

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Thursday, January 16, 2024

2:00pm - 4:00pm

LA County Public Works Headquarters, 1st Floor (Courtyard), Conference Room C

900 S Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803

WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

*Seta Marjanian, Los Angeles Flood Control District (Agency)

*Conor Mossavi, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

Cathie Santo Domingo, Los Angeles Recreation & Parks (Agency)

*Cara Campbell, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

Ida Meisami-Fard, Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment (Agency)

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)

Jill Sohm, University of Southern California (Community)

*Roxy Rivas, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)

Brent Maue, Pasadena (Municipal)

Ted Gerber, South Pasadena (Municipal)

Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair

Karo Torossian, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice Chair

*Kara Plourde, Los Angeles County (Municipal)

Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Valeria Mena, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Alonso Garcia, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Absent:

Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)

Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)

Edith de Guzman, University of California, Los Angeles (Community)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial in both English and Spanish and announced that any public comment made in Spanish will be translated to English. Public Works staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members, and a quorum was established.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 21, 2024 & December 4, 2024

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from November 21, 2024, and December 4, 2024. Chair Villegas motioned to approve the minutes from November 21, 2024, and December 4, 2024, seconded by Member Ernesto Pantoja. The WASC voted to approve the November 21, 2024, and December 4, 2024, meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 2 in abstention, and 2 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex-parte communication disclosures.

4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff acknowledged the impact of the recent fires in the Los Angeles region. The Safe Clean Water (SCW) Program Watershed Planning team is evaluating how the fires impacted funded projects, and evaluating how lessons learned from these events can be integrated into the Initial Watershed Plans to enhance climate resilience. Chair Villegas confirmed that Public Works staff will check in with Project Developers impacted by the recent fires and can provide Project Developers with the option of delaying funding disbursement to projects that were significantly impacted by the fires.

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- The Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 (FY24-25) Transfer Agreement and Addendum distribution began in December 2024. An email was sent out to new and continuing Project Developers with instructions on how to use the Transfer Agreement functionality within the Reporting Module. Project Developers are advised to start uploading their supporting documents to execute their agreements.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting scheduled for January 8 was cancelled due to the recent Los Angeles fires and will be rescheduled. The ROC has invited WASC Chairs to provide updates and recommendations relating to each WASC. The ROC will also discuss updates on SCW Program Adaptive Management. To view meeting details and materials, please visit the [ROC events webpage](#).
- The FY22-23 Watershed Area Regional Program Process (WARPP) Report for the ULAR WASC 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 made up to FY 22-23. Note that the WARPP has one section summarizing projected benefits of the FY 23-24 SIP. 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; 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 FY23-24 and is anticipated to be released next year.
- The 2024 Municipal Transfer Agreements are currently being processed and executed by SCW staff. Disbursements were scheduled for end of December 2024. Cities will need to comply with all reporting requirements to receive the fifth disbursement. Please contact Public Works staff about any issues accessing the disbursement.
- The Los Angeles County Flood Control District has partnered with the Water Foundation to administer the Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program. The Program will support education and community engagement efforts related to stormwater and urban runoff capture within the Los Angeles County Flood Control District. Applicants may submit proposals from now until May 31, 2025, on the [Water Foundation's website](#). Proposals will be evaluated and awarded on a rolling basis.

Public Work's Watershed Planning staff provided updates, noting that the Initial Watershed Plan will first be developed for the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) Watershed Area. Lessons learned from creating the LLAR Initial Watershed Plan will be used to develop the Initial Watershed Plans for the remaining eight Watershed Areas. Public Work's Watershed Planning staff have made progress in identifying Watershed Area characteristics, establishing indicators and performance measures, quantifying needs and identifying strategies to meet needs, and more. The Watershed Planning Framework is completed and available on

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

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Alonso Garcia shared that the Watershed Coordinators are strategizing with the Regional Coordination team on how the SCW Program can support communities with fire recovery, especially related to water quality.

Watershed Coordinator Garcia announced that the Watershed Coordinators are planning tours of Los Angeles County Public Works' Nogales Park Stormwater Capture Project, Franklin D. Roosevelt Park Regional Stormwater Capture Project, and the City of Los Angeles' Oros Green Street Project.

Watershed Coordinator Garcia shared that the Watershed Coordinators are engaging with cities to support participation in the SCW Program and have assisted multiple community-based organizations (CBOs) in applying for Safe, Clean Water Public Education and Community Engagement Grants.

Watershed Coordinator Mena provided an update on recent outreach efforts, including a monthly newsletter and social media posts, that share updates on the SCW Program, highlight SCW Program-funded projects in the ULAR Watershed Area, spotlight community partners, and share events and grant opportunities. Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman encouraged Committee Members to suggest community groups to highlight in future newsletters.

Watershed Coordinator Liberman shared that the Watershed Coordinators are planning to attend three educational events this year: BizFed Institute Water Resiliency Conference, VerdeXchange Environmental Conference, and the Los Angeles Business Council Sustainability Workshop Summit.

Chair Villegas suggested that Watershed Coordinators share lessons learned from recent fires with local municipalities. Vice Chair Karo Torossian recommended that Watershed Coordinators encourage Project Developers to incorporate fire prevention best practices in project designs.

Public Works staff mentioned that Public Works will provide free post-fire engineering advice to impacted residents. Impacted residents can contact Public Works at 1-800-933-0930.

6) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Community Garden Stormwater Capture and Investigation Findings

This agenda item was postponed. The presentation will be rescheduled to a future ULAR WASC meeting.

b) Technical Resources Program (TRP) Presentation

i. Crescenta Valley Park Stormwater Capture Project

Carla Dillon (Crescenta Valley Water District) presented on the Crescenta Valley Park Stormwater Capture Project TRP application. The project will infiltrate stormwater from 3,357 acres and intends to recharge the Verdugo Aquifer by 500 acre-feet yearly, with the objective to improve water quality and resiliency. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Dillon clarified that Crescenta Valley Water District does not have Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements because the Crescenta Valley Water District does not hold a municipal separate

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storm sewer system (MS4) permit. Dillon also clarified that the operations cost includes labor, while maintenance costs include the cost of equipment parts.

Member Jill Sohm clarified with Dillon that 1,900 acre-feet is currently pumped from the Verdugo Aquifer each year. Upon inquiry, Dillon explained that the City of Glendale and Crescenta Valley Water District pump from the Verdugo Aquifer. Dillon added that 500 acre-feet of estimated yearly recharge was determined during a preliminary feasibility study.

Chair Villegas confirmed with Dillon that this project would increase the volume of stormwater captured for aquifer recharge. Dillon also clarified that this project intends to use gravity-based recharge.

Member Pantoja confirmed with Dillon that Crescenta Valley Water District would be interested in hiring local workers during construction.

c) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentations

i. Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County

Christopher Tull (California Data Collaborative) presented on the Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County study. DROPS 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](#).

Vice Chair Torossian confirmed with Tull that this TRP has not yet received funding from the other eight WASCs. Member Ted Gerber inquired how the TRP would be impacted if the Project Developer does not receive funding from all WASCs, and Tull shared that the study would likely develop fewer features as a result.

Member Roxy Rivas inquired if the development of the DROPS tool considered the Living Infrastructure Field Kit developed by Accelerated Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA). Tull clarified that the DROPS tool will be built for water agencies as the end user but understands that other organizations may be interested in using this tool.

Upon inquiry, Tull clarified that software engineers from the California Data Collective would be building the DROPS tool. Tull also shared that the Project Applicant is still evaluating whether the DROPS tool could be updated after it is published, and what that process entails.

Chair Villegas inquired how users will be able to access the DROPS tool once it is developed. Tull mentioned that the Project Developers have conducted interviews with potential users to understand needs and that while the Project Developer has not yet determined how the DROPS tool will be accessed, Tull emphasized that a version of the tool would be available to users at no cost. Tull mentioned that there may be a premium version available to agencies who pay for a California Data Collective membership. Tull shared that membership fees may be used to host the DROPS tool online long-term. Chair Villegas mentioned that the Project Developers could reapply for WASC funding to maintain the tool.

Upon inquiry, Tull explained that artificial intelligence in the form of machine learning tools may be used to interpret data and generative chat models may be used to summarize data for users.

ii. Quantifying Community Flood Management Benefits of Watershed-Scale Stormwater Capture

Brad Wardynski (Craftwater) and Mackenzie Bolger (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments) presented on the Quantifying Community Flood Management Benefits of Watershed Scale Stormwater

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Capture TRP. The TRP explores community flood improvement benefits of SCW Program projects under various climate change scenarios to develop river restoration alternatives. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Wardynski explained that the TRP is focused on the Arroyo Seco in the ULAR Watershed Area because there are many data resources available, but the analysis may be expanded to other watershed areas once this pilot study is completed.

Member Gerber inquired how the TRP will impact on-going projects along the Arroyo Seco. Wardynski explained that publicly available information on existing SCW Program-funded projects will be included in the study model and that the TRP would conduct an engineering analysis of suitable locations for future projects. Upon inquiry, Wardynski clarified that the TRP would not prioritize potential projects, but instead intends to quantify flood benefits of any potential projects.

Member Sohm inquired how the TRP would be impacted if academic partners are unable to secure funding on the projected timeline. Wardynski explained that the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) team has all the necessary data to proceed with the project, while the University of California, Irvine (UCI) team is in the process of obtaining funding to perform flood mapping. Wardynski noted that if the UCI team's funding is delayed, the study could still be completed while focusing on one sub-watershed.

7) Public Comment

Maggie Gardner (Los Angeles Waterkeeper) expressed support for the Quantifying Community Flood Management Benefits of Watershed-Scale Stormwater Capture study. Gardner commented that the SCW Program does not currently have performance metrics to describe flood related Community Investment Benefits, so the TRP would be beneficial to the region.

Christopher Tull (Public Member) expressed support for the Crescenta Valley Park Stormwater Capture Project. Tull mentioned that the groundwater monitoring well located about one mile downstream of proposed site has shown groundwater levels far below levels that were seen several decades ago and commented that the project would improve local water supplies and increase the availability of imported water for other users.

Carla Dillon (Crescenta Valley Water District) expressed support for the Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County TRP. Dillon commented that this study would be beneficial for the Crescenta Valley Water District to identify areas that are most suitable for high-investment groundwater recharge infrastructure projects.

8) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm at Public Works Headquarters. Items for the next agenda may include:

- a) FY24-25 Project Modification Requests (PMR) Overview
- b) Scientific Study Peer Reviews

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff shared that there are two PMRs and three Scientific Study peer reviews planned for the next meeting.

9) Adjournment

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Chair Villegas thanked Committee Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

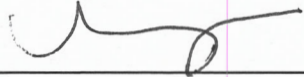
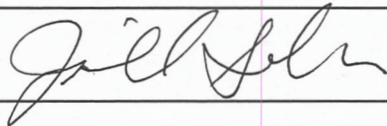
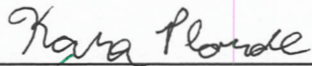
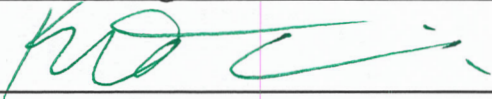
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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Adi Liberman	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		<i>Adi Liberman</i>
Alonso Garcia	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		<i>Alonso Garcia</i>
Anteneh Tesfaye	City of South Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Arlene Guzman	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Art Castro	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	
Blayne Sutton-Wills	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Alternate	
Brent Maue	City of Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Cara Campbell	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	<i>Cara Campbell</i>
Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Agency	Primary	<i>Cathie Santo Domingo</i>
Conor Mossavi	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	<i>Conor Mossavi</i>
Edith de Guzman	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
Ernesto Pantoja	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Primary	<i>Ernesto Pantoja</i>

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Ernesto Rivera	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Primary	
Gary Lam	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Agency	Alternate	
Gregory Pierce	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Ida Meisami-Fard	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Primary	
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Jill Sohm	University of Southern California	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
John Huynh	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	
Kara Plourde	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Alternate	
Karo Torossian	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Kenneth Jones	City of San Fernando	Municipal	Primary	
Kristina Kreter	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Miguel Luna	Urban Semillas	Community Stakeholder	Primary	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Rafael Prieto	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Roxy Rivas	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Satenig Marjanian	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Alternate	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Sergio Rascon	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Ted Gerber	City of South Pasadena	Municipal	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Initials]</i>
Teresa Villegas	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Thuan Nguyen	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Primary	
Veronica Padilla- Campos	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Primary	

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Carla Dillon	Dillon	C.V.W.D	cdillon@cvwd.com
Armine	Sargsyan	CVWD	asargsyan@cvwd.com
Brad	Wardynski	Craftwater	brad.wardynski@craftwater.com
Christopher	Tull	CaDC	chris@theCaDC.org
Stacy	Luell	Herrera Enviro. Consultants	SLUELL@HerreraInc.com

WebEx Webinar Attendees
Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting - January 16, 2025

Alexandro Garcia
Alonso
Angineh Shahnazarian
Carlos Preciado
Carlos Rodriguez
Chris Lee
Craig Doberstein
Jason Casanova, CWH
Jennifer Amarant
Vicki Friesen

Jenny Chau
JonPaul Sarro SCW WP
Jose Castro - LACPW
Joyce Amaro
Kirk Allen - LACPW
Kristina Kreter
Mackenzie Bolger - SGVCOG
Maggie Gardner
Mark Nguyen
Paulina Mejia

Pearl Azizian
Pearl Azizian
Richard B. Lewis, III
SCWP - Larry Tran
SCWP ULAR WASC
Safe Clean Water - Host
Serena Zhu
Susie Santilena
Thom Epps Craftwater
Tiffany Chang

William OBraitis
Gabriella