

Safe, Clean Water Program

Rio Hondo

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



Meeting Minutes:

Tuesday, May 18, 2021
1:00pm - 3:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Attendees

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez (LA County Flood Control District)
Tom Love (Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District)
Kelly Gardner (Main San Gabriel Basin)
Kristen Ruffell (Sanitation Districts)
Brent Maue (City of Pasadena Parks and Recreation)
Thomas Wong (San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District)

Mark Hall (Greater LA County Vector Control District)
Daniel Rossman (The Wilderness Society)
David Dolphin (Alhambra)
Vanessa Hevener (Arcadia)
Fernando Villaluna (LA County)
Gloria Crudgington (Monrovia)
Frank Lopez (Monterey Park)
James Carlson (Sierra Madre)

Committee Members Not Present:

Kris Markarian (Pasadena Public Works)

*Committee Member Alternate

See attached attendance report for full list of attendees

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tom Love, Chair of the Rio Hondo WASC, welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order.

Kevin Kim (District) facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. All committee members made self-introductions and with a majority present, quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 04, 2021

The District provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Tom Love asked the Committee members for comments or revisions.

Kristen Ruffell motioned to approve the minutes. James Carlson seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from May 04, 2021. (Approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

Kevin Kim (District) provided the District update noting: The deadline for Round 3 Call for Projects is July 31, 2021. The District anticipates hosting two information sessions at the end of May and/or early June. An email blast and the SCW website will be updated with meeting details. The District is making minor changes to the Project Module and an updated application will be available by the end of next week. The District requests that project applicants initiate the conceptual plan approval letter process with their local Flood Control District Watershed managers no later than May 31, 2021.

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With regards to the Watershed Coordinators (WC), 7 out of 12 contracts have been executed. Richard Watson will be the WC for the RH WASC and his insurance paperwork is in process. Mike Antos, from Stantec, will continue as the Regional Coordinator.

FY 2021-22 Annual Plans were due April 1, 2021. Approximately 50 Annual Plans were received. The District requested those Municipalities who have not submitted their Annual Plans to do so as soon as possible.

The District noted that the Nature-based Solutions (NBS) interim programming guidance is available on the SCW Program website. The guidelines are intended to establish a shared vocabulary, provide guidance to the WASCs on how to prioritize NBS when evaluating projects, and clarify how project applicants can support the SCW program goals of prioritizing NBS.

4. Ex Parte Communications Disclosures

None.

5. Public Comment Period

Claire Robinson, Managing Director of Amigos De Los Rios, submitted multiple public comment letters in support of the Plymouth School Neighborhood Stormwater Capture Project. (see attached)

Bryan Matsumoto, representing OurWaterLA Coalition, commented the Merced Ave Greenway, Plymouth School Neighborhood Stormwater Capture, and the Rio Hondo Ecosystem Restoration Projects. They also commented that no funding be allocated for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study.

Richard Watson represents the team proposing the Regional Pathogen Study and is the future WC for the RH WASC. He stated that he is working to clear the WC insurance requirements.

6. Discussion Items

a) Summary of Scientific Studies from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)

i) Regional Pathogen Reduction Study

<https://safecleanwaterla.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/04/RegionalPathogenReduction-synthesis-of-reviews.pdf>

Richard Watson addressed the Scientific Study comments by noting that their proposal intentionally lacked details to allow for future stakeholder feedback. He commented that they received feedback from the Regional Water Quality Control Board and improved on their application since the previous submittal.

Gloria Crudgington commented that their Watershed may be interested in being able to differentiate between animal and human pathogens due to the National Forest and wilderness. Richard Watson noted that the study is relevant to any Watershed that has bacteria TMDLs.

ii) Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed Management Area

<https://safecleanwaterla.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fire-Effects-Study-in-the-ULARWatershed-Management-Area-synthesis-of-reviews.pdf>

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Dawn Petschauer, City of Los Angeles, commented that the design plans presented were flexible because wildfires happen without warning, so it is difficult to create a detailed design.

Gloria Crudginton asked if Cal Fire would be interested in participating financially. Dawn Petschauer responded that they are allocating grant funds aside and thinking of ways to monetize water.

b) Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Benefit Validation

No discussion.

c) Confirm Fiscal Year 2020-21 Requests

Joshua Felton confirmed that the FY 21-22 funding request for the Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project was accurate.

Project developers for the pre-SIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration study and the LRS Adaptation to Address the LA River Bacteria TMDL for the ULAR Watershed Management Group study confirmed that the FY 21-22 funding requests were accurate.

The District confirmed the budget for the Watershed Coordinator will remain the same for FY 21-22.

d) Preliminary Ranking of Projects

The District confirmed they received 14 of 15 preliminary ranking responses and displayed the results.

| Program | Project Name | Score | Program Place | Overall Place |
|---------|------------------------------------------|-------|---------------|---------------|
| IP | Rio Hondo Ecosystem Restoration Project | 137 | 1 | 1 |
| IP | Alhambra Wash Dry-Weather Diversion | 127 | 2 | 2 |
| IP | Eaton Wash Dry-Weather Diversion | 121 | 3 | 3 |
| IP | Mt. Lowe Median Stormwater Capture Proje | 107 | 4 | 4 |
| IP | Rubio Wash Dry-Weather Diversion | 105 | 5 | 5 |
| IP | Merced Ave Greenway (Phase I - South Res | 104 | 6 | 6 |
| IP | Plymouth School Neighborhood Stormwater | 94 | 7 | 7 |
| TRP | Washington Park Stormwater Capture Proje | 88 | 1 | 8 |
| IP | East Los Angeles College Northeast Drain | 85 | 8 | 9 |
| TRP | Sierra Madre Boulevard Green Street Stor | 85 | 2 | 9 |
| SS | Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed | 69 | 1 | 11 |
| SS | Regional Pathogen Reduction Study | 58 | 2 | 12 |
| TRP | South El Monte High School | 43 | 3 | 13 |

e) SCW Project Funding by Municipality Map

The District noted that there is a provision in the Ordinance that references infrastructure program funds

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benefitting each Municipality should be in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction to the extent feasible and the District reviewed the Municipality Investment heatmap as a reference.

Daniel Rossman asked for a resource regarding municipal benefits. He also asked for clarity on benefits to Disadvantaged Communities. Mike Antos responded that the policy guidance notes that benefits go to projects claiming DAC benefits first then the remainder is balanced between the Municipalities.

f) Rio Hondo (RH) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Stormwater Investment Plan (SCW Portal & RH Scoring Rubric)

i) Infrastructure Program (IP)

- (1) Mt. Lowe Median Stormwater Capture Project (Los Angeles County)
- (2) Merced Ave Greenway (Phase I – South Residential Corridor) (City of South El Monte)
- (3) East Los Angeles College Northeast Drainage Area and City of Monterey Park Biofiltration Project (East Los Angeles College/Build LACCD)
- (4) Alhambra Wash Dry-Weather Diversion (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG))
- (5) Eaton Wash Dry-Weather Diversion (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG))
- (6) Plymouth School Neighborhood Stormwater Capture Demonstration Project (Amigos de los Rios (AdIR))
- (7) Rubio Wash Dry-Weather Diversion (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG))
- (8) Rio Hondo Ecosystem Restoration Project (City of Monrovia)

ii) Technical Resources Program (TRP)

- (1) Washington Park Stormwater Capture Project (City of Pasadena)
- (2) Sierra Madre Boulevard Green Street Stormwater Capture Project (City of Pasadena)
- (3) South El Monte High School Project (Lena Luna)

iii) Scientific Study (SS)

- (1) Regional Pathogen Reduction Study (Gateway Water Management Authority)
- (2) Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed Management Area (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments)

Tom Love commented that there is a limit to the amount that can be allocated for SS and there is not enough funding for both. Mike Antos responded that it may be possible to adjust annual allocations to support both projects. Gloria Crudgington commented that she would like to know the impact if funds were to be split between both SS. David Dolphin commented in favor of funding the Fire Effects Study. Multiple Committee members referenced the LRS Adaptation SS and mentioned they are awaiting results. Kelly Gardner commented that if the Fire Study secured additional funding it would reduce their funding request from SCW Program and possibly allow them to fund both SS.

The District commented that it is not recommended to partially fund the Regional Pathogen Study as it involves multiple Watersheds unless they are able to still carry out the full scope of the Project. Richard Watson did not recall the details of the LRS Adaptation SS but believed they were complimentary. Richard Watson mentioned that they would be agreeable to adjusting funding allocations throughout the years. He

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indicated that they are hoping for 4 to 5 WASCs to participate but could proceed with just 2 to 3 WASCs.

Kristen Ruffell asked Julian Juarez if the Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project could receive annual funding allocations in advance. Julian Juarez responded that they could work with the WASC to advance the Project and that it is in an early-stage design.

Multiple Committee Members recommended that the funding allocation stay as originally requested. James Carlson commented in favor of the Fire Effects SS over the Regional Pathogen Study. Multiple members suggested funding all projects except the Regional Pathogen Study.

Project developers clarified that the drainage areas between the Eaton Wash and Rubio Wash Dry Weather Projects do not overlap.

Kristen Ruffell suggested a funding scenario where funding is adjusted forward to reallocate interest to the project applicant versus the District. Gloria Crudginton responded that it is important to keep the funds in a safe place and that the interest is negligible. She added that the WASC would lose its flexibility with funding if they advance funding allocations to projects. Finally, she commented that the pending legislative bill AB-377 would potentially accelerate MS4 compliance. The District confirmed that funds for the Baldwin Lake Project are already earmarked regardless of the year the funds are to be disbursed.

David Dolphin commented that they expect more projects from smaller cities in the future and that advancing allocations would free up funds for future projects.

Joshua Felton commented that the Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project is not scheduled to be awarded funds until FY 22-23 and asked how it would affect reporting. The District indicated that they have 5 years to use the funds and they would report the funds as unused until they proceed.

The District noted that CEQA determinations would be required before they can disburse construction funds to the Baldwin Lake Project and asked when the documents would be ready. Julian Juarez responded that they have not started the CEQA process yet and its a 12-month process once its initiated. The District clarified that they could accept the funds in advance but that the funds would be disbursed after their CEQA review.

7. Public Comment Period

Richard Watson commented that there is a future Water Bond measure that would allocate funds towards Stormwater and that the Governor should be contacted to get more support.

Bryan Matsumoto commented that the Alhambra, Eaton and Rubio Wash Dry-Weather Diversion Projects do not provide substantial Community Investments. He recommended keeping funds free for future projects and not funding the lower scoring projects.

8. Voting Items

a) Validate DAC Benefit for Fiscal Year 2021-22 RH IP Projects (if needed)

No Vote

b) Approve the final Fiscal Year 2021- 22 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendation for the RH Watershed Area and approve submission to the Regional Oversight Committee for review.

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(if able)

David Dolphin motioned to fund all Round 2 SIP projects submitted except the Regional Pathogen Study and advancing funds from FY23-24 to FY21-22 for the Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project. James Carlson seconded the motion.

The Committee voted to approve the motion to fund all Round 2 SIP projects submitted except the Regional Pathogen Study and advance funds from FY23-24 to FY21-22 for the Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project. (Approved, see vote tracking sheet).

The District noted the next step is for District staff to prepare a report that will be sent to the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC). The ROC is responsible for approving the SIPs for the Board of Supervisors approval.

9. Items for next agenda

No discussion.

10. Adjournment

Kristen Ruffell thanked WASC members and public for their attendance and adjourned the meeting.

Attendance
RH WASC - May 18, 2021

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cameron McCullough | claire robinson |
| Thomas Wong | Mary Ann Breckell |
| Oliver Galang (Craftwater) | Kristen Ruffell |
| Kirk Allen | Daniel Apt |
| David Dolphiin | Kevin Kim - LACFCD |
| Drew Ready | Jud Warren |
| Brenda Stevens | Kevin Chang |
| Eva Malis | Mark Hall |
| Eddie Chan | Thelma Briseno |
| Hans Tremmel | Alex Tachiki |
| Brad Parks | MATT RICH |
| Brian Rowley | Jalaine Verdiner |
| Rodrigo Pelayo | Katie Harrel |
| Mike Antos | Lena Luna |
| Vik Bapna - CWE | Frank Lopez |
| Brent Maue | Donald McLarty |
| Fernando Villaluna | Amanda Zeidner |
| Michelle Kim | Carlos Moran |
| Dawn Petschauer | Stephanie Tong - LACFCD |
| Eileen Alduenda | Heather Curtis |
| Melanie Morita - LACFCD | Vanessa Hevener |
| Nick S | Enrique Baull |
| Gloria Crudgington | Lisa Skutecki |
| Bryan Matsumoto | Daniel Rossman |
| Richard Watson | Katie Ward |
| Thuan Nguyen | Ruby Wang |
| Clarasophia Gust | Mark Daniel |
| katie m | Jason Casanova |
| Julian J | Maritsa DRA Inc. |
| James Carlson | James Tong |
| Joe Venzon - LA County | Joshua Felton |
| Kelly Gardner | Tom Love |
| Brianna Datti | |