



SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Report February 2025

Melina Sempill Watts, Watershed Coordinator
March 13, 2025

Photo and Logo, Los Angeles County



Measure W: The Safe Clean Water Program provides local, dedicated funding to increase our local water supply, improve water quality, and protect public health.

Photo and Logo, Los Angeles County

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LAND

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

ERASURE OF A WORD DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE TRUTH IT REPRESENTS

The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants — past, present, and emerging — as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multigenerational trauma. This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the

Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council

Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

San Fernando Band of Mission Indians



**Facilitate Community Engagement
in SCWP**

- Wrote and distributed **NSMB watershed newsletter**
- Shared **Earth Island Brower Youth Awards applications** with Deanna Armbruster, SAMO Fund + Clark Stevens, RCDSMM. Looking for some home town wins.
- **Laura Rink, Heal the Bay Aquarium** has offered for NSMB WASC to visit **tidewater gobies rescued from Topanga Lagoon; shall I set this up?**



Photo courtesy RCDSMM

Please take
out your
phone + use
the QR code.
Take the
survey.

What changes would you like to see in LA County?



Share your vision with the
**Safe, Clean Water Program
Community Strengths and
Needs Assessment.**

Scan the QR Code or visit
SafeCleanWaterLA.org/Survey
to participate!



Scan Me!



Identify and Develop Project Concepts



Place-centered Projects

- Looked at possible project sites in Topanga with Craig Doberstein and his colleague, geomorphologist Jeff Parsons
- SAMO Fund applied for **Medea Creek project** to SCWP Community Engagement and Education Grant (CEE Grant); \$250K
- Austin Toyoma (**SMMUSD**,) Claire Robinson (**Amigo de los Rios**); may apply for **Webster School in Malibu**, SCWP CEE Grant; \$250K
- Nascent **Lake Lindero project idea** is defunct due to new lawsuits.
- -Asking RCDSMM to **update of the Topanga Creek Watershed Plan**



- **RCDSMM submitted watershed education grant to SCWP Community Engagement and Education Grant; \$250K**
- **Asked ARLA to consider connecting cisterns to water supply for fire; suggested LAT op ed piece**
- **SAMO Fund applying for to SCWP Community Engagement and Education Grant; probably just under \$200K**
- **-Approached Story Corps with an outreach idea to do an oral history of L.A. + H2); Proposal titled, Water, the Soul of Los Angeles.**
- **Asking local cities to share the SCWP survey; Calabasas was first**
- **Proposing water quality update online event for community, Alvina Mehito SCCWRP is coordinating WQ testing efforts – let's talk dates**



Community Engagement-centered Projects

Photo by
RCDSMM



Work with Technical Assistance Teams



TECHNICAL ADVISORY TEAM IN WESTLAKE VILLAGE



**Facilitate Identification and
Representation of Community Priorities**

**Fire.
Debris removal.
Water quality.
Landslides.**

Oh California...



Photo by California Department of State Parks

Fire and Water: Water Quality Queries

- Connected Curtis Castle, and Tatiana Holden, **City of Calabasas** to **Elisha Wakefield, Susan Arredondo** and **Enrique Casa** from **L.A Regional Water Quality Control Board** to discuss post fire debris clean up
- Connected **Elisha Wakefield** to **Alvina Mehito** from **SCCWRP** and others at her request
- Helped **City of Calabasas** connect with **LA Sanitation District** (FEMA and EPA in place) for **02/10 event**
- **Underlined that land fill was used after the Woolsey Fire with no community pushback.**
- **Annelisa Moe, Heal the Bay** offered water quality testing talk to NSMB WASC; **is this of interest?**
- **Provided Allen Ma, Bruce Hamamoto and Alberto Grajeda with a list of entities who are doing water quality testing along with resources to pursue funding**
- Malibu grapevine, “Michael Medina from L.A. County (survey department) did a study assessing sediment flow for emergency flood control work at Malibu Creek” **he stated that he did not.** When concerned about flooding in lower Malibu, Gretchen E. Hayes, MLA, Environmental Planning and Program Management Professional and Jorgen Blumbergh, Practice Leader - ESA Environmental Hydrology & Design



**Integrate Priorities Through
Partnerships and Extensive Networks**

- Watched **Jessica Forte** represent **NSMB WASC** at **ROC** online
- Attended **Sierra Club Water Committee** meeting online, charmed by Charming Evelyn
- Introduced **Dr. Travis Longcore, UCLA** to **Craig Doberstein, Hererra** so that they can **talk historic stream flow patterns** together
- Attended **Southern California Water Dialogue**

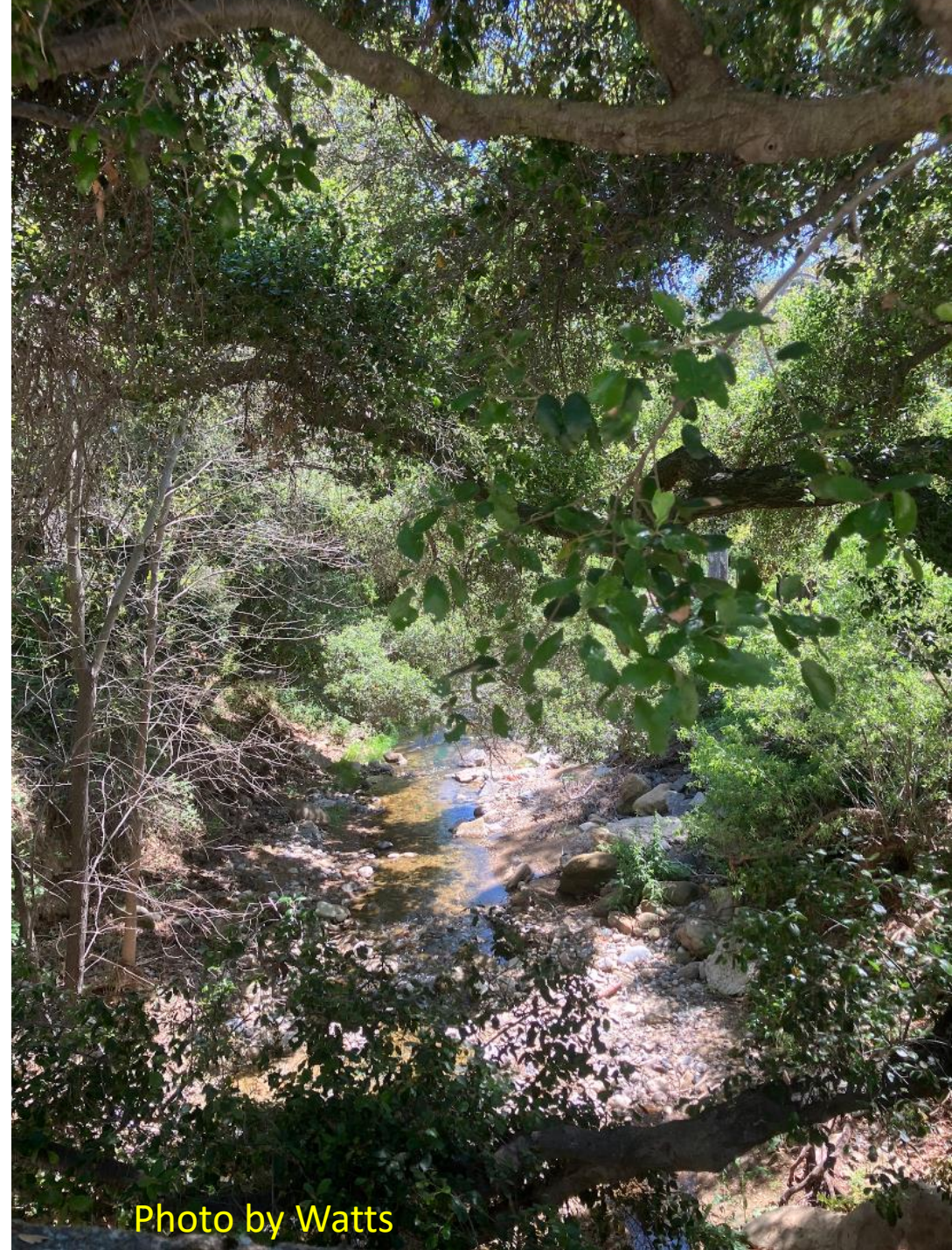


Photo by Watts

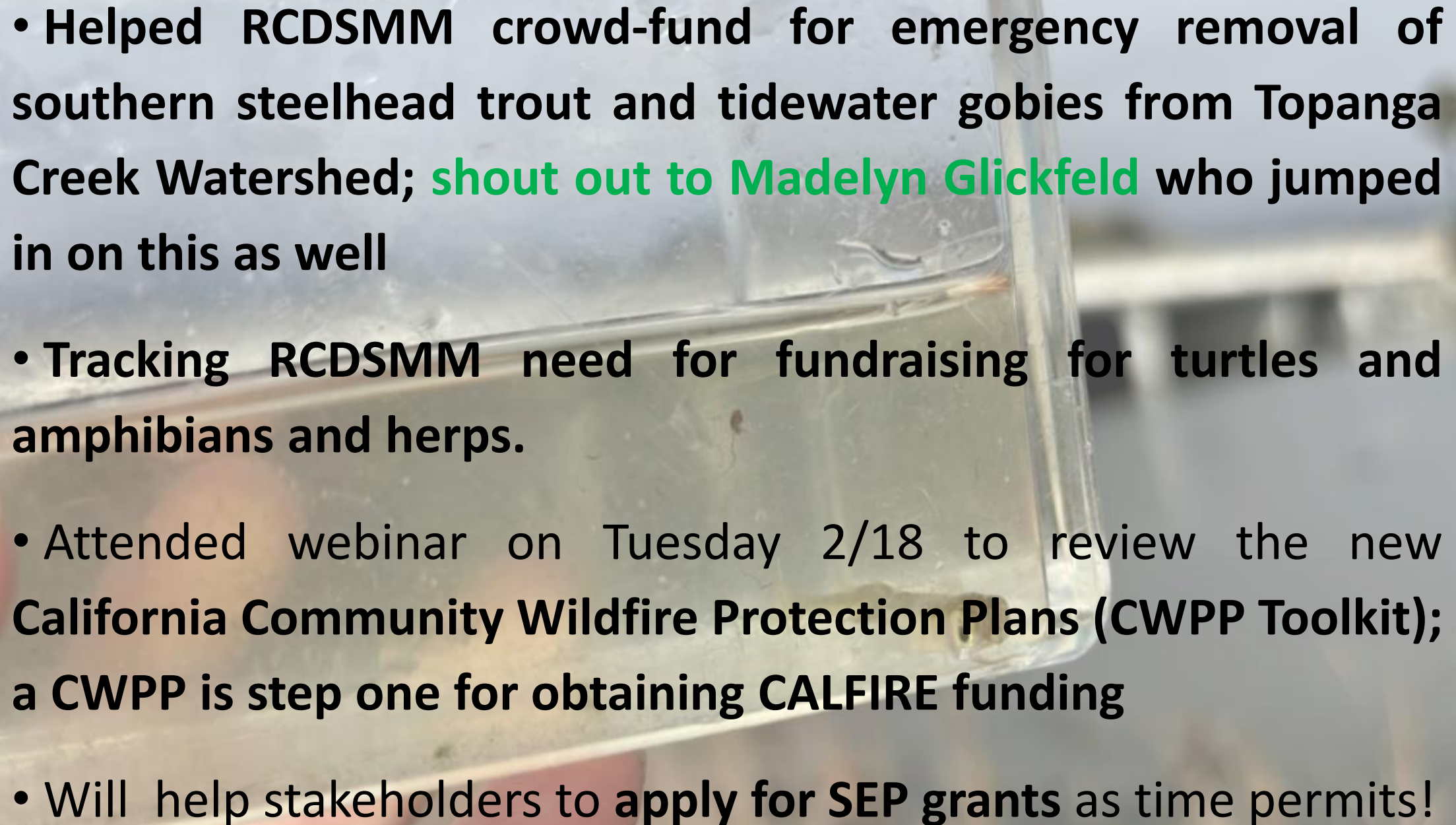
Cost Share Partners

- Reaching out to **CALTRANS** to discuss partnership opportunities along Highway 27 with necessary **Topanga Creek Restoration**
- **Shared link for SEP application** with newsletter and other watershed coordinators
- Tried to build a partnership with **McCoy Creek project**, RCDSMM declines
- Trying (unsuccessfully so far) to set up meeting with **Ms. Heather Schaefer, Southern Region Grants Program from CALFIRE** with interested watershed coordinators
- **Attended NSMB FY25-26 SIP Budget Outlook** led by Eric Bonilla with Jessica Forte and Roxanne Hughes



Photo by CALTRANS

Leveraged / Outside Funding Pursued

- 
- A hand is holding a clear plastic container, likely a petri dish or a small jar, which contains a small amount of water and a tiny, translucent fish. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with some structures.
- Helped RCDSMM crowd-fund for emergency removal of southern steelhead trout and tidewater gobies from Topanga Creek Watershed; **shout out to Madelyn Glickfeld** who jumped in on this as well
 - Tracking RCDSMM need for fundraising for turtles and amphibians and herps.
 - Attended webinar on Tuesday 2/18 to review the new **California Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP Toolkit)**; a CWPP is step one for obtaining CALFIRE funding
 - Will help stakeholders to **apply for SEP grants** as time permits!



Local Stakeholder Education

Online Event:

The Impacts of Fires on Water Quality in the Malibu Creek and Topanga Creek Watersheds

Suggested speakers,

- Elisha Wakefield, LA Regional Water Quality Control Board,
- Alvina Mehito, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
- Annelisa Moe, Heal the Bay
- Rosi Dagit, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains

And...?

Photo by Los Angeles County
Fire Department

Looking for Suggestions for Dates



Potential Projects

Scientific Study Requests

Can the NSMB WASC pay for everything it wants to see happen here?

Maybe!

And, if not, watershed coordinator will commit to seeking funds ...elsewhere.



Photo by Watts

Outreach, Upcoming



Safe, Clean Water Program Success Stories:

Nine Watersheds,
Nine Projects

*Does the NSMB WASC
want to see this
presentation?*

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM



Image Courtesy of Safe, Clean Water L.A.

Scheduling Concerns or Issues

North Santa Monica
Bay
State of the
Watershed
2025 + 2026, the
Movie,
Production on hold,
Calabasas City
Communications
Department Let Go

**Exploring SEP grant
application for these
films.**

**Will connect with
film students.**

**Will ask other cities
for support.**



Contacts

Blog

Search

a practical manual for how to care for the shared landscape upon which all our lives depend

- Outdoor
- Animals
- Landscaping
- Water
- Energy
- Air
- Shopping/Recycling
- EcoBlog
- Living Lightly Top 10

A Book in Print?

A QR Code? Or?

A conversation for ... 2026.

Conserving Water

click here to learn more >



A Conversation for 2026

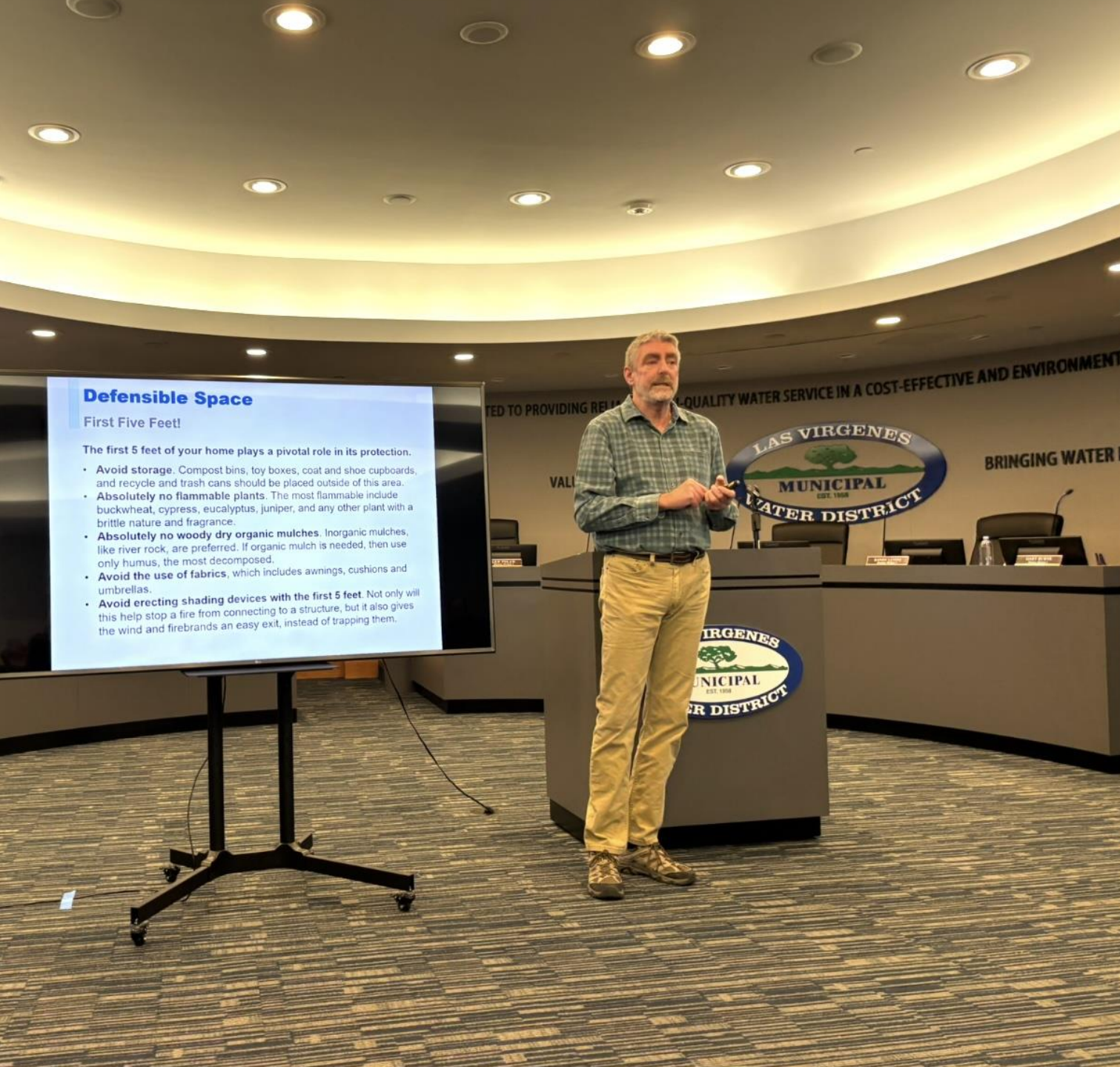


**Planning:
MALIBU LAGOON RESTORATION CELEBRATION**

Photo by Watts



**Watershed Coordinator
Coordination**



New Watershed Coordinator Working Group...

Fire and Water.

Watershed Coordinators are talking about creating an online event to show the nexus between fire resilient landscapes and design and water conservation, water supply and nature based solutions.

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District has been a leader in this space for decades with Douglas Kent and other community leaders..

Watershed Coordinators want to share this information broadly...

Your Watershed Coordinator is co-facilitating the next Watershed Coordinator Meeting with Richard Watson

The Main topic?

You.

We will discuss *how* the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Steering Committee engaged in a facilitated conversation to bring in their own dream science projects.

