

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



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Thursday, August 4, 2022  
3:00pm - 5:00 pm  
WebEx Meeting

## 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)  
\*Christopher Lapaz, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)  
Jerrid McKenna, 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)  
Ivan Volschenk, Evolve Business Strategies (Community)  
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Santa Clarita Valley Community Hiking Club (Community)  
Bruce Hamamoto, Los Angeles County (Municipal)  
Jason Gibbs, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Chair  
\*Oliver Cramer, Santa Clarita (Municipal)  
Damon Letz, Santa Clarita (Municipal)  
Darin Seegmiller, Santa Clarita (Municipal)  
Peter Massey, TreePeople (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

\*Committee Member Alternate

## Committee Members Absent:

There were no committee members absent.

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees.

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Jason Gibbs, Chair of the Santa Clara River (SCR) WASC, welcomed Committee Members and gave a brief WebEx tutorial, then called the meeting to order.

The Los Angeles County Flood District (District) staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

## **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 7, 2022**

District Staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve meeting minutes by Member Ivan Volschenk, seconded by Member Sandra Cattell. The Committee voted to approve the July 7, 2022 meeting minutes, with 16 votes in favor and zero opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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

Member Darin Seegmiller informed the Committee that the City of Santa Clarita has made changes to the representatives in their municipal member seats for the SCR WASC.

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Member Cattell provided an update that the Sierra Club is planning a water forum with Santa Clarita Valley Water District and the City of Santa Clarita to address some of the topics from WASC meetings in October.

District Staff provided an update, noting:

- On July 12, the Board of Supervisors voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing its position every 30 days and will act to cover all the commissions and committees under their authority.
- The call for projects for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY23-24) closed on July 31. The District will be conducting completeness checks for project applications after which projects will be brought to the WASC for voting.
- Quarterly reports for Infrastructure Program and Scientific Studies are due August 15. All nine Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) were approved by the Regional Oversight Committee for advancement to the Board for approval. The Board of Supervisors meeting is scheduled for October 4.

## 4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Peter Massey, along with TreePeople colleague Amanda Begley, provided a quarterly update, highlighting various projects and initiatives. Watershed Coordinator Massey has reached out to Roy Marson, part of Bouquet Canyon Network and Watershed committee, who raised a concern about the Bouquet Canyon Reservoir at the previous WASC meeting to discuss water needs in the area. A meeting with Member Steve Cole was also scheduled to learn about water projects currently underway in Bouquet Canyon.

In summary, Watershed Coordinator Massey has conducted 23 meetings/interviews, participated in 3 meetings with funders, visited 1 site, and engaged an estimate of 950+ people during the first quarter. Upcoming events in the second quarter include a Tribal Allyship workshop on August 24, a River Rally on September 17, and an application deadline to Strategic Growth Council on October 5.

TreePeople and other organizations involved in restoring sites in the San Francisquito Canyon are in search of satellite space suitable for a small office, materials yard, and parking spaces. If anyone is aware of any available spaces, please contact Watershed Coordinator Massey.

Member Ramy Gindi noted that the LA County Flood Control District is working on a project at Bouquet Canyon Creek and has been working with the Wildlife Conversation Board and Department of Fish and Wildlife. Member Gindi will provide information from the internal project manager to assist in discussions with community member Marson as well.

Member Hunt Braly requested that the Watershed Coordinator presentation be distributed and posted on the SCWP website, and that in the future any slides for use at WASC meetings be completed and shared as part of the agenda packet.

Watershed Coordinator Massey answered a question regarding which organizations make up the Arundo Mapping Group, listing: UC Santa Barbara, Stillwater Sciences, Santa Clara River Conservancy, representatives from the City of Santa Clarita, and others from Ventura County.

## 5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

District Staff met with Members Braly, Cattell, and Mary Johnson to discuss the video recording policy.

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Member Cattell also spoke with Member Heather Merenda and Chair Gibbs separately on different issues related to water.

## 6. Public Comment Period

District Staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, posted them to the SCWP website, and displayed them on-screen. Speaker cards or other correspondence received after 5:00pm will be added to the minutes.

District Staff shared screen to display a public comment card from NECA-IBEW of Los Angeles, regarding Project Labor Agreements.

## 7. Discussion Items

### a) WASC Roles and Responsibilities Presentation

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) shared a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the WASC, projects received in the FY22-23 call for projects, Interim Guidance and the Metrics and Monitoring Study, and an update on funding. See slides available on the SCWP website.

### b) Pico Canyon Park and Jake Kuredjian Park Discussion

Member Bruce Hamamoto introduced Josafat Flores, who was the project manager from Los Angeles County Public Work (LACPW) that previously presented on the two projects located at Pico Canyon Park and Jake Kuredjian Park. Flores presented and explained why these two projects were not combined despite their geographic proximity. The main reason the projects were not combined is because the flows for each come from different drainage areas and are located within different subwatersheds. The projects are also at different development stages. A map showing both projects' diverted flows was displayed on screen and Flores explained that the debris basin near Jake Kuredjian Park is meant to capture sediment, not infiltrate water, therefore flows will be diverted from entering the debris basin and instead directed into Jake Kuredjian Park for infiltration.

Flores also addressed why LACPW did not choose the nearby golf course as an alternative site. The golf course is located within the jurisdiction of the City of Santa Clarita and is operated by a private business, so additional steps related to obtaining right of way would have been required. Additionally, the golf course would have also required the treatment of a larger volume of water.

The Committee discussed the diverted flows. Member Cattell noted that from a financial management perspective, it would make sense for both project flows to be directed towards the debris basin, especially if the flows from Pico Canyon Park already flow naturally toward the debris basin. Member Bruce Hamamoto clarified that flows directed to the basin would need to be pumped vertically to the higher elevation of Jake Kuredjian Park, which is an expensive endeavor. The Jake Kuredjian Park project team evaluated various pathways to route the flows via gravity and noted the newly proposed path (designated in yellow on the aerial map of the project area) is in closer proximity to the diversion paths of the Pico Canyon Park project. LACPW will be revisiting the possibility of combining the diversion paths.

Antos asked LACPW if flows are being diverted in the proposed plans because water needs to be treated before entering Pico Canyon. LACPW staff said that this consideration needs to be verified to determine if Pico Canyon is an impaired water body that requires flows be diverted or treated before discharge.

Member Cattell observed that educational signs in the area indicate that water drains to the ocean and suggested amending the signs to reflect that water will infiltrate to a nearby groundwater basin and feed

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the neighborhood's drinking water supply. Member Hamamoto responded that while there may be difficulty in changing the specific signs Member Cattell is referring to, relevant educational signage can be created as part of the Jake Kuredjian Park project.

Member Johnson expressed appreciation for LACPW's decision to reevaluate the possibility of combining the two projects and stressed the importance of integrating them, even if delays to project schedules result.

The Committee discussed holding a site tour with LACPW staff. Arrangements will be made with Flores, District staff, and Watershed Coordinator Massey to plan a site tour and determine whether it would be considered a meeting depending on if a quorum is reached.

## **c) District policy on meeting recordings**

Kirk Allen, District lead for SCWP, spoke about the District's policy regarding video recording, which is as follows:

- The District does not post audio or video recordings of Committee meetings on their website.
- The District provides meeting recordings through public records requests submitted via email to the SCWP email within 30 days of the meeting.
- Recordings are deleted after 30 days.
- The purpose of the District's policy is to encourage public participation during meetings.
- Official meeting minutes are made available on the SCWP website.

Member Braly commented that other public agencies provide recordings online, though they are also subject to verbal mistakes. Member Braly is not aware of a reason why recordings should be deleted after 30 days. Member Cattell added that meeting minutes do not provide the same depth of understanding that comes from listening to an entire meeting. Various Committee Members agreed, stating that if SCWP purports to foster public engagement, then the District should provide meeting recordings without the additional step of a public records request through email.

Member Gindi observed that the video recording policy is standard across the County's various other Committees. Because meeting minutes are the only official record of WASC meetings, Committee Members should all ensure that they accurately represent the contents of meetings.

Watershed Coordinator Massey noted that WASC meetings are scheduled during the day and work week, when most community members are not available to attend due to other fulltime work commitments. It is important to acknowledge that even this Committee includes representatives who are not compensated for their time participating and other WASCs struggle to even have these kinds of partners (community organizations and businesses) as part of their committees.

## **8. Public Comment Period**

Jacqueline Ayer (Acton Town Council) made a public comment regarding Member Cattell's request for modifying the public comment period to follow each discussion item, noting that it had not been implemented during this meeting. Ayer voiced support for expanding the video recording policy and noted that public records requests often take longer than 30 days to be processed, making the request process futile. Ayer stated that policies that are not rooted in a particular law or ordinance are meaningless.

## **9. Voting Items**

### **a) Selection of Chair(s)**

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Chair Gibbs expressed gratitude serving as Chair and initiated the nomination process for selecting a new Chair. Member Jerrid McKenna nominated Member Seegmiller, who accepted the nomination. Member Damon Letz seconded the nomination. Member Braly was unable to vote verbally and provided visual representation instead. The motion was approved, with 17 votes in favor and zero opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet). Member Seegmiller will act as Chair of the SCR WASC, effective immediately.

Member Gibbs nominated Member Dirk Marks for the position of Vice Chair, which was seconded by Chair Seegmiller. Member Marks accepted the nomination. Member Braly was unable to vote verbally and provided visual representation instead. The motion was approved, with 17 votes in favor and zero opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet). Member Marks will act as Vice Chair of the SCR WASC, effective immediately.

## **b) WASC to make a recommendation to the District about the video recording policy**

Member Cattell made a motion to stipulate all virtual meetings be videotaped, all in-person meetings be audio recorded, and all recordings be made accessible on the website and archived without a public records request.

Chair Seegmiller amended the motion to draft a letter detailing Member Cattell's original motion into a recommendation to the District. After some discussion related to drafting the letter on behalf of the WASC, it was decided that the motion would be for Chair Seegmiller to draft a letter with the support of Members Cattell and Braly and send the letter to District staff prior to the next WASC meeting. Member Cole seconded the motion, including the subsequent amendments. The motion was approved, with 12 votes in favor, one opposed, and three abstentions (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Members Braly and Cattell requested District Staff provide each of them a copy of this meeting's video recording and noted that this request should be considered a recurring request for future meeting recordings as well.

## **8. Public Comment Period (continued)**

Public Member Lynne Plambeck had microphone issues during the public comment period and had written a comment in the chat earlier regarding the Pico Canyon Park and Jake Kuredjian Park projects. Plambeck requested that Member Hamamoto provide documentation regarding the challenges cited in combining the two projects and decision to not pursue the golf course site. Upon recommendation by Chair Seegmiller and District Staff, Member Hamamoto will provide a written response and will also be present at future meetings to address any additional comments.

## **10. Items for Next Agenda**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 1, 2022, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM. See the SCWP website for details.

## **11. Adjournment**

Chair Seegmiller thanked the WASC members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

**SANTA CLARA RIVER WASC MEETING - August 4, 2022**

		Quorum Present				Voting Items (see meeting minutes for additional details)			
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 7-7-2022 Meeting Minutes	Vote to Approve SCR Chair (Darin Seegmiller)	Vote to Approve SCR Vice Chair (Dirk Marks)	Vote for Chair Seegmiller to prepare and send to the District a letter with a request to record and post all virtual meetings and audio-record and post all in-person meetings; archive all recordings on website without the need for PRA request.
Agency	District	Julian Juarez		Ramy Gindi	x	Y	Y	Y	N
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	Dirk Marks	x			Y	Y	Y	Y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency	Steve Cole	x	Rick Viergutz		Y	Y	Y	Y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Kristen Ruffell		Christopher Lapaz	x	Y	Y	Y	Y
Agency	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	Jerrid McKenna	x	Susan Nelson		Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Poole & Shaffery	Hunt Braly	x			Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Agua Dulce Town Council	Mary Johnson	x			Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	Sandra Cattell	x	Diane Trautman		Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Evolve Business Strategies	Ivan Volschenk	x			Y	Y	Y	
Community Stakeholder	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	x	Heidi Webber			Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		Y	Y	Y	A
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		Y	Y	Y	A
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		Y	Y	Y	A
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Jason Gibbs	x	Tyler Pledger		Y	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Heather Merenda		Oliver Cramer	x	Y	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Damon Letz	x	Dan Duncan		Y	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Darin Seegmiller	x	Sarona Vivanco		Y	Y	Y	Y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	TreePeople, Inc.	Peter Massey	x						
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17				Yes (Y)	16	17	17
Total Voting Members Present		17				No (N)	0	0	0
Agency		5				Abstain (A)	0	0	0
Community Stakeholder		5				Total	16	17	17
Municipal Members		7				Approved	Approved	Approved	Approved

**Attendees**  
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Allen Ma LA Co Public Works	Eric Bonilla - LACFCD	Kayla Kilgo - CWE	Oliver Cramer
Amanda Begley	Graciela Cruz Sierra - LACFCD	Kirk Allen	Peter Massey
Amy Seyerle	Hayat Rasul	Larry Tran	Ramy Gindi
Bruce Hamamoto	Heather Turpin	Lauro Alvarado	Roland Pacheco
Chris Lapaz	Hunt Braly	Lauro Alvarado	Ryanna Fossum
Damon Letz	Ivan Volschenk	Lynne Plambeck	Sandra Cattell
Darin Seegmiller	Jacqueline Ayer	Marisol Serrano	Serena Zhu
Dee Corhiran	Jason Gibbs	Mary Johnson	Steve Cole
Dianne Hellrigel	Jerrid McKenna	Mayra Cabrera	Uriel Cobian - LACFCD
Dirk Marks	josafat flores	Melanie Morita	
enrique baul	Justin Jones - (LACFCD)	Mike Antos (Regional Coordination)	