

# Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



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Tuesday, January 27, 2026  
1:00pm – 3:00pm  
Progress Park Auditorium/Plaza West  
15500 Downey Ave  
Paramount, CA 90723  
WebEx Meeting

## Committee Members Present:

\*Enrique Baul, Flood Control District (Agency)  
Jenn Swart, Water Replenishment District (Agency)  
Shannon Bishop, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Agency)  
Danielle Lewis, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)  
Isabelle Campiformio, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)  
\*Arturo Gonzalez, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)  
Manny Gonez, TreePeople (Community), Co-Chair  
\*Dylan Porter, Port of Long Beach (Community)  
Candice Dickens-Russell, Friends of the Los Angeles River (Community)  
Bernardo Iniguez, Bell Gardens (Municipal)  
Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal)  
Alexa Reasoner, Long Beach (Municipal)  
Freddie Agyin, Vernon (Municipal)  
Joseph Venzon, Los Angeles County (Municipal), Co-Chair  
Gladis Deras, South Gate (Municipal)  
Azucena Ramirez, SGA (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

## Committee Members Not Present:

Madeline Chen, Central Basin (Agency)  
Adriana Figueroa, Paramount (Municipal)

\*Committee Member Alternate

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

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## **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Joseph Venzon, 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. Public Works staff shared a reminder of the attendance policy with WASC members.

Public Works staff announced that Spanish interpretation services will now be provided at WASC meeting going forward.

## **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 28, 2025**

Public Works staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Dan Mueller motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Co-Chair Manny Gonez. The Committee voted to approve the October 28, 2025 LLAR WASC meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 6 in abstention, and 0 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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## 3) Committee Member and Program Updates

Member Jenn Swart introduced themselves as the new Member representing the Water Replenishment District.

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

- The Board of Supervisors approved the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY25-26) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) on November 4, 2025.
- Completeness checks of Projects for FY25-26 were performed by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District. Program-wide, three Scientific Study (SS) applications were deemed ineligible, and Project applicants have been notified of the SCW Program's decision. SCW Program staff is developing supplemental guidance for future SS submissions.
- Two of the three ineligible SS applications were focused on workforce development. Workforce development remains a key component of the SCW Program. Discussions regarding collaborative solutions to expand workforce development within the SCW Program are ongoing with the applicants.
- The recording of the Science Symposium, which took place on November 12, 2025, has been posted to the [SCW Program website](#).
- The Scoring Committee met six times between September and December to review and score 29 Projects. 26 Projects passed the Scoring threshold and are now being presented to the WASCs for consideration in the FY26-27 SIP. The LLAR WASC did not receive any Infrastructure Project (IP) Program applications this round.
- Program-wide, 31 Project Modification Requests (PMRs) were received by the October 31, 2025 deadline. The LLAR WASC received two PMRs. The PMRs were related to a schedule change and a documented withdrawal of a Project, respectively.
- Mid-Year Reports are due February 15, 2026.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) met on January 14, 2026, to discuss the Draft Biennial Program Progress Report and open the 30-day public comment period. All stakeholders and members of the public are invited to submit comments by February 14, 2026.
- The ROC will meet again on February 11, 2026 to discuss the draft Initial Watershed Plans.
- Committee Members connected to specific Projects due to their organizational affiliation must avoid
  - using their WASC membership to advocate for these Projects during SIP deliberations; instead,
  - Committee Members should have colleagues or consultants attend WASC meetings on behalf of the Project.

Emily Ng (Stantec, Regional Coordination) provided an update introducing the SIP Deliberation Workbook for Committee Members. The Workbooks include Project summaries, Scoring rubrics, and note-taking pages to support Committee Members during SIP deliberation.

## 4) Presentation and Discussion Items

### a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

### b) Workforce Development presentation by Jolene Guerrero, Deputy Director at Los Angeles County Public Works

Jolene Guerrero (Public Works) presented on the SCW Program's Workforce Development Update. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

### c) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentations

#### i) A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds

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## **Presentation by the Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research**

Andrea Amend (Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research (MIPPR), Project applicant) presented on the A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds SS. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Dylan Porter expressed support for additional trash removal. Member Porter inquired how the SS intends to evaluate the effectiveness of Best Management Practices (BMPs). Amend expressed hope that existing data monitors and documents BMP effectiveness and stated that MIPPR can parse information from historical data if needed. Amend noted that planned BMPs can request monitoring.

Member Mueller questioned whether MIPPR intends to analyze the type of trash found alongside land use data, and if data would be sourced from the County or individual agencies. Amend attributed this role to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which would help target areas of concern.

Upon inquiry, Amend stated that the TAC would ideally be composed of invested stakeholders, representatives from multiple cities, and WASC Members, but deferred to Win Cowger (MIPPR), the SS Proponent, for further details.

Member Porter asked if the SS could progress with funding from only one WASC or if the SS needs all WASCs to participate to be viable. Amend explained that the SS could start with sites within one Watershed Area or multiple.

Co-Chair Venzon inquired if MIPPR has contacted any regulators, since many cities are subject to Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permits. Amend deferred to Cowger for more information.

Member Porter suggested connecting with the Regional Water Quality Control Board if the WASCs choose not to fund this Study, since multiple cities are installing full capture trash BMPs.

Public Works staff noted that all SS applicants will be invited to the next WASC meeting to answer any additional questions.

## **ii) Assessment and Treatment of Contaminants of Emerging Concern Presentation by Stillwater Sciences**

Nate Butler and Sam Ward (Stillwater Sciences, Project applicants) presented on the Assessment and Treatment of Contaminants of Emerging Concern SS. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Butler explained that the SS intends to research treatment strategies and understand how implemented strategies are functioning and if supplemental strategies are needed.

Upon inquiry, Butler explained that the SS is designed to be viable with funding from only one WASC, but funding from multiple WASCs would increase cost efficacy. Ward shared that the savings would largely come from eliminating redundancy in the literature review between Watershed Areas.

Member Mueller asked if monitoring stations or grab samples would be used and noted that multiple agencies have monitoring stations in place already. Butler explained that only grab samples would be collected, and that the SS intends to establish a point of safe access for continuous use throughout the Study. Butler emphasized the intention to access locations where contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) have been tested for in the past.

Member Bernardo Iniguez inquired if the SS claims that CECs are infiltrating the groundwater table and if a treatment train is required. Butler shared that the SS is focused on locations where CECs flow through a component or treatment facility rather than full capture and infiltration.

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Co-Chair Venzon asked if the SS effort is limited to the four similar studies referenced in the presentation and the thought process behind their selection. Butler explained that the selected studies use relatively recent data and modeled CECs in Los Angeles County. Ward noted that these studies are part of the literature review and more studies may be released by the start of the SS.

Member Swart mentioned a SS titled Regional CECs and Pollutant EMCs in Stormwater Assessment, which has been submitted to the Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB), Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR), Rio Hondo (RH), South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB), Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR), and Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) WASCs. Member Swart asked if there was potential for collaboration, or if the Studies were distinct. Ward stated that collaboration is welcomed. Butler noted that the Regional CECs and Pollutant EMCs in Stormwater Assessment SS focuses on targeted BMPs siting given land use considerations.

#### **iii) Characterizing and Optimizing the Water Quality Benefits of In-Channel Vegetation Presentation by the University of Southern California Dornsife Public Exchange**

Josh West, Carling Monder, and Alex Robinson (University of Southern California (USC) Dornsife Public Exchange, Project applicants) and Joyce Wong (Fluidion, Project applicant) presented on the Characterizing and Optimizing the Water Quality Benefits of In-Channel Vegetation SS. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Co-Chair Gonez inquired if the SS would be viable in the LLAR Watershed if not funded in the ULAR Watershed. West confirmed that the Study would be viable and noted that much of the necessary instrumentation has been developed already; however, West noted that the budget would not be sufficient for metals-based analyzers without funding from the ULAR WASC.

Upon inquiry, West explained that the cost share from the USC is not contingent on receipt of funding from the ULAR WASC.

Member Swart requested clarification on the community-based citizen science program. Monder shared that the USC Dornsife Public Exchange plans to leverage relationships with community partners like Friends of the Los Angeles River and Clockshop to engage community members. Monder also noted that the handheld Fluidion analyzer is safe for community use even with little training.

Upon inquiry, Robinson explained that the SS intends to understand the role of vegetation in water quality by constructing small-scale, controlled wetlands, where well-performing plants can be identified.

Co-Chair Gonez asked about testing done to validate the high-frequency, in-channel sensors. Wong explained that the sensors have been utilized at the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, City of Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment, and across multiple cities in the United States. Wong also noted that the technology has been validated by the World Health Organization.

Upon inquiry, Monder shared that the team is in conversation with the Public Works and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is willing to engage in advisory committees.

Member Iniguez questioned whether the SS would consider flooding impacts in circumstances such as a vegetated soft bottom. West explained that the SS would not recommend soft bottom vegetation regardless of flood risk nor generate hydrodynamic models of flooding but would provide data to better balance water and ecological benefits, flood conveyance capacity, and public amenity considerations.

Co-Chair Gonez asked if removing concrete from the river to accommodate soft bottom vegetation is a possibility. West explained that the SS would analyze how much vegetation versus channel area is required for water quality, temperature and habitat benefits. Robinson added that the nexus between flood protection and habitat management in a vegetated channel is uninformed, and the resulting data would better inform these dynamics.

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#### **5) Public Comment Period**

Public Works staff compiled all public comments and uploaded them to the [SCW Program website](#). Public Works staff noted that a recent server error may have affected the receipt of public comments. In-person, virtual and call-in users were invited to provide public comment.

Ben Harris (Los Angeles Waterkeeper) expressed support for the Characterizing and Optimizing the Water Quality Benefits of In-Channel Vegetation SS and remarked that the SS was a useful first step in evaluating the Water Quality Benefits claimed in multi-benefit projects. Harris noted that other individuals and organizations intend to collect data around soft bottom stretches in the Los Angeles River and emphasized the value of collaboration for long-term restoration and flood protection goals.

John Mendoza (City of Pomona) requested that the WASCs hold a meeting to discuss workforce development programs, with an emphasis on communication to the public. Mendoza expressed that open dialogue with the community and the jobs associated with the Program are needed.

#### **6) Voting Items**

There were no voting items.

#### **7) Items for Next Agenda**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 24, 2026, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. See the [SCW Program website](#) for meeting details.

- a) Regional Program FY24-25 Annual Report Summary
- b) FY26-27 Scientific Studies Peer Review Summary
- c) Lower Los Angeles River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Stormwater Investment Plan

#### **8) Adjournment**

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

LLAR WASC - January 27, 2025

		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve October 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Agency	District	Ernesto Rivera		Enrique Baul	x	a
Agency	Central Basin	Madeline Chen		Braden Yu		
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Jenn Swart	x			a
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Shannon Bishop	x	Alysha Chan		a
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreat	Danielle Lewis	x	Todd Leland		y
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Isabelle Campiformio	x	Maria Madrigal		a
Community Stakeholder	Rivers & Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Arturo Gonzalez	x	y
Community Stakeholder	TreePeople	Manny Gonez*	x	Mary Hillemeier		y
Community Stakeholder	Port of Long Beach	James Vernon		Dylan Porter	x	y
Community Stakeholder	Friends of the Los Angeles River	Candice Dickens-Russell	x	Ryan Mayeda		y
Municipal Members	City of Bell Gardens	Bernardo Iniguez	x	Natalie Rivera-Estrada		a
Municipal Members	City of Downey	Dan Mueller	x	Matt Robertson		y
Municipal Members	City of Long Beach	Alexa Reasoner	x	Wataru Kumagai		y
Municipal Members	City of Vernon	Freddie Agyin	x			y
Municipal Members	City of Paramount	Adriana Figueroa		Michelle Tse		
Municipal Members	County of Los Angeles	Joseph Venzon*	x	Fred Gonzalez		a
Municipal Members	City of South Gate	Gladis Deras	x			y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	SGA Marketing	Tara Dales	x			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	9
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	6
Community Stakeholder		5			Total	15
Municipal Members		6				Approved

**Attendees**  
**Lower Los Angeles River WASC Meeting**  
**January 27, 2025**

Alysha Chan

Aric M

Ben Harris (LA Waterkeeper)

Call-in User\_1

Carlos Rodriguez

Dan Angelescu

Emily Ng (Regional Coordination)

Fred Gonzalez - County of Los Angeles

Jolene Guerrero

Kayla Gailing

Kelsey Henck

LLAR AV

Lauren Anderson

Luis Perez

Michelle Kim

Rebecca Correa

Robert Blankenship

Jose L. Escajeda

Ryanna Fossum

SCW Staff - Anthony Barreras

SCWP Staff - Larry Tran

SCWP Staff - Timothy Lim

Spanish Interpreter-Alejandra

Taylor Paez

Theodore Von Bitner

karen barnett