





**Date:** February 24, 2026

**To:** LLAR WASC Committee Members  
cc: SCWP Staff, Watershed Coordinator

**From:** OWLA Core Team (DayOne, Heal the Bay, LAANE, LA Waterkeeper, Nature for All, Pacoima Beautiful, The Nature Conservancy, and TreePeople)

**RE:** Input on Project Prioritization for SCWP SIP

Ahead of the 2026-2027 SIP Deliberation, the OurWaterLA Coalition (OWLA) has reviewed all of the infrastructure applications that passed the scoring threshold to identify which projects we believe exemplify the spirit of Measure W. The categories we consider are:

- Location (within/outside a DAC)
- Does the project address an actual need of an underserved community?
- Anti-displacement measures
- Community support and engagement
- Water quality and water supply
- Public health, community investments, and multiple benefits
- Nature-based solutions
- Green jobs
- Cost and leveraged funding

There were no infrastructure projects in LLAR WASC this year, but OWLA would recommend funding the following scientific study:

1. **Characterizing and Optimizing the Water Quality Benefits of In-Channel Vegetation**
  - a. This study will quantify how in-channel vegetation influences bacteria, nutrients, metals, sediment dynamics, temperature, and flood behavior, generating predictive modeling tools, management scenarios, and publicly accessible datasets to strengthen water quality decision-making. By providing stakeholder-informed guidance on how vegetation can be optimized for performance, it supports the integration and prioritization of nature-based solutions in river management while advancing multi-benefit outcomes, including improved ecosystem function, climate resilience, and more adaptive watershed management practices.

OWLA would also like to highlight some of the general patterns we noticed this year in applications.

General Patterns:

1. **Narrative response, especially in Community Investment Benefits, was lacking** on a number of applications this round. Applicants should give thoughtful responses and try to provide as much context as possible. Strong examples are provided in projects like Ganesha Park Stormwater Capture Project and Edward Vincent Jr. Park Stormwater Improvements Project, which included multiple workshops, surveys, childcare/translation

to support participation, and evidence of public feedback directly shaping project elements.

2. **Anti-displacement responses feel like a check-box**; applicant responses use similar responses and most responses do not include any specifics.
3. There are **few non-traditional applicants and non-profit partners** applying and/or participating in applications.
4. One project, Reimagining La Brea Tar Pits, created a Native American Advisory Council to co-develop their landscape plan and educational exhibits. **We would love to see more Tribal partnerships like this developed.**

As you consider what to fund in this year's SIP, OWLA strongly recommends that you approve projects and studies that include strong remarks for water quality that:

- increase local water supply resilience
- utilize vegetated nature-based solutions,
- clearly demonstrate a strong community engagement plan and process took place,
- include a significant community investment element,
- provide benefits directly to and, as applicable, are located in a disadvantaged community, and
- promote green jobs.

We also want to be clear that just because we don't identify a project or study as an exemplar, does not mean that it is not a quality project or study. That said, we do believe it is valuable for us to highlight the projects and studies that went above and beyond because we believe they deserve recognition.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to continuing our engagement with this committee and the watershed coordinators to ensure a better water future for the region.

Sincerely,

OurWaterLA

OurWaterLA is a diverse coalition of community leaders and organizations from across Los Angeles County united to create a strong water future for Los Angeles. Our goal is to secure clean, safe, affordable and reliable water for drinking, recreation and commerce now and for the future. We have a deep commitment to uphold the trust that voters had in us when passing this measure and that projects which achieve Safe Clean Water Program objectives of water quality, water supply, nature-based solutions and community investments are prioritized.