

Watershed Coordinator Quarterly Report

A Project of Safe, Clean Water L.A.

Watershed: Santa Clara River
Watershed Coordinator: TreePeople
WC Contact: petermassey@treepeople.org

Quarterly Report No: 1
Contract Year: 1
Date of Submission: 8/31/2021
Notice to Proceed: 5/18/21
Period Covered: 5/18/21 to 8/31/21

A. Summary of Activities

TreePeople is honored and grateful to serve as Coordinator for the Santa Clara River Watershed Area. Following is a summary of inaugural activities completed during our first quarter and progress made toward completion of the annual scope of work:

1. Strategies used to integrate priorities for the community, municipalities, the watershed area, and the region

In May 2021 TreePeople officially began work as Watershed Coordinator. Even prior to the start date, we attended multiple community and Watershed Area Steering Committee meetings after being selected in February 2021 and were able to ground ourselves in current issues and became more familiar with the Committee.

A key strategy to begin our work in the area is to **focus on unincorporated areas**, where little or no investment has been made to date from the SCWP. For example, in April TreePeople held a meeting with members of the Acton Town Council to discuss their concerns, including flooding in the downtown section of Acton, and possible septic leaks from a RV trailer parks in or near the Santa Clara River floodplain. With this information, and an additional exploratory visit to multiple sites in the area, TreePeople began a list of potential project sites.

We also gathered background information through conversations with City of Santa Clarita and LA County Public Works regarding projects already underway or being planned for submittal to SCWP – all of which help fulfill priorities established in the area’s Enhanced Watershed Management Plan approved by the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Another key activity for this quarter was development of the **Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP)**. In June 2021, TreePeople attended our first WASC meeting as an official member and provided to the Committee an outline for the Plan as well as an overview of the Watershed Coordinator role and tasks. We alerted the WASC we would present a Plan draft at the July meeting for their review, toward possible approval at the August meeting. The July meeting was cancelled, the Plan was provided for review July 30, and initial presentation was made August 5.

At that time, we led a 30min presentation and discussion of the SOEP for the WASC and public attendees, receiving multiple comments. Subsequent comments were received from the City of Santa Clarita on August 26, and comments will be received through at least September.

The draft SOEP includes geographic and social background information on the area to help guide our work going forward, combined with the following strategies:

- *Build diverse relationships that support project identification and ongoing coordination.*
- *Draw from relationships to identify projects that serve community needs and SCWP goals.*
- *Focus community involvement on project development.*
- *Clarify educational needs that support understanding of how projects support shared goals.*
- *Share information through a regular public reporting structure.*

Additionally, we conducted background research and participated in webinars and trainings related to work in the SCR area. These included training on wells and septic systems, a briefing on the LA County Water Plan, and the Aquifer Risk mapping project of the State Water Board's SAFER program among other research efforts. We participated in webinars with CA Dept of Water Resources and the California State Water Quality Control Board on cost-share opportunities from flood reduction and emergency drought funds.

2. Partnerships and networks engaged

Of most significance was coordinating with the **CA Prop 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program (WaterTalks)**. Because of the resources available, this program also serves as a potential cost-share partner. Since 2018, TreePeople has served as consultant lead for WaterTalks Outreach, Education and Needs Assessment activities in the Greater LA County IRWM Region and has coordinated with California State University-San Bernardino who serves as consultant in the Upper Santa Clara River IRWM Region (USCR).

In late May, TreePeople submitted a proposal to provide Project Development services for WaterTalks in the USCR area which covers all and more of the SCWP Santa Clara River Watershed Area – and in August were thrilled to learn we were awarded the entire USCR area. This will provide additional resources of up to \$1M (through 2022) in the form of engineering and design services for developing water infrastructure projects and programs to support disadvantaged, tribal and underrepresented communities in USCR. It is anticipated that some of these projects will be submitted to the SCWP in 2022, as well as to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for Round 2 of the IRWM funding program, and other funding sources.

Another major network engaged was the **collective of Watershed Coordinators across the SCWP**. We attended monthly Coordinator meetings throughout the quarter and agreed to serve on working groups to coordinate cost-share partners, as well as working with school districts. We briefed SGA (Lower LA River Watershed Area Coordinator) on how they can access data from the WaterTalks Needs Assessment; we then volunteered to host the September Coordinators meeting where we will brief the team on the WaterTalks program and how it's resources can serve the SCWP.

3. Engagement of conventional and unconventional stakeholders

TreePeople reached out to Richard Watson and Associated (RWA) to confirm if their team planned to submit a **Pathogen Study** to the SCWP Scientific Studies program Round 3 (July 2021). They had done so for two previous Rounds and, in the SCR area, met with repeated community

concerns from Acton and Agua Dulce that became a topic at multiple WASC meetings. Learning that RWA would again apply, TreePeople facilitated a meeting between RWA and representatives from Acton and Agua Dulce Town Councils to get clarity around community concerns in the Study proposal – so the study could address those BEFORE it was submitted again. Based on feedback from Town Council reps, concerns were addressed in the Round 3 proposal.

During the quarter, we provided an early analysis of survey data from the WaterTalks Program to help guide LA County Public Works in their July SCWP application for a project at Pico Canyon Park - to show where community interests are or could be addressed by aspects of the project design. We provided guidance on best practices in community outreach and assisted in connecting County with local groups they could present to about the project. County presented to the Westridge HOA on July 15 and to Southern Oaks HOA August 9. TreePeople attended both meetings to support County and get familiar with local community issues. At the Westridge HOA meeting, an engineer with LA County PW presented the Pico Canyon Park project, still very early in development. When he finished, the chair of the meeting shared that in his experience, someone from LA County bringing a project to the community so early in the process was unprecedented and was deeply appreciated. We also supported LA County Public Works by attending the Castaic Town Council meeting (June 15) for their presentation of the Hasley Canyon Park project, and to become more familiar with community issues and leaders.

Along with several WASC members and alternates, we also attended meetings of the Agua Dulce Town Council, and met with the Nature Conservancy and leaders of the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians to begin building relationships. We also met with LA County Parks Department regarding the 2021 Rural and Regional Parks Needs Assessment; we promoted it among local contacts and then attended the public workshop for the Santa Clarita Valley region.

B. Engagement Meetings Held or Attended

Summary (required elements)

Element	Minimum	This Qtr.	Total YTD
Engagement meetings held	4	2	2
Educational events held	2	0	0
Other meetings attended	0	17	17
Cost-share partner relationships	0	2	2
Leveraged funding pursuits	0	1	1

Detail

	Meeting or Event	Date	Summary of Meeting or Event	Stakeholders Engaged	Held or Attended?	ATTCH #
0	Site visits tour	4/19	Potential project sites (pre-contract start)	WASC member	Held	
0	Acton Town Council	5/13	Discuss water issues (pre-contract start)	Residents	Held	
1	WASC	6/3	Outline of our duties and the SOEP	Committee	Attended	B1

2	Agua Dulce TC	6/9	Observe local issues	Residents	Attended	
3	Castaic TC	6/15	LA County Hasley Canyon presentation	Residents	Attended	
4	Coordinators	6/21	SCWP Coordination	SCW Coordinators	Attended	
5	ROC	6/29	Program wide review	NA	Attended	
6	WASC member interviews (16)	July (mult.)	SOEP preparation	WASC members, alternates.	NA	
7	The Nature Conservancy	7/15	Interested Parties list	Leading NGO	Held	B2
8	Agua Dulce TC	7/14	Observe local issues	Residents	Attended	
9	Pathogen Study Review	7/19	Address local concerns about the study	Acton/Agua Dulce reps; study author	Held	B3, B4
10	Westridge HOA	7/21	LA County Pico Canyon Project presentation	Residents	Attended	B5
11	Coordinators	7/29	SCWP Coordination	SCW Coordinators	Attended	
12	WASC	8/5	SOEP Presentation	Committee	Attended	B6, B7
13	Southern Oaks HOA	8/9	LA County Pico Canyon Project presentation	Residents	Attended	
14	Fernandeno Tataviam Band Mission Indians	8/10	Explore project needs; Tataviam Land Trust	President and staff of FTBMI	Attended	
15	Santa Clarita City Council	8/24	Observe local issues	NA	Attended	
16	Coordinators	8/26	SCWP Coordination	SCW Coordinators	Attended	
17	Park Needs Workshop	8/30	LACO Parks Reg/Rural Needs Assmt for SCR	Acton/Agua Dulce residents	Attended	

C. Potential Cost-Share Partners Contacted

	Potential Partner Name	Date First Contacted	Project name / type	Nature of potential partnership	ATTCH #
1	Dept Water Resources	8/3/21	Acton Flooding Relief	Webinar - Flood Risk Reduction Grants	
2	Dept Water Resources	8/31/21	Acton / Agua Dulce Water Resilience	Webinar - Small Community Drought Relief Grant Program	

D. Leveraged / Outside Funding Pursued

	Potential Outside Funding Source	Status or Outcome of the Pursuit	ATTCH #
1	DACTI Program	Proposal submitted May 21; awarded August 5	D1

E. Detailed Progress Report

Task #	Task Name	LOE per Work Plan	LOE this period*	LOE YTD	Adj*
1	Facilitate Community Engagement in SCWP	20%	74%	74%	87%
2	Identify and Develop Project Concepts	20%	3%	3%	3%
3	Work with Technical Assistance Teams	10%	1%	1%	1%
4	Facilitate, ID and Represent Community Priorities	10%	0%	0%	0%
5	Integrate Priorities Through Partnerships / Networks	10%	0%	0%	0%
6	Cost-Share Partners	5%	1%	1%	1%
7	Leverage Funding	5%	0%	0%	0%
8	Local Stakeholder Education	10%	3%	3%	4%
9	Watershed Coordinator Collaboration	10%	7%	7%	9%
	Overall	100%	89%	89%	105%

**The average assumes 4 full months of work and is how reports and invoices have been filed through Stantec, when the contract did not begin until May 18 - equaling 3.4 months through August. The final column provides an adjustment to 3.4 months for comparison.*

F. Engagement efforts benefitting Disadvantaged Communities

As previously shared, TreePeople prioritized outreach efforts during the period on unincorporated communities in the Watershed Area. These areas are considered “underrepresented” by the WaterTalks program, and such a view was confirmed by WASC members and other community leaders as we prepared the SOEP. Median Household Income may or may not fall within the definition of being disadvantaged by SCWP guidelines in these rural and semi-urban areas, which is a unique feature of the SCR Watershed by comparison to other SCWP areas. TreePeople did not otherwise engage with communities defined as disadvantaged by SCWP during the period but will during subsequent Quarters.

G. Scheduling concerns or issues

Approval of the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan is delayed until September or later due to cancellation of the WASC meeting in July, however this should not impact our timeline. There are no other scheduling concerns.

H. Expected activities next quarter

- Host an outreach and education table at the Santa Clara River Rally Sept 18
- Host a Watershed Coordinator’s meeting with a focus on resources available through WaterTalks
- Begin outreach to staff from public offices serving the area
- Hold a Workshop focused on SCR Watershed area using technical resources from the WaterTalks program, to explore potential projects and programs that address identified community needs.