

# Santa Clara River

## Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



### Meeting Minutes

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Thursday, March 20, 2025

1:00pm - 4:00pm

Santa Clarita City Hall

Carl Boyer Room

23920 Valencia Blvd. Valencia, CA 91355

WebEx Meeting

#### Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Agency)

Ali Elhassan, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

\*Rick Viergutz, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency)

Francisco Guerrero, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Agency)

\*Susan Nelson, City of Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services (Agency)

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)

Laurene Weste, Santa Clarita (Municipal)

Oliver Cramer, Santa Clarita (Municipal)

Damon Letz, Santa Clarita (Municipal)

Darin Seegmiller, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Chair

Amanda Begley, TreePeople (Watershed Coordinator, Non-voting member)

#### Committee Members Not Present:

Hunt Braly, Poole & Shaffery (Community)

Ivan Volschenk, Evolve Business Strategies (Community)

\*Committee Member Alternate

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

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#### **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 and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. A quorum was established.

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 20, 2025**

Public Works staff presented the previous meeting minutes. Vice-Chair Sandra Cattell motioned to approve the meeting minutes from February 20, 2025, seconded by Member Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel. The Committee voted to approve the February 20, 2025, meeting minutes with 14 votes in favor, 1 vote in abstention, 0 opposed, and 0 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

#### **3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure**

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

#### **4. Committee Member and Program Updates**

Public Works staff deferred program updates to the next SCR WASC meeting to prioritize Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) deliberations for the remainder of the meeting.

# Santa Clara River

## Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



### Meeting Minutes

---

#### 5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Amanda Begley provided an update on Watershed Coordinator activities during February 2025. Watershed Coordinator Begley attended the second annual Santa Clarita Valley Eco Alliance Eco-Film Festival on March 8, and distributed the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) at the event. Watershed Coordinator Begley encouraged meeting attendees to take the survey and explore survey responses received so far on the CSNA [Dthe Community Engagement & Education\[00\]](#) page. Watershed Coordinator Begley will continue to administer the CSNA at future tabling and outreach events.

Watershed Coordinator Begley noted that the next educational event in the SCR Watershed Area will be the River and Steelhead Teaching Tour on April 5 at Duane R Harte Park in Santa Clarita, hosted in collaboration with Southern Steelhead Coalition. More information is available on the [Southern Steelhead Coalition website](#).

Watershed Coordinator Begley also noted the Department of Water Resources' Rural Water Supply Reliability Program is open to applications from community members for reimbursement of hauled water up to \$2,400. Watershed Coordinator Begley will publicize the Rural Water Supply Reliability Program at future community outreach events.

Member Erskine-Hellrigel offered to assist Watershed Coordinator Begley with planning the River and Steelhead Teaching Tour.

#### 6. Public Comment Period

Two public comment cards were submitted before the meeting. Public comment cards are available on the [SCW Program website](#). There were no in-person or virtual public comments.

#### 7. Discussion Items

##### a. Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY23-24) Quarter 3 (Q3) and Quarter 4

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) and Alex Ov (HDR) presented an overview of the FY23-24 Q3 and Q4 reports. The Q3 and Q4 reports are prepared by Project Developers to provide the WASC with updates to project status, covering January 2024 through June 2024. Antos explained recent changes to the Regional Program reporting requirements, and Ov summarized funding allocations and status updates of projects in the SCR Watershed Area as of June 2024. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Ov clarified that Project Developers in the SCR Watershed Area have received \$16,244,222 as of June 2024, and that the SCR WASC is anticipated to have \$41,829,101 to distribute within the SCW Program.

Upon request from WASC Members, Project Developers shared updates on funded Infrastructure Program projects.

Diego Carrizo (Los Angeles County Public Works) shared that the Hasley Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project is currently in the pre-design phase. Results from a groundwater investigation were received in January 2025 and indicated that groundwater levels are within 30 feet of the surface. It was determined that infiltration is not viable at this site, because there would be insufficient buffer space between the bottom of infiltration infrastructures and the top of the water table. The Project Developer is assessing alternative solutions, including the feasibility of diverting to sewer. Upon inquiry, Carrizo elaborated that the Project Developer has not spent any funds from the SCW Regional Program or Municipal Program.

# Santa Clara River

## Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



### Meeting Minutes

---

Carrizo shared that the Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project is on hold pending results of a feasibility study.

Archie Dornidon (City of Santa Clarita) shared that the Via Princessa Park and Regional BMP Project is in the 90% design phase, and that project design, including permitting, is expected to be complete by the end of 2025.

Connor Hahm (City of Santa Clarita) shared that the Project Developer has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for a design consultant on the Newhall Park Infiltration Project. The RFP closes on April 1, and 30% design is scheduled for completion by the end of 2025.

Vice-Chair Cattell reminded Project Developers that SCR WASC Members would like to be invited to public outreach events related to funded projects and emphasized the importance of community engagement in design development.

#### **i. Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

#### **b. Santa Clara River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Stormwater Investment Plan**

Antos presented an overview of the SIP Programming process, including tools available to WASC members to aid in SIP deliberation. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Vice-Chair Cattell inquired if Project Developers are required to pursue leveraged funding if project costs increase after SCW Program funding has been approved. Antos clarified that Project Developers can choose to pursue leveraged funding or request additional funding from the WASC through a Project Modification Request. Antos mentioned that the WASC can set its own priorities around leverage funding.

Public Works staff provided an overview of the SIP Tool available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that 59% of total funding available to the SCR WASC over the next five fiscal years has been preliminarily allocated to ongoing projects.

Public Works staff presented a potential FY 25-26 funding scenario that involves funding the Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System Scientific Study (hereafter referred to as the DROPS SS). Public Works staff explained that funding the DROPS SS would utilize less than 1% of total projected funding available in the next five fiscal years. Chair Seegmiller reminded the WASC that the DROPS SS would develop a model built from existing datasets into one application that could be used to determine the best locations for stormwater infiltration in Los Angeles County.

Christopher Tull (California Data Collaborative, Project Applicant) was present for questions and explained that the DROPS SS will build upon a pilot study currently being conducted. The DROPS SS Project Developer plans to work with a user group to improve the model developed in the pilot study. The features in the expanded model will depend on how much funding the Project Developer receives from the SCW Program.

Member Francisco Guerrero inquired if other WASCs have decided to fund the DROPS SS. Public Works staff shared that as of this meeting date, only the Lower San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo WASCs have recommended a SIP, and neither included the DROPS SS.

Member Mary Johnson inquired how the DROPS SS would proceed if only one WASC funded the project. Additionally, Member Ali Elhassan inquired how many WASCs would need to fund the DROPS SS so that the SS can execute the intended benefits. Tull shared that any amount of funding would allow the DROPS SS to move forward with incremental improvements, but more significant progress could be made with funding from at least three WASCs.



### Meeting Minutes

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Chair Seegmiller inquired why other WASCs decided to not include the DROPS SS in their SIPs. Tull shared that the Rio Hondo WASC had previously funded another SS, the PreSIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration SS, that Rio Hondo WASC Members thought served a similar purpose as the DROPS SS. Additionally, the Lower San Gabriel WASC did not fund the DROPS SS because the Lower San Gabriel Watershed Area is not as suitable for water supply augmentation as other areas of Los Angeles County.

Upon inquiry, Tull shared that if the SCR WASC were the only WASC to fund the DROPS SS, the study could be tailored to feedback from SCR WASC members and the SCR Watershed Area's unique needs. However, the DROPS tool would likely still be developed with County-wide datasets.

Member Bruce Hamamoto mentioned that the DROPS SS does not appear to have many Water Quality benefits. Additionally, several WASC members questioned what new benefit the DROPS SS would provide that existing tools, such as Los Angeles County's Watershed Management Programs, the SCW Program Watershed Plans, and datasets internal to local water supply agencies, do not have.

Tull shared that the Project Developer's partner agencies proposed the DROPS SS because those agencies did not have a tool that could easily and quickly assess benefits of potential sites for stormwater infiltration projects. Tull acknowledged that other agencies may have internal tools, but the Project Developer aims to create a tool that is available to a wider group of stakeholders and has a more accessible user interface.

Member Laurene Weste expressed support for the DROPS SS, because the study could validate that existing tools used by local water agencies are effective at finding areas suitable for groundwater recharge.

Member Johnson inquired if the Project Developer has pursued leveraged funding for the DROPS SS. Tull explained that the ongoing pilot study that is a predecessor to the DROPS SS is funded by Foothill Municipal Water District, Crescenta Valley Water District, City of Glendale, City of Pasadena, and Metropolitan Water District. If the DROPS SS does not receive enough funding from the SCW Program, the Project Developer can consider other possible funding sources.

Member Elhassan inquired how the City of Santa Clarita currently evaluates potential locations for stormwater infiltration projects and Chair Seegmiller explained that City of Santa Clarita uses the Watershed Management Plan, which cites potential locations for stormwater capture. Chair Seegmiller expressed uncertainty if the DROPS SS would produce new information for the City of Santa Clarita, but commented that the benefit of the study would be creating a tool that is easy to utilize and accessible to everyone.

Vice-Chair Cattell inquired if the DROPS SS would have identified that the site initially selected for the Hasley Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project was not suitable for infiltration. Tull explained that it is not known yet if the DROPS tool would have been able to recognize that the site was not appropriate for a groundwater recharge project, because all relevant datasets have not been identified. However, Tull agreed that the Hasley Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project could be a good case study candidate to test the DROPS tool.

Public Works staff then presented on funding carried over from previous SIPs for Infrastructure Projects and Scientific Studies.

Upon inquiry, Chair Seegmiller clarified that the funding requested by Via Princessa Park and Regional BMP Project for FY25-26 and FY26-27 would be used for operations and maintenance.

Member Hamamoto inquired why the WASC did not receive an update on the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS, which was funded by the SCR WASC in FY24-25. Public Works staff explained that the Project Developer is not required to begin reporting to the WASC until the second half of FY24-25 due to the timeline of funding disbursements.



### Meeting Minutes

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Upon inquiry, Antos confirmed that the Regional Pathogen Reduction SS, which was funded by the SCR WASC in FY21-22, has received funding from all nine WASCs. To Antos' knowledge, no WASCs have expressed concern about the Regional Pathogen Reduction SS, and of the two WASCs that have submitted their recommended FY25-26 SIP, both have continued funding the Regional Pathogen Reduction SS.

Upon inquiry, Chair Seegmiller shared that the Project Developer of the Via Princessa Park and Regional BMP Project and Newhall Park Infiltration Project does not anticipate requesting any additional funding from this WASC.

#### **i. Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

#### **8. Voting Items**

Member Weste motioned to approve the final Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Stormwater Investment Plan for SCR Watershed Area, including Watershed Coordinator and approve submission to the ROC for review (funding scenario "All continuing projects and scientific studies (with no funding changes); 1 New SS (Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County"), seconded by Member Erskine-Hellrigel. The Committee voted to approve the motion with 11 votes in favor, 0 votes in abstention, 4 opposed, and 0 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

#### **9. Items for Next Agenda**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, April 17, from 1:00pm – 3:00pm. The item on the next agenda is Watershed Planning Workshop #3.

Member Elhassan shared that several WASC members will have conflicts on Thursdays from 1:00pm – 3:00pm going forward. Public Works staff will send a survey to all WASC Members to determine availability for future meetings.

#### **10. Adjournment**

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

SANTA CLARA RIVER WASC MEETING - MARCH 20, 2025							
		Quorum Present				Voting Items (see meeting minutes for additional details)	
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present ?	Approve 2/20/2025 Meeting Minutes	Approve the Final Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Stormwater Investment Plan for SCR Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator and approve submission to the ROC for review (funding scenario "All continuing projects and scientific studies (with no funding changes); 1 New SS (Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System(DROPS) for Los Angeles County)")
Agency	District	Julian Juarez	x	Alynn Sun		y	y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	Ali Elhassan	x	Najwa Pitois		y	y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency	Steve Cole		Rick Viergutz	x	y	y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Francisco Guerrero	x	Christopher Lapaz		y	n
Agency	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	Jerrid McKenna		Susan Nelson	x	y	y
Community Stakeholder	Poole & Shaffery	Hunt Braly					
Community Stakeholder	Agua Dulce Town Council	Mary Johnson	x			y	y
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	n
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y	n
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y	n
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Laurene Weste, Councilmember	x	Tyler Pledger		a	y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Oliver Cramer	x	Haley Lawton		y	y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Damon Letz	x	Dan Duncan		y	y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Darin Seegmiller*	x	Amber Rodriguez		y	y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	TreePeople, Inc.	Amanda Begley	x	Heather Turpin			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	14	11
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0	4
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	0
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	15	15
Municipal Members		7				Approved	Approved

**Webex Attendees**  
**Santa Clara River WASC Meeting**  
**March 20, 2025**

Alberto Grajeda	Claire Barr	Erum Razzak	TONY MALDONADO
Alexander Ov	Dan Duncan	Hunt Braly	Vicki Friesen
Ali Sharbat Cal Poly	Daria Antonova - LACPW	Jason Pepito - SCW WP	cherise thompson
Alynn Sun	Diego Carrizo	Jenny Chau	
Call-in User_2	SCR WASC	Josephine Gutierrez	
Carlos Preciado	SCR WASC Presenter	Mehrad Kamalzare - CPP	
Carlos Rodriguez	SCW Staff - Anthony Barreras	Melanie Rivera	
Christopher Tull	Santa Clarita City Hall	Richard Watson	



Santa Clara River  
Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Ali Elhassan	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency		P	
Allen Ma	LA County Public Works		A	
Alynn Sun	FCD		A	
Amanda Begley (non-voting)	TreePeople		WC	
Amber Rodriguez	Santa Clarita		A	
Bruce Hamamoto	LA County Public Works		P	
Christopher Lapaz	LA County Sanitation Districts		A	
Damon Letz	Santa Clarita		P	
Dan Duncan	Santa Clarita		A	
Darin Seegmiller	Santa Clarita		P	
Diane Trautman	Santa Clarita Sierra Club		A	
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation		P	
Francisco Guerrero	LA County Sanitation Districts		P	
Haley Lawton	Santa Clarita		A	
Heather Turpin (non-voting)	TreePeople		WC	

March 20, 2025



Santa Clara River  
Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Heidi Webber	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation		A	
Hunt Braly	Poole & Shaffery		P	
Ivan Volschenk	Evolve Business Strategies		P	
Jerrid McKenna	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services		P	
Julian Juarez	FCD		P	<i>Julian Juarez</i>
Laurene Weste, Councilmember	Santa Clarita		P	<i>Laurene Weste</i>
Mary Johnson	Agua Dulce Town Council		P	<i>M. Johnson</i>
Najwa Pitois	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency		A	
Oliver Cramer	Santa Clarita		P	<i>Oliver Cramer</i>
Rick Viergutz	Santa Clarita Valley GSA		A	<i>Rick Viergutz</i>
Sandra Cattell	Santa Clarita Sierra Club		P	<i>Sandra Cattell</i>
Steve Cole	Santa Clarita Valley GSA		P	
Susan Nelson	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services		A	<i>Susan Nelson</i>
Tyler Pledger	Santa Clarita		A	

March 20, 2025

Santa Clara River  
Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Connor	Hahn	City	me