-Chair Cattell nominated Chair Seegmiller as Chair. Chair Seegmiller expressed a willingness to continue in the role and asked if anyone wished to serve as Vice-Chair or Co-Chair. Vice-Chair Cattell indicated openness to continuing in the role as Vice-Chair.

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i. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

9. Voting Items

The voting for Discussion Item 7a was moved up.

Vice-Chair Cattell motioned to approve Darin Seegmiller to continue as the Chair of the SCR WASC, seconded by Member Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel. The Committee voted to approve Darin Seegmiller as Chair of the SCR WASC with 15 votes in favor, 0 votes in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Member Braly motioned to approve Sandra Cattell to continue as the Vice-Chair of the SCR WASC, seconded by Member Steve Cole. The Committee voted to approve Sandra Cattell as Vice-Chair with 15 in favor, 0 votes in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

7. Discussion Items (Continued)

b) Discussion on Invasive Species in the Santa Clara River Watershed

Watershed Coordinator Begley presented on the Invasive Species in the Santa Clara River Watershed: Watershed-Wide Arundo Management Group. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Watershed Coordinator Begley confirmed that other invasive species are considered beyond Arundo. The Committee posed questions regarding the costs associated with fire, particularly in relation to Arundo and tamarisk. Concerns were raised about the source of these plants and the need to stop selling invasive species. Alternatives for monetizing the removal of these species were explored, including the potential for converting Arundo into other products.

Vice-Chair Cattell noted that permits are required to access the river and remove invasive species. The Committee discussed whether individuals could remove invasive species from their own land. Member Cole clarified that a permitting process will be established as part of the Watershed-Wide Arundo Management initiative. Member Cole indicated that the method of removal would determine permitting and whether the process could be expedited. Vice-Chair Cattell proposed cutting Arundo and controlling it with tarps during the summer.

The Committee invited Tom Dudley (Santa Clara River Conservancy) to speak about the Arundo efforts and ongoing California Fish and Wildlife Program, aimed at removing invasive plants. This program seeks to streamline the approval process for other projects. Dudley highlighted the challenges posed by species such as Tamarisk, castor bean, and poison hemlock, discussing the pursuit of biological control methods to manage pest plants while minimizing pesticide use.

Member Braley inquired about funding related to these initiatives. Watershed Coordinator Begley confirmed that funding is allocated for retreatment efforts to prevent the regrowth of invasive species, with the permitting process currently underway.

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i. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments

c) WASC Roles and Responsibilities Presentation

Fossum presented on WASC roles and responsibilities. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Cole requested to review the slide detailing investments in the Program to date, inquiring about the status of metrics related to stormwater capture and cleaning and quantifiable progress. Fossum noted that this is a major focus for the Watershed Planning team, who will be reviewing Performance Measures and Population Indicators specific to each watershed and the County as a whole.

Chair Seegmiller noted the significant momentum with current projects and highlighted the Via Princesa Park project. Chair Seegmiller commented that progress will soon be visible as the SCR WASC moves forward in its upcoming phases and construction efforts begin.

i. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

8. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

10. Items for Next Agenda

Public Works staff noted that the next meeting date will be October 17, 2024 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. See SCW Program website for meeting details. Items on the next agenda may include:

- a. Watershed Planning Workshop #2
- b. Continued discussion of invasive plant removal efforts

11. Adjournment

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

Webex Attendees
Santa Clara River WASC Meeting
September 19, 2024

Allen Ma - LA Co Public Works
Carlos Rodriguez
Chris Lapaz
Connor Rudmann
Daria Antonova - LACPW

Diego Carrizo
Heather Turpin
Jenny Chau
Justin Jones
Larry Tran - LACPW

Luis Perez SCW WP
Mark Hall GLAmosquito
Ryanna Fossum Regional Coordination
SCWP - Presenter
Sara

Shawn Kelly
Stephanie Luu
Thierry Rivard
lynne plambeck
tom dudley

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