

# Safe, Clean Water Program

## Lower Los Angeles River

### Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

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#### **Meeting Minutes:**

Thursday, January 14, 2021  
1:00pm - 3:00pm  
WebEx Meeting

#### **Attendees**

##### Committee Members Present:

Dan Sharp (District)	Gladis Deras (South Gate)
Lyndsey Bloxom* (Water Replenishment District)	Melissa Bahmanpour (River Action)
Kristen Ruffell (LA County Sanitation)	Melissa You (Long Beach)
Stephen Scott (Long Beach Parks & Recreation)	Gina Nila (Commerce)
James Vernon (Port of Long Beach)	Adriana Figueroa (Paramount)
Kedrin Hopkins (Conservation Corps of Long Beach)	Kelli Tunnicliff (Signal Hill)
Alex Rojas (Central Basin)	Manny Gonez* (TreePeople)

##### Committee Members Not Present:

Mark Stanley (Rivers and Mountains Conservancy)  
Laura Ochoa (Lynwood)  
Dan Mueller (Downey)

\*Committee Member Alternate

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Gina Nila, Chair of the Lower Los Angeles River WASC, called the meeting to order.

Mr. CJ Caluag of the District asked for a rollcall of WASC members, and with a majority present, quorum was established.

### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The District uploaded a copy of the meeting minutes from the December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, and Ms. Nila asked the committee members for comments or revisions.

Ms. Kristen Ruffell moved to approve the meeting minutes, with Mr. James Vernon seconding this motion. Mr. Caluag asked if anyone had any revisions or comments, with no comments expressed by any of the WASC members. Mr. Caluag then did a roll call vote of the WASC members present for approval of the meeting minutes. The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (with Ms. Nila and Ms. Gladis Deras abstaining). (Approved, see vote tracking sheet)

### **3. Committee Member and District Updates**

Mr. Caluag provided the District updates, beginning with the Scoring Committee (SC) having now completed its Infrastructure Program (IP) project scoring. Project applicants that did not meet the scoring threshold were contacted to update their project applications and submit clarifying information to the District by the end of the week. Mr. Caluag noted that the LLAR WASC had two IP projects that were deemed unscorable by the SC, and that these project applicants were requested to update their project applications

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and submit clarifying information by the noted deadline. The next scheduled SC meeting will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to review project applicant resubmissions. For Round 2 funding, the LLAR WASC will consider a total of eight IP projects, no Technical Resources Program (TRP) projects, and four Scientific Studies Program projects.

Mr. Caluag also provided a summary on the Watershed Coordinator (WC) applicants, with 67 proposals received from 21 different project applicants which were evaluated and scored in Phase 1 by LA County Public Works' Business Relations and Contracts Division (BRCD). The project applicants that met the qualifications specified in the solicitation documents moved on to Phase 2, which consists of the WC interviews and selection process by each respective WASC.

Mr. Caluag added that the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) will meet on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to further discuss Water Supply Benefits and prioritization of Nature Based Solutions. On February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the ROC will be discussing Disadvantaged Community Benefits and Community Engagement program guidance.

Mr. Caluag then provided an update on the Safe Clean Water Program reporting module stating that it will be utilized for the quarterly reporting and all the other different reports that need to be submitted, that the reporting module will be functional by April 2021, and provided a demonstration to the Committee.

Finally, Mr. Caluag noted that Municipalities were requested to submit their Transfer Agreements, Resolutions and Annual Plans and for the Regional Transfer Agreements, project developers are also requested to submit their executed Transfer Agreements, Resolutions, Authorizations and Scope of Work (if applicable) to the District as soon as possible.

Ms. Ruffell requested from the District a summary of each Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP)-funded project and their annual requests to further help future SIP funding allocations. Mr. Caluag noted that a tool is currently in development to evaluate Round 1 SIP project funding, and thereafter (Round 2 and future round) SIP project funding amounts.

#### **4. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures**

Ms. Nila asked if any WASC members have any disclosures to present to the group.

Ms. Nila, Chair of the Los Angeles River Upper Reach 2 (LARUR2), stated that general discussions occurred with members of the LARUR2 regarding the Salt Lake Park project.

Mr. Manny Gonez disclosed that the City of Huntington Park reached out to TreePeople, Inc. regarding their Salt Lake Park project and requested a letter of support. TreePeople, Inc. has not decided on whether it will provide a letter of support.

#### **5. Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments provided during this part of the meeting agenda.

#### **6. Voting Items**

##### **a) Watershed Coordinator Selection**

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## i) Interview Process Overview & Discussion

Mr. Caluag began this overview by reminding the WASC members that they all received an evaluation sheet, which should have been filled out with notes and passed on to your alternate WASC member as necessary. Each WASC member has also received the roles and responsibilities of the WC, and the Statement of Qualifications (SOQs) for the 5 applicants vying for the one WC position in this Watershed Area (WA).

## ii) Voting Process for Watershed Coordinator Selection

Mr. Caluag provided an overview of the WC selection process by first referring to the Selection Process sheet which was developed with the L.A. County Counsel's office. Mr. Caluag stated that a roll call vote would be involved to select the WC, and noted that the LLAR WASC had 5 different proposers interview at the previous WASC meeting for the WC position. One proposer would be selected as Primary and two or three proposers would be selected as Alternates in the event the Primary WC selected declines the role. Mr. Caluag further stated that each Committee member would have one vote for each membership seat he/she represents, that a majority vote will be required (14 WASC members in attendance means a minimum of 8 votes are necessary for a majority vote), and each WASC member called upon will be asked to state the name of the preferred WC. Should a majority vote not be reached, a runoff between the top 2 vote getters would be conducted. The District will track the votes on the spreadsheet normally used for conducting votes. Finally, Mr. Caluag stated that all WC voting selections will be done this month, and when all nine WASCs submit their voting results, the District and BRCD will jointly work together to finalize the selection of each WASC's WC.

Mr. Dan Sharp commented that it is important to keep in mind the broadening of the goals of the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program when selecting a WC as well as having a connection with the community and around a variety of types of projects would be beneficial to the WASC to further the goals of the SCW Program.

Ms. Melissa Bahmanpour asked Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) what was their experience working in Cudahy and what was the experience of all WC proposers working with the Watershed communities. KDI noted that their experience working in the Los Angeles River WA is largely through projects they have been working on for a couple of years, and KDI is providing technical assistance to cities and communities to apply for the Statewide Parks Program and Prop 68 funding that is available for new and renovated parks in poor neighborhoods. KDI started working in Cudahy this past summer with the Parks Department and a group of 30 to 40 residents, including a couple of Park Commission Members as part of the core group, to go through the process of developing ideas on how to renovate a park and coming up with a site plan and specific features and design elements that core group would have liked to see in that park. KDI further noted to have provided similar services to the City of Bell Gardens. KDI finally noted to have had conversations with nine different Park Directors and City Officials throughout the WA, about the renovation park project.

S. Groner Associates (SGA) noted that they located in the WA and that they have completed multiple projects in downtown Long Beach that involved Community Engagement. SGA further noted securing grants for several Cities including the City of Long Beach specifically for the Lower Los Angeles River's pollution prevention and illegal dumping, and have coordinated outreach to residents and businesses. We also did a

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project in the Watts area called Watts Reimagined, another community engagement effort. Finally, SGA noted to have worked in Huntington Park, located on Florence Blvd for a streetscape redesign project with LA County Regional Planning which required outreach to businesses to redevelop facades and the streetscape of the area to ultimately develop a green street on Florence Blvd.

CASC Engineering & Consulting (CASC) noted to have experience east of the WA; City of El Monte. CASC successfully submitted two projects for SCW Program funding. One project was for street improvements and grade separations which included underground galleries below the street. Pre-COVID, CASC implemented an outreach program; door to door canvassing. CASC further noted to have working experience in Community Engagement via the TRP program conceptual revitalization project which involved preliminary community engagement for a soccer field with infiltration galleries in the City of El Monte. CASC also noted the McClaren Hall Project where community meetings were coordinated in various languages. Finally, the Park renovation project for City of El Monte, which CASC successfully submitted for funding and the project is currently in the Community Engagement phase with 11 community meetings held thus far.

GreenPrint Partners noted that they are unique in that they are a national firm and focus on green infrastructure and multi-benefits stormwater projects in Disadvantaged Communities. GreenPrint Partners commented that they do not have ground projects in the WA but have focused in investigation of how to best develop community based and community LED projects through the SCW Program with Water Foundation funding they secured. GreenPrint Partners further noted that their experience is extensive in project development; taking conceptual projects, if they are fundable, and achievable and ultimately building these projects.

Environmental Outreach Strategies (EOS) noted to have extensive experience working with the community for the Los Angeles County Sanitation District. EOS was responsible for developing a list of Community Stakeholders comprised of 800 stakeholders and outreach to community groups, and the coordination of dozens of community meetings.

Ms. Lyndsey Bloxom requested clarification on the 5 WC proposers for LLAR as being selected as Primary WC for other WAs. Mr. Caluag noted that EOS and the Council for Watershed Health (a total of 3 WCs, with 2 WCs voted for the Council for Watershed Health) had been selected as Primary WCs for ULAR WA. Ms. Ruffell noted that Heal the Bay (South Santa Monica Bay), TreePeople, Inc. (Santa Clara River) and Ohana Vets (Lower San Gabriel River) have already been selected as Primary WCs in other Watershed areas.

Ms. Nila requested clarification on those WC proposers that have submitted proposals to multiple Watersheds and have been selected as the Primary; how would they manage/have capacity if selected for this Watershed providing the required services.

CASC noted to have submitted their proposal to 4 WAs. As of right now, they had not been selected as a Primary WC. If they were to be selected, CASC does have capacity to service those WAs as a team with a WC appointed to each WA. CASC further noted that it would be unlikely that they would be selected in 4 WAs but rather they would be selected for one WA in which case they have capacity to serve. Ms. Ruffell followed up further on CASC response and requested clarification on whether CASC would only service one or multiple WC positions. CASC noted that they would select just one WC position.

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SGA noted to have submitted proposals to multiple WAs and as of right now they have been selected as alternates in two WAs. SGA's further noted that their goal is to service one WA, specifically the LLAR WA as this where SGA is located.

KDI noted that they only submitted a proposal to LLAR as they have deep ties to the WA. KDI further noted that their focus is to work with Disadvantaged Communities, and that there is a high concentration of this in the LLAR WA.

GreenPrint Partners noted that they have submitted WC proposals in multiple WAs and prefer to serve only one position and use a team approach.

EOS noted that they have the capacity to serve two WC positions. If they were selected for a third WA, their preference would be to just serve two WAs (i.e. hold 2 WC positions).

Mr. Mike Antos (Stantec) noted that the WC will be a dedicated non-voting individual on the WASC, and further noted that the WASC will need to select a WC that best serves the needs of the WA. Finally, Mr. Antos noted that the District would manage the logistics of the selected WC and their availability, and their assigned individual after the WASCs have made their selection(s).

Ms. Ruffell noted that in the other WASCs she is a member of, there have been discussions among the Committee members on who their top two or three firms were which helped each come to a consensus.

Ms. Adriana Figueroa noted that community engagement is a really big component for her city and various cities in the LLAR and stated her primary WC preference as SGA, with CASC being her first alternate WC.

Ms. Melissa You stated that she sits in the Lower San Gabriel River WASC and stated that Groner and CASC were close in that WASC as the primary WC choice. Ms. You stated her primary WC preference as SGA, with CASC being her first alternate WC.

Ms. Kelli Tunnichiff requested clarification from GreenPrint Partners as to their local experience. GreenPrint Partners noted that they have spent a lot time building relationships with local community partners before submitting their proposal and that Ms. April Mendez would serve as the WC until the newly-hired WC is on boarded. Ms. Tunnichiff further noted her primary WC preference as SGA, with GreenPrint Partners being her first alternate WC.

Ms. Bahmanpour stated that the cities' priorities and WC selections are important, but also expressed that whoever is hired must be good at engaging community groups and bring them to the table, and that firms with little experience in this area may struggle with this important area of need. Ms. Bahmanpour stated her primary WC preference as KDI, with SGA being her first alternate WC.

Ms. Deras stated that she was not able to attend the previous meeting and has been reviewing the SOQs, but further agreed with the other cities that having local experience for the WC role is very important, as is stakeholder participation. Ms. Deras stated her primary WC preference as SGA, with KDI being her first alternate WC.

Ms. Figueroa noted and agreed with Ms. Bahmanpour's earlier point regarding outreach and engagement with non-profits and community outreach groups. When Ms. Figueroa mentioned SGA as her primary WC preference, it is because SGA has this experience.

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Mr. Gonez thanked all the WC applicants, and stated that on behalf of TreePeople, Inc., Mr. Gonez stated his primary WC preference as KDI, with CASC being his first alternate WC.

#### iii) **[Voting Item] – Watershed Coordinator Selection**

Ms. Nila moved to proceed with Roll Call for WC vote selection, with Mr. Caluag having facilitated the Roll Call vote.

The Committee voted for S. Groner & Associates as the Primary WC selection, Kounkuey Design Initiative as the first WC Alternate, and CASC Engineering & Consulting as the second WC Alternate. (Approved, see vote tracking sheet)

### **7. Public Comment Period**

\*Note – Agenda Item 7. Public Comment Period occurred before Agenda Item 6. Voting Item iii) Watershed Coordinator Selection

There were no public comments provided during this part of the meeting agenda.

### **8. Items for Next Agenda**

Starting next month, meetings will go back to their normal schedule of the fourth Tuesday of the month. Upcoming items for future meetings include:

- i) 8 Infrastructure Program presentations; and
- ii) 4 Scientific Study Program presentations.

Ms. Nila asked how many presentations would be planned per meeting, and Mr. Caluag stated that no more than four presentations would be planned per meeting, with each presentation having 10 minutes for presenting and 10 minutes for Questions & Answers.

Ms. Nila asked if the WASC would be able to review the project presentations before the next meeting, or have to look at each application. Mr. Caluag referred to the SCW Project Module and recommended that the WASC look at each project's application before each project's scheduled presentation, which will be noted in the future meeting agendas.

Finally, Ms. Nila requested that the District provide a summarized spreadsheet of project allocated funds. Mr. Caluag responded that they would prepare a summary to help the WASC with their SIP planning efforts.

### **9. Adjournment**

Ms. Nila thanked the committee members and the public for their time and participation and adjourned the meeting.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 1pm – 3pm**  
**Virtual Meeting – WebEx Events**

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**Attendees**  
**Lower Los Angeles River WASC Meeting**  
**January 14, 2021**

Manny	Gonez	Grace	Kast
Carlos	Moran	Nick	S
Lynda	Bybee	Melissa	Guerrero
kedrin	Hopkins	Safe	Clean Water LA
Adi	Liberman	Lyndsey	Bloxom
CJ	Caluag - LACFCD	Jeremy	Melendez
Benjamin	Shorofsky	STEPHEN	GRONER
Thuan	Nguyen	Ed	Suher, CASC
Dylan	Porter	Matilda	Reyes
Cecilia	Salazar	Bryce	Lee
Maritsa	DRA Inc.	Mike	Antos
Jason	Casanova	Melissa	Bahmanpour
Melissa	You	Paul	Glenn (GHD)
Wataru	Kumagai	Dan	Sharp
James	Vernon	IE	C
Adriana	Figueroa	Joe	Venzon - LA County
Justin	Jones - LACFCD	Jerome	Chou
Gladis	Deras	Blake	TreePeople
Jon	Abelson	Gina	Nila
Mayra	Cabrera - LACFCD	Kristen	Ruffell
Jennifer	Amarant	chelina	odbert
Alex	Rojas	Stephen	Scott
kelli	tunncliff		