

# Rio Hondo Watershed Coordinator Update

Presented to the Rio Hondo WASC

15 March 2022

By Richard Watson & Julie Millett (RWA)





# Watershed Coordinator Activities

## WC Activities since Last WASC Meeting

- Worked to connect project proponents of two current projects (one approved and one up for approval) that are in the same sub-watershed
- Worked with SGVCOG to plan an educational event to better inform municipal staff about the program (scheduled for March 21)
- Attended kick-off meeting of proposed project with City of Alhambra staff and engineering team
- Visited 3 other sites of project proposed for Year 4 submittal
- Talked with WCs in Upper LAR and Upper SGR re: joint educational and outreach events (joint event with USGR scheduled for March 22)

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# WC Activities since Last WASC Meeting

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- Developing a sub-watershed mapping tool to assess projects in the same wash or Rio Hondo reach
- Interacted with CBO groups re: working together
- Attended outreach event held by Coordinators from other Watershed Areas
- Attended SGV Greenway Meeting
- Monitored LLAR/LSGR SCWP Coordination/Outreach Meeting

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# WC Activities since Last WASC Meeting

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- Attended February Watershed Coordinator group meeting
- Attended Internet of Water Stakeholder Engagement webinar
- Attended Place It Workshop (APIFM) at Alhambra Farmers' Market

## Engagement with Community- Based Organizations

- **ActiveSGV:** Met to discuss program, how to collaborate.
- **APIFM:** Meet and greet, discussed program and how to work together. Attended their community engagement event.
- **Nature for All:** Touched base re: their current efforts and our upcoming community engagement event.
- **Day One:** Coordinating with USGR Watershed Coordinators (Day One) re: jointly convened outreach event (3/22) and area projects.

## Planned Upcoming Activity Focus

- Convening an educational event with a focus on municipal stakeholders through SGVCOG
- Convening an outreach event with USGR Watershed Coordinator team focusing on cities in the southeastern portion of the Rio Hondo Watershed Area
- Publicizing above events through calls, email invitations, and social media.
- Meeting with Active SGV to discuss projects and opportunities
- Meeting with API Forward Movement to discuss projects and opportunities
- Preparing for next events in April and May
- Preparing for watershed strategy discussion with WASC

# Call to Action for Project Proponents

- July 31 deadline is coming quickly!
- Please engage with the Watershed Coordinator team – we can be a resource to Cities, community groups, and other project proponents.
- If you will be submitting a project in July, start outreach to potential project supporters ASAP.
  - Community engagement and support is critical
  - Document your outreach (support letters, etc.)
  - New [Safe, Clean Water Program Interim Guidance document](#) details requirements for outreach/engagement at all stages of project development



# SCWP 2022 Interim Guidance

- **4 Guidance Areas:**
  - Strengthening Community Engagement and Support
  - Water Supply Guidance
  - Programming of Nature-Based Solutions
  - Implementing Disadvantaged Community Policies in the Regional Program



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# 2022 Interim Guidance – Strengthening Community Engagement and Support



## 2022 Interim Guidance

### Strengthening Community Engagement and Support

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- Feasibility Plans must include “a plan for outreach/engagement to solicit, address, and incorporate stakeholder input on the project, which should also address issues related to displacement and gentrification.”
- Regional Program applicants can receive up to 4 points from Scoring Committee if project demonstrates “strong local, community-based support and/or has been developed as part of a partnership with local NGOs and CBOs.”



## 2022 Interim Guidance

### Strengthening Community Engagement and Support (Continued)

- **Project Planning Phase** – identify stakeholders and involve them in identifying community needs, concerns, and objectives, & potential solutions.
- **Design Phase** – further solicitation, evaluation, and incorporation of stakeholder input
- **Construction Phase through Monitoring and O&M Phases** – realize effective partnerships, maintain relationships and sustained education, and communicate/recognize Project progress and benefits to best prepare for successful long-term maintenance, monitoring, and/or plans for future Phases.

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# 2022 Interim Guidance – Strengthening Community Engagement & Support (Continued)

Table 2. Best practices for conducting outreach and engagement

	Good	Better	Best
<b>Engagement Levels</b>	<p><b>Inform</b> - Provide the community with relevant information</p> <p><b>Consult</b> - Gather input from the Community</p>	<p><b>Involve</b> - Ensure community input, needs, and assets are integrated into processes, receive demonstrable consideration and appropriate responses, and inform planning</p> <p><b>Educate</b> – Grow community understanding of the existing infrastructure systems, purposes, perceived outstanding needs, pertinent history and regulations, SCWP opportunities (including Watershed Coordinators) to establish</p> <p><b>Learn</b> – Grow own understanding of existing community, perceived needs, pertinent history, key concerns, and other potentially interested parties.</p>	<p><b>Collaborate</b> - Leverage and grow community capacity to play a leadership role in both planning and implementation</p> <p><b>Incorporate</b> - Foster democratic participation and equity by including the community in decision-making, bridge divide between community and governance</p> <p><b>Partner</b> – Establish certain project concepts based on community-driven and identified needs, solidify formal partnerships, and build in sustained paths forward to joint implementation and management with well-defined roles per agreement</p>

	Good	Better	Best
<b>Example Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact Sheets with translation as needed</li> <li>• Open Houses</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Videos</li> <li>• Online Media</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Local Media</li> <li>• Listening Sessions</li> <li>• Public Comment</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House Meetings</li> <li>• Interactive Workshops &amp; Tours</li> <li>• Community Forums</li> <li>• Canvassing</li> <li>• Transparent responses to community comments</li> <li>• Document expanded understanding and commitment to ongoing relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOUs or support letters with Community Based Organizations</li> <li>• MOUs or support letters from Elected Officials</li> <li>• Community Organizing</li> <li>• Citizen Advocacy Committees</li> <li>• Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling</li> <li>• Community-Driven Planning</li> <li>• Consensus Building</li> <li>• Participatory Action Research</li> <li>• Participatory Budgeting</li> <li>• Cooperatives</li> </ul>



# 2022 Interim Guidance - Strengthening Community Engagement

## Guidance for WASC Members

- Read the justification in applications and submitted Feasibility Studies about community engagement and support for the project.
- During project presentations or Scoring Committee evaluations, ask about community engagement and support for the project.
- Ask Watershed Coordinators to evaluate and report to the WASC how the community, city and county agencies, and other stakeholders would describe community needs, concerns, and objectives in the WA.

# 2022 Interim Guidance – Water Supply Guidance





# SCWP 2022 Interim Guidance – Water Supply Guidance

Los Angeles Flood Control District Code Section 16.03.00: **“Water Supply Benefit”** means an increase in the amount of locally available water supply, provided there is a nexus to Stormwater or Urban Runoff capture. Activities resulting in this benefit include, but are not limited to, the following:

- reuse and conservation practices,
- diversion of Stormwater or Urban Runoff to a sanitary sewer system for direct or indirect water recycling,
- increased groundwater replenishment or available yield, or
- offset of potable water use.

- Identification of needs related to each type of benefit – Water Supply, Water Quality, and Community Investment – is an important part of project evaluation.
  - For Water Supply Benefit, essential due to potential for one project’s claimed benefit to be impacted by another upstream or downstream
- Feasibility Studies should include estimate of average annual amount of stormwater captured for reuse onsite and average annual amount used to augment water supplies.

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## 2022 Interim Guidance – Water Supply Guidance (Continued)

### Guidance to Support Feasibility Study Guideline Provisions:

Five scenarios described:

- 1. Projects in watersheds with existing downstream stormwater capture facilities (or other proposed downstream projects)***
- 2. Projects claiming to capture “first flush” flows that would not be captured by existing facilities or concurrent projects (and would be wasted to the ocean)***
- 3. Projects claiming future water supply benefit due to future projects or infrastructure***
- 4. Projects diverting onsite runoff to a sanitary sewer***
- 5. Projects claiming infiltration of water***



## 2022 Interim Guidance – Water Supply Guidance (Continued)

### Guidance for WASC Members

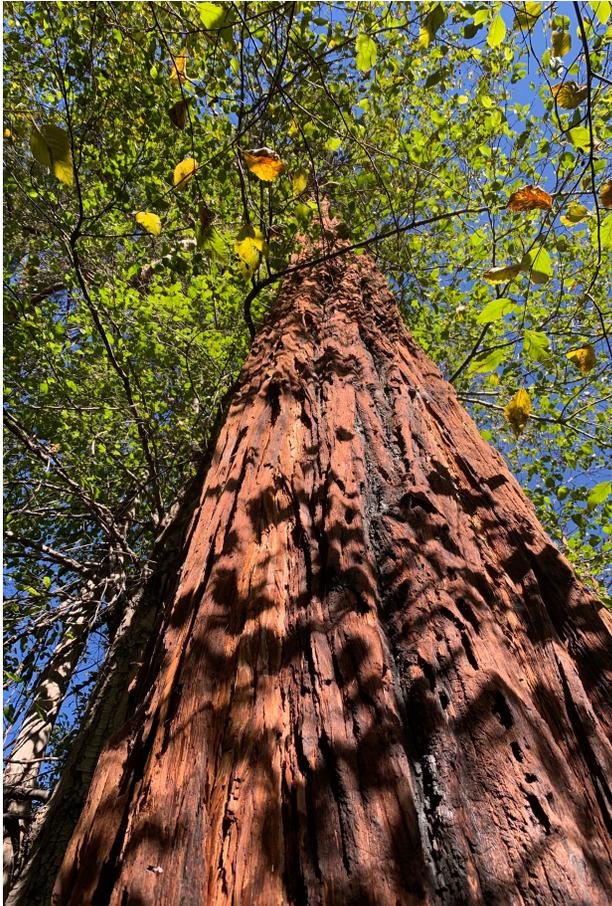
- Read justification and Feasibility Study re: Water Supply Benefits claimed.
- Review applications for assurance that infiltrate water reaches a managed aquifer through demonstration of high infiltration potential or proximity to a water reclamation facility.
- Ask follow-up questions to proponents, as applicable.
- Additional tools and strategies for WASC members:
  - Ask WCs to evaluate and report to WASC how the people, public agencies, and other stakeholders describe the preferred Water Supply Benefits in the WA (desired outcomes and watershed-specific goals).
  - Invite informational presentations to better understand potential Water Supply Benefits sought and challenges faced.

# 2022 Interim Guidance – Programming Nature-Based Solutions





## 2022 Guidance – Programming Nature-Based Solutions



- **NBS – a Project that utilizes natural processes that slow, detain, infiltrate or filter Stormwater or Urban Runoff.**
- May be designed to provide additional benefits such as sequestering carbon, supporting biodiversity, providing shade, creating and enhancing open space, and improving quality of life for surrounding communities.

In short, Projects that use natural processes or nature-mimicking strategies to meet identified needs and deliver SCWP benefits are Nature-Based Solutions:





## 2022 Guidance – Programming Nature-Based Solutions

- **“Are there natural processes or nature-mimicking strategies that this Project can use to address watershed needs and deliver SCWP benefits?”**
  - Project proponents can use this question to design a project that maximizes these processes/strategies to provide desired benefits, or to submit a request under TRP for a Feasibility Study to determine whether such strategies can be used at that site.
  - WASCs can use this question to evaluate if/how individual projects are fulfilling the directive to prioritize NBS to meet the needs of the watershed and its communities.
- If NBS not used, proponent required to provide an explanation with supporting analysis of why it is not feasible.
- Project proponents are responsible for prioritizing NBS at earliest possible stage – instructed to work through feasibility of NBS to meet identified needs.

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## 2022 Guidance – Programming Nature-Based Solutions

- NBS can be used for a variety of needs, including improved flood control management, additional parks or habitat, access to waterways, recreational opportunities, green space at schools, and mitigating heat island effects.
  - A table on pp. 27-28 provides some examples of identified needs/outcomes that can be addressed through nature-based solutions.
- Points for NBS information in Feasibility Studies (15 points max):
  - 5 points for implementing natural processes (Y/N)
  - 5 points for utilizing natural materials (Y/N)
  - Up to 5 points for removing impermeable surface

## 2022 Guidance – NBS (Continued)

- If there are not natural processes or nature-mimicking strategies in a project, WASC can consider: **should this project be revisited for future SIP consideration instead?**
- Feasibility of NBS is key to this part of evaluation.
- If infeasibility demonstrated, WASC should not consider absence of NPS as sole grounds to revisit a project in future.





# 2022 Interim Guidance – Nature-Based Solutions

## Guidance for WASC Members

- Prior to sending projects to Scoring Committee, WASC can evaluate extent to which natural processes or nature-mimicking strategies are included, and extent of NBS across the Watershed Area's suite of projects.
- After scoring and during project review, WASC Members should read NBS materials included in projects. Where NBS judged infeasible, review analysis and justifications given.
- During presentation, members can ask questions re: inclusion/lack of NBS in project.
- During SIP programming, members can review previous SIPS and the suite of projects.
- ***At anytime***, WASC members may:
  - Ask their Watershed Coordinators to evaluate and report back how the communities and other stakeholders would prioritize NBS in the Watershed Area.
  - Invite informational presentations from agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders to better understand how NBS would bring benefits and meet the challenges faced in the Watershed Area.



## 2022 Guidance –Nature-Based Solutions (Continued)

- WASCs can consider how full suite of WA projects – approved in past SIPs, and currently under consideration – together reflect a prioritization of NBS.
  - Has the WASC prioritized nature-based solutions within this and prior SIPs?
  - How are the nature-based solutions funded to-date collectively providing the anticipated benefits to the Watershed Area, and where are the biggest needs or opportunities?
- If Watershed Area needs cannot be adequately met by the WA’s suite of projects (i.e., if there are not eligible projects that meet those needs), WASC members should inform FCD staff and WCs to solicit assistance developing the pipeline of those types of projects for future funding years.
- Other tools available to WASC members (p.33) emphasize evaluation of NBS components during project evaluation.



## 2022 Guidance –Nature-Based Solutions (Continued)

- Fund Transfer Agreements (Regional and Municipal Programs) and Progress Reports also require consideration of incorporation nature-based solutions and discussion of methods.
- The treatment of nature-based solutions in this 2022 Guidance is expected to be utilized for Regional Program Round 4 Call for Projects.
  - Primary focus will expand to fostering more effective planning and evaluation of Nature-Based Solutions.
  - Includes assisting project developers and WASCs in further expanding their design thinking and decision making, as well as expanding messaging.
  - 2022 Guidance comment period through **March 17**

# 2022 Interim Guidance – Implementing Disadvantaged Community Policies





## 2022 Guidance –Implementing Disadvantaged Community Policies

- Program goal of investing in disadvantaged communities is achieved by locating beneficial Projects within, or such that the benefits of a Project are directly provided to, census block groups where the median household income is less than 80% of the statewide median household income.
  - “Direct benefit” will be determined on a project-by-project basis considering the goals of SCWP, the benefits provided to the community, and the area within those benefits will be experienced.
- Disadvantaged Community Benefit designation may be modified during an agendized discussion of a Project.
- A number of cities in SCWP boundaries are US census places that could be considered “disadvantaged” at the scale of the City. In the Rio Hondo Watershed Area, El Monte, Montebello, Rosemead, and South El Monte all have MHIs below 80% of the statewide MHI (2018 data).

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## 2022 Guidance –Implementing Disadvantaged Community Policies

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- Community support is very important.
  - One of the best ways to document benefit to a community is if the community itself expresses support.
  - Project proponents are encouraged to obtain letters of support documenting that the benefitting communities are eager for the project benefit and are supportive of the project effort.
    - Public testimony during meetings also can be part of the WASC’s decision-making process.
  - WASC members can rely on assertions from communities and their representatives that the Project will provide them benefits.
    - Important to empower community members to voice their perceived benefits through community education and support.

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## 2022 Guidance –Implementing Disadvantaged Community Policies

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- **WASC Tools and Strategies** to determine appropriateness of each Project’s claim of providing, or not providing, benefits to members of disadvantaged communities:
  - ***During Project evaluation***, WASC members may:
    - Read justification provided in application and submitted Feasibility Study
    - Ask questions during presentations by Project proponents
    - During agendaized Project Discussion period, voting WASC members may suggest modifying status as part of a motion related to formation of SIP.
  - ***At anytime***, WASC members may:
    - Ask their Watershed Coordinators to evaluate and report back how the communities and other stakeholders would describe the community benefits.
    - Invite informational presentations from agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders to better understand DAC benefits sought and challenges faced.



## Questions and Discussion

Richard Watson

[rwatson@rwaplanning.com](mailto:rwatson@rwaplanning.com)

949-394-8495

Julie Millett

[jmillett@rwaplanning.com](mailto:jmillett@rwaplanning.com)

310-980-1534



Monrovia Canyon Park, Photo Courtesy City of Monrovia

