

Santa Clara River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, November 10, 2021
3:00pm – 5:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Attendees

Committee Members Present:

*Ramy Gindi, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Dirk Marks, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (Agency)
Steve Cole, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency)
Kristen Ruffell, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Janine Prado, City of Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services (Agency)
Hunt Braly, Poole & Shaffery (Community)
Mary Johnson, Agua Dulce Town Council (Community)
Sandra Cattell, Sierra Club (Community)
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation (Community)
*Allen Ma, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Jason Gibbs, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Chair
Heather Merenda, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
*Mike Hennawy, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
Tom Cole, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Peter Massey, TreePeople (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Not Present:

Ivan Volschenk, Evolve Business Strategies (Community)

*Committee Member Alternate

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jason Gibbs, Chair of the Santa Clara River WASC, welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

District Staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 7, 2021

The District provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Member Dirk Marks, seconded by Member Mike Hennawy. The committee voted to approve the October 7, 2021 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no Committee Member updates.

District Staff provided an update, noting:

- Funds transfer process is initiated; currently setting up transfer agreements for the new projects.

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- The Scoring Committee has started to score projects across the program. Infrastructure program projects for the SCR WASC will be scored on November 22.
- Staff reminded project proponents and Watershed Coordinators to submit quarterly reports, which will be summarized and presented to the WASC at upcoming meetings. The next set of quarterly reports are due November 15 and will be summarized and presented to the WASC in December.
- On October 7, the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) received an implementation update presentation from District staff regarding the progress of the SCWP. The update was well-received. The slides are available on the SCWP website, under the ROC page.
- The Board of Supervisors are acting under the authority of a new bill (AB 361) that was signed into law effective October 1 which authorizes public committees to continue meeting without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing every 30 days and will act to cover all the commissions and committees under their authority.
- The County is preparing to in-person meetings when AB 361 is no longer applicable. Participants will be required to provide proof of vaccination for COVID-19.
- Webinars will be held next week (Monday, November 15th at 1:30 p.m. and Thursday, November 18th at 1:30 pm) to review the Municipal Program's online reporting module for the Annual Report, which is due December 31, 2021.
- Vacancies in the WASC should be filled. Committee members who do not have alternates in the WASC meetings should work with District staff to identify alternates and initiate the onboarding process. Committee members should provide 60 days' notice to District Staff prior to stepping down from the WASC.
- District shared that the three-year term of municipal representatives to the WASC ends soon, and the process for reselecting or selecting participants for those roles will be undertaken soon.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Peter Massey provided on each of the Watershed Coordinator tasks, noting:

- A revised draft with highlighted changes of the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP) was shared earlier this week. Primary changes include the addition of maps.
- A 4-hour workshop was held in project development to leverage funds from the Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program (DACIP), "Water Talks." TreePeople, Stantec, Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous People, and Council for Watershed Health were in attendance.
- A community survey is being conducting in that same program by the California State University and a report of the findings will be shared when it is available.
- The Coordinators met to discuss MS4 Permits as it relates to the SCW Program and to discuss logistics around procuring outreach materials through the County. The Coordinators are also looking into potential funding sources, specifically Measure RR (LA Unified School District) and Caltrans.
- Currently working with LA County staff on a presentation regarding workforce development, which will be provided in the future.

Member Hunter Braly thanked the Watershed Coordinator for addressing the comments in the SOEP and suggested Agenda Item 9.a be moved forward in the agenda. District Staff noted that public comment should be opened up for SOEP.

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5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Member Mary Johnson disclosed her participation in a community meeting that included a presentation by LA County Flood Control District staff related to the flooding in Acton. Watershed Coordinator Massey and Members Bruce Hamamoto and Member Julian Juarez were also part of the meeting.

Member Heather Merenda disclosed ongoing discussions with Watershed Coordinator Massey related to DACIP and her role on the MS4 compliance team at the City. The Member has participated in many discussions related to project concepts.

6. Public Comment Period

Jacqueline Ayers asked how many acre-feet would be entrained by the Pico Canyon Park and Jack Kuredjan Park Stormwater Improvement Projects and expressed appreciation for Watershed Coordinator Massey's efforts to engage the community.

9. Voting Items

Chair Gibbs elected to advance the Voting Item to approve the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan, following the presentation made by Watershed Coordinator Massey in Item 4 and the Public Comment Period in Item 6. Member Braly made a motion to approve the Final Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP); seconded by Member Steve Cole. The committee voted to approve the Final SOEP (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

7. Presentation and Discussion Items:

A) Infrastructure Program Presentations

i. Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project

Presentation by Josafat Flores. *The Project will divert stormwater/urban runoff into an infiltration gallery underneath the park and will include above ground improvements.*

Member Sandra Cattell asked why the project is not eligible for water supply points and whether the project is located in an area with flooding concerns. Flores noted that the cost per acre-foot was outside the eligible point criteria and replied that flooding concerns have been reported east of the project site.

Member Cattell commented that the WASC should give more attention to projects that can address local flood concerns effectively with more impactful nature-based solutions than bioswales and drought-tolerant native plants. Member Cattell noted a previous project that installed an infiltration gallery in an area that was not flooding.

Member Johnson asked what contaminants would be eliminated by the project and requested specific numbers regarding the contaminant level and the City's TMDL goals. Flores responded that the project will contribute to a 90% reduction in bacteria in the drainage area of the project, as well as reductions in trash, metals and toxins, helping the County comply with Bacteria TMDLs.

Members Johnson and Cattrell discussed their concern that the actual problem may be less significant than the proposed project calls for, and that the source of bacteria may be naturally occurring. Member Cattrell also questioned if a source control program might be more efficient for managing human-sourced bacteria than this project. Member Cattell asked Flores to send the numbers to all WASC members. Flores agreed to follow up with the Committee.

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Member Allen Ma clarified that this is a regional project that helps meet the MS4 permit. The project's construction timeline will help the County achieve compliance as mandated by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Jacqueline Ayers asked for stream data demonstrating the current level contamination, so that the WASC can better understand how the project will quantitatively reduce pollutants.

B) Technical Resources Program (TRP) Presentation

i. Jake Kuredjian Park Stormwater Improvements Project

Presentation by Josafat Flores. *The feasibility study involves analysis of stormwater capture BMPs at Jake Kuredjian Park in the unincorporated Stevenson Ranch area.*

Member Kristen Ruffell asked why the two projects presented were not combined, considering their proximity. Flores responded that the projects are at different stages in development and were separated to meet the milestones of the Enhanced Watershed Management Plan.

Member Ma confirmed that due to elevation differences, the two projects cannot be hydraulically combined.

Member Cattell noted the need for additional community education efforts and mentioned that other nature-based solutions aside from drought tolerant plants and bioswales can be integrated into the Jake Kuredjian Park Project, as the site receives more water than just seasonal flows. Member Cattell suggested the project explore strategies similar to those used in the San Joaquin Marsh near the University of California at Irvine, such as ponding to remove contaminants and recharge the treated water. Flores noted that because the project is in its feasibility phase, it is open to changes. Flores will explore the WASC members' suggestions.

Member Johnson asked for specific numbers on contaminant concentrations to make certain that the benefits outweigh the costs.

Watershed Coordinator Massey asked whether the project could handle flows from potential residential development in the drainage area. Flores noted that the project is designed for the 85th percentile storm with some contingencies factored into design; further analysis is required to determine whether the project could handle flows from additional development.

Member Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel noted that the Pico Canyon was previously an oilfield and asked whether water from the area will flow into the Park. Flores noted that the flows into the Park will come from storm drains.

Member Braly requested:

- All materials addressing the questions asked be sent to all members of the WASC;
- Clarification on why the Pico Canyon project does not receive any points for water supply;
- Annual data on how much water is treated at the site for both projects; and
- Estimated funding sources for each stage of project development.

Flores will follow up with the WASC regarding Member Braly's requests.

Jacqueline Ayers requested clarification as to whether all water from the entire drainage area will be treated by the two projects, or if only a portion of the flows will go to the entrainment wells. Ayers asked

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for confirmation that any new development needs to be self-contained so Measure W or tax-payer funds would not go to cleaning up flows from new development. Flores provided confirmation and that the numbers provided represent the entire drainage area that will be captured and contained by the projects.

Member Cattell asked whether flows will be treated if the infiltration gallery is full and elevated concerns regarding flows from the Pico Canyon oilfield. Member Cattell also asked project proponents to explore the possibility of combining the projects. Flores responded that the Project is designed to infiltrate within 72 hours; if full, flows will bypass the system.

Member Erskine-Hellrigel requested that the bacteria of concern be identified. Flores will follow up with the WASC regarding Member Erskine-Hellrigel's request.

C) Scientific Studies (SS) Program Presentation **i. Regional Pathogen Reduction Study**

Presentation by Richard Watson. *This study aims to use the latest available science to measure water-borne pathogens across watersheds. It will help identify key sources of human health risk and develop cost-effective protective strategies.*

Co-Chair Tom Cole asked about BMPs that would result from the Study. Watson noted that the study will reveal issues that need to be addressed to achieve pathogen reduction, such as sewer laterals and homelessness. The study will also investigate funding mechanisms that can be used to fund BMPs resulting from the Study.

Member Merenda requested Chair Gibbs allow her to make a 5-minute presentation on why this study matters. Mike Antos (Stantec) provided a recommendation that members of the WASC abstain from making presentations related to projects that are being considered by the committee, and that other WASCs have faced this issue and decided that staff from the WASC Member's agency be invited to give such presentations.

Co-Chair Cole suggested tabling the presentation about the significance of the project until the next meeting. Member Merenda agreed and requested that the presentation be provided prior to the WASC making a vote about this project.

8. Public Comment Period

Jacqueline Ayers expressed appreciation for Watershed Coordinator Massey resolving the community's concerns with the study.

9. Voting Items

- A) Approval of the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan.

This item was advanced by the Chair in the agenda to follow item 6.

10. Items for Next Agenda

- Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) discussion
- Presentation from the City of Santa Clarita on the significance of the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study.

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Member Cattell asked whether the WASC will vote on the projects at the next meeting. District staff noted that the WASC can either call for a vote, request resubmission, and/or hold further discussions related to projects.

Member Cattell requested a budget/funding update prior to the SIP discussion. District staff noted that a SIP tool will be updated and provided to the WASC.

11. Adjournment

Co-chair Cole thanked WASC members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, December 2, 2021
3:00PM – 5:00PM
See SCW website for meeting details

SANTA CLARA RIVER WASC MEETING - NOVEMBER 10, 2021

		Quorum Present				(see meeting minutes for additional details)	
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 10-7-2021 Meeting Minutes	Approve Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan
Agency	District	Julian Juarez		Ramy Gindi	x	A	Y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	Dirk Marks	x	Mike Alvord		Y	Y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency	Steve Cole	x	Rick Viergutz		Y	Y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Kristen Ruffell	x	Christopher Lapaz		A	Y
Agency	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	Janine Prado	x	Amy Seyerle		Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Poole & Shaffery	Hunt Braly	x			A	Y
Community Stakeholder	Agua Dulce Town Council	Mary Johnson	x			Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	Sandra Cattell	x	Diane Trautman		Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Evolve Business Strategies	Ivan Volschenk					
Community Stakeholder	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	x	Heidi Webber		Y	Y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto		Allen Ma	x	A	Y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto		Allen Ma	x	A	Y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto		Allen Ma	x	A	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Jason Gibbs	x	Darin Seegmiller		Y	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Heather Merenda	x	Oliver Cramer		A	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Robert Newman		Mike Hennawy	x	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Tom Cole	x	David Peterson		Y	Y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	TreePeople, Inc.	Peter Massey	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	9	16
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	7	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	16	16
Municipal Members		7				Approved	Approved

Attendees
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Darin Seegmiller	Lauro Alvarado	Darin Son (NoteTaker)	Trevor Davis
Enrique Baul	CJ Caluag - LACFCD	Sandra Cattell	Steve Cole
Ramy Gindi (A)	Allen Ma - LA County Public	Jacqueline Ayer	Annakaren Ramirez
Peter Massey	Blake Whittington	Richard Watson	Heather Merenda
Sarai Jimenez	Kristen Ruffell	Janine Prado	Brenda Ponton
Diane Trautman	Mike Antos (Regional Coord)	Dirk Marks	Tom Cole
Josafat Flores	Amanda Begley	Steven Webb	Kayla Kilgo (CWE)
Mary Johnson	Mike Hennawy	Dianne Hellrigel	Oliver Cramer
Uriel Cobian - LACFCD	Jason Glibbs	Hunt Braly	