

Lower Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, June 24, 2025
1:00pm - 3:00pm
East Rancho Dominguez Library
4420 E Rose St., East Rancho Dominguez
WebEx Meeting

Committee Member Present:

Ernesto Rivera, Flood Control District (Agency)
Madeline Chen, Central Basin (Agency) Co-Chair
Asha Kreiling, Water Replenishment District (Agency), Co-Chair
*Alysha Chan, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Stephen Scott, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)
*Maria Madrigal, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)
*Arturo Gonzalez, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)
*Mary Hillemeier, TreePeople (Community)
*Dylan Porter, Port of Long Beach (Community)
Candice Dickens-Russell, Friends of the Los Angeles River (Community)
*Matt Robertson, Downey (Municipal)
Alexa Reasoner, Long Beach (Municipal)
*Pamela Torres, City of Lynwood (Municipal)
Adriana Figueroa, City of Paramount (Municipal)
Joseph Venzon, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Tara Dales, Stephen Groner Associates (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Not Present:

Gina Nila, City of Commerce (Municipal)
Gladis Deras, City of South Gate (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Asha Kreiling, Co-Chair of the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed all Committee Members and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff facilitated a roll call, conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx, and provided an overview of meeting guidelines and participation instructions for any participants joining online. A quorum was established.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 22, 2025

Public Works staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Joseph Venzon motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Pamela Torres. The Committee voted to approve the April 22, 2025 LLAR WASC meeting minutes with 12 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, and 1 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3) Committee Member and Program Updates

Watershed Coordinator Tara Dales shared that the Urban Orchard Project will have its grand opening on July 12, 2025. Member Adriana Figueroa shared with Public Works staff that Member Gina Nila has retired and an Alternate Member from the City of Commerce should be contacted.

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Public Works staff provided an update on various SCW Program activities:

- Applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 - 2026 Low Income Senior Owned Exemptions and General Income Based Tax Reduction were due on May 1, 2025. The form can be found on the Exemptions and Reductions section of the [SCW Program website](#).
- The Call for Projects deadline for consideration in the FY2026-27 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) is July 31, 2025. The Projects Application Module is now live for Infrastructure Program, Technical Resources Program, and Scientific Study (SS) Applicants. Applicants can now start populating the Application. A list of resources related to the Application can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).
- The Regional Program Annual Report (covering July 2024 - June 2025) is due on August 15, 2025 for Project Developers and Scientific Studies approved in FY2020 through FY2025 SIPs. Project and Study Developers are to submit reports regardless of receiving funds, expenditures or activities, or having executed the Funds Transfer Agreement.
- The upcoming Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting is scheduled for July 9 at 1:00pm where the ROC will be reviewing the last five of the nine SIPs. The ROC reviewed the LLAR SIP during the ROC meeting on June 11.
- The first two rounds of Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program proposals were awarded a total of approximately \$3.1 million. To see a list of approved proposals for Rounds 1 and 2 of the Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program, please visit the [Water Foundation's Website](#). Grant submissions have been closed.
- The Quarter 4 (Q4) 2025 Funding Report has been posted to the [SCW Program website](#) under the Resources tab. In support of Public Works, the Regional Coordination team prepares quarterly funding reports that include a high-level overview of recent funding policy highlights and a funding matrix that shares currently active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to SCW Program projects. Public Works staff and Regional Coordination are actively tracking activity to better understand impacts to future funding.
- The wildfires that occurred in LA County in January 2025 will not impact SCW Program taxes. Public Works staff is not waiving SCW direct assessments in the fire or other emergency affected areas since they fund services that are still being provided independently of the fires and its aftermath. However, there will be a decrease in the ad valorem revenue the Flood Fund receives since all ad valorem revenues County-wide are receiving a decrease based on general property tax relief in the fire areas.
- Drafts of the Initial Watershed Plans and the partially functioning Planning Tool will be available for a 30-day public review period in the Fall. After the public review period, Public Works staff will present on the Initial Watershed Plans to each WASC and the ROC, and, in early 2026, the Initial Watershed Plans will be published. A new standalone Watershed Planning webpage on the [SCW Program website](#) is now live and houses all resources related to the Watershed Planning effort.
- The Community Strengths & Needs Assessment (CSNA) Survey has been gaining momentum in the last several months from engagement efforts led by the Watershed Coordinators. Since the CSNA's launch, 428 new survey responses have been collected; for this Watershed Area, 53 responses have been collected. A promotional toolkit has been developed and is available on the new [Watershed Planning webpage](#), alongside the CSNA Survey and Dashboard. The toolkit and Frequently-Asked-Questions are available to anyone interested in promoting the CSNA.
- As part of Adaptive Management, the Los Angeles County Water Plan Nature-based Solutions (NBS) Task Force and Blue Ribbon Panel is currently developing a standard NBS definition and criteria to fill current definitional gaps. Once available, these updates will be incorporated in future Watershed Planning efforts. For any questions regarding Watershed Planning, contact watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.
- To keep up with Program Updates as they are shared, please subscribe to receive email notifications by emailing SafeCleanWaterLA@subscriptions.lacounty.gov. This newsletter provides

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important updates on the Regional, Municipal, and District Programs, designed to help our community stay informed and engaged.

4) Public Comment Period

Amanda Begley (TreePeople) shared support for Tara Dales (S. Groner Associates, Inc.) to be reappointed as LLAR Watershed Coordinator. Begley shared public comment supporting Dales's leadership, attention to detail, community engagement expertise has raised the bar on collaboration.

James Cortes (Los Angeles County resident) expressed support for Tara Dales (S. Groner Associates, Inc.) to be reappointed as LLAR Watershed Coordinator. Cortes noted Dales' work in the SCW Program, noting collaboration on Watershed Coordinator-led events.

Diana Morales (Assemblymember Anthony Rendon) spoke in support of Tara Dales (S. Groner Associates, Inc.), and noted working together in 2021 with Assemblymember Anthony Rendon, which demonstrated Dales' work ethic, commitment to amplifying community voices, and ability to make informed decisions. Morales commented that Dales has deep knowledge of the Watershed Area and its communities.

Melissa Bahmanpour (Long Beach City College) shared support for Tara Dales (S. Groner Associates, Inc.) to be reappointed as LLAR Watershed Coordinator. Bahmanpour shared working together through the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. Bahmanpour commented that Dales is a clear communicator, dedicated, and centers community in all decisions.

5) Presentation and Discussion Items

Co-Chair Kreiling expressed appreciation for Member Mary Hillenmeier and Member Manny Gonez for presenting at the ROC meeting on behalf of the WASC during the LLAR SIP review.

a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

b) Watershed Coordinator Selection

i) Process Overview

Public Works staff explained the Watershed Coordinator selection process and stated the required qualifications. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program Website](#). In the LLAR Watershed Area, there is one Watershed Coordinator position available, and three qualified proposers applied to the position – Dudek, S. Groner Associate, Inc., and Barrios & Associates LLC.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff explained that proposers must submit a separate application to each WASC, and that a single proposer could be assigned to multiple WASCs, especially when that organization has various teams.

ii) Interviews

1. Dudek

The Dudek team highlighted experience in engaging diverse communities, emphasizing stakeholder engagement and advisory focus groups, and project development of multi-benefit stormwater projects. Dudek mentioned collaboration with Craftwater as a subcontractor. The Committee confirmed with Dudek that Craftwater is aware of potential conflicts of interest and that Dudek has not applied to the Watershed Coordinator position for Watershed Areas where Craftwater has SCW Program-funded projects. Dudek also confirmed applying as Watershed Coordinator to other WASCs, including the Lower San Gabriel WASC, and would prioritize one WASC if offered both.

2. S. Groner Associates, Inc.

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S. Groner Associates, Inc. (SGA) shared experience related to community engagement, agency connections, and past involvement as the current LLAR Watershed Coordinator. The Committee confirmed that another staff member of SGA also serves as the Watershed Coordinator for the Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area.

Upon inquiry, SGA discussed a strategy for improving engagement with members of the community and how efforts from the annual gap analysis will be implemented. Dales also shared experience related to leveraging funding and technical assistance as it relates to the Watershed Coordinator role.

3. Barrios & Associates, LLC

Barrios & Associates, LLC shared community outreach experience in LLAR Watershed Area, collaboration with existing organizations, and local water system knowledge. The Committee confirmed that Barrios & Associates, LLC also applied to the LSGR WASC. Barrios & Associates, LLC also shared experience attending Orange County's version of WASC meetings and their commitment with advocacy firms.

The WASC discussed the proposers' interviews and selection of a Watershed Coordinator. Committee Members acknowledged the difficulty of selecting a non-incumbent over a well-established candidate like Tara Dales (SGA), referencing the public comments recommending Dales.

The Committee expressed general concern regarding conflicts of interest with Dudek and Craftwater. Upon inquiry, Public Works staff will verify if Craftwater would still be able to apply for projects in the LLAR WASC if Dudek is selected as the Watershed Coordinator. Committee Members expressed concern regarding activity of the WASC's related projects such as the Lynwood Stormwater Capture Project and the recently approved SS on Minimum Control Measures.

Several Committee Members expressed concern with selecting an alternate Watershed Coordinator. Upon inquiry, Public Works staff explained that WASCs that only received one applicant for the Watershed Coordinator position would revisit the qualified list as needed, since there would not be an alternate assigned. Public Works staff also clarified that fulfilling the Certified Business Enterprise category was a scoring factor, not a mandatory requirement.

The Committee emphasized the importance of assessing the various teams' priorities, especially around funding and cost-sharing, approachability, and measurable outcomes.

6) Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

7) Voting Items

a) Selection of a Watershed Coordinator for Lower Los Angeles River

Member Figueroa motioned to appoint S. Groner and Associates as the Primary LLAR Watershed Coordinator, seconded by Member Arturo Gonzalez. The Committee voted to approve the motion with 14 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Member Figueroa requested Public Works to follow up with the WASC on the perceived conflict of interest discussed today.

Member Gonzalez motioned to appoint Dudek as the alternate Watershed Coordinator for the LLAR WASC. The Committee then voted on the motion with 7 votes in favor, 4 opposed, and 3 in abstention, approving Dudek as the alternate Watershed Coordinator for LLAR WASC (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

8) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for July 22 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Items on the next agenda include:

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a) FY 24-25 Regional Program Mid-Year Report Summary

9) Adjournment

Co-Chair Kreiling thanked WASC Members, Public Works staff, and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

LLAR WASC - June 24, 2025								
		Quorum Present						
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve April 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes	Appoint S. Groner and Associates, Inc. as the Primary Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Coordinator	Appoint Dudek as the Alternate Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Coordinator
Agency	District	Ernesto Rivera	x	Enrique Baul		Y	Y	Y
Agency	Central Basin	Madeline Chen*	x	Braden Yu		not present at vote	Y	A
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Asha Kreiling*	x	Jenn Swart		Y	Y	Y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Shannon Bishop		Alysha Chan	x	Y	Y	N
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation	Danielle Lewis	x	Todd Leland		Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Isabelle Campiformio		Maria Madrigal	x	vote not cast	vote not cast	vote not cast
Community Stakeholder	Rivers & Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Arturo Gonzalez	x	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	TreePeople	Manny Gonez		Mary Hillemeier	x	Y	Y	N
Community Stakeholder	Port of Long Beach	James Vernon		Dylan Porter	x	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Friends of the Los Angeles River	Candice Dickens-Russell	x			Y	Y	N
Municipal Members	City of Commerce	Gina Nila		Thomas Bekele				
Municipal Members	City of Downey	Dan Mueller		Matt Robertson	x	Y	Y	A
Municipal Members	City of Long Beach	Alexa Reasoner	x	Wataru Kumagai		Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	City of Lynwood	Julian Lee		Pamela Torres	x	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	City of Paramount	Adriana Figueroa	x			A	Y	N
Municipal Members	County of Los Angeles	Joseph Venzon	x	Fred Gonzalez		Y	Y	A
Municipal Members	City of South Gate	Gladis Deras						
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	SGA Marketing	Tara Dales	x					
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	12	14	7
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0	0	4
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	0	3
Community Stakeholder		5			Total	13	14	14
Municipal Members		5				Approved	Approved	Approved

Attendees
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Alonso	Dr. Win Cowger MIPPR	Michelle Kim
Amanda Begley, TreePeople	Fred Gonzalez - LA County	Ng, Emily
Anthony Barreras - SCWP Staff	James	Pablo Forni
Aric M	Jose Castro - SCWP Staff	Rob Garcia Jr.
Bryan Igboke - LACPW	Kerry Quinlan	SCWP LLAR WASC
Carlos Preciado	Laurel Hunt	Theodore von Bitner
David Coghiel	Lola	Travis Diaz LACFCD
David Lee - LACFCD	Melissa Bahmanpour	Uriel Cobian
Diana Morales	valeria	