

# Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes

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Tuesday, January 10, 2023

10:00am – 12:30 pm

WebEx Meeting

## Committee Members Present

Marcela Benavides-Aguilar, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)

\*Asha Kreiling, Water Replenishment District (Agency)

\*Alysha Chan, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)

\*Nancy Villasenor, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)

Dan Knapp, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)

\*Noya Wang, Resident (Community)

\*Sally Gee, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)

Mike O'Grady, Cerritos (Municipal)

Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal)

Melissa You, Long Beach (Municipal), Chair

Bernie Iniguez, Bellflower (Municipal)

Kelli Pickler, Lakewood (Municipal)

Vicki Smith, Whittier (Municipal)

\*Joseph Venzon, Unincorporated areas of LA County (Municipal)

Kekoa Anderson, OhanaVets (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Grace Kast, OhanaVets (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

\*Committee Member Alternate

## Committee Members Not Present:

Alex Rojas, Central Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)

Gabrielle Weeks, Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment (Community)

Lisa Ann Rapp, Resident (Community), Vice-Chair

See attached attendance sheet for full list of attendees.

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## **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Melissa You, Chair of the Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (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 December 13, 2022**

District staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Dan Mueller motioned to approve the meeting minutes, which was seconded by Member Bernie Iniguez. The Committee voted to approve the December 13, 2022 meeting minutes, with 11 members in favor, 0 opposed, and 3 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

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

District staff provided an update, noting:

- On December 20, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) 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. In the event that the Board does not approve

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AB 361, Committee Members will vote whether to continue teleconferencing during a state of emergency. District staff will provide additional guidance if and when this occurs.

- An email was sent out to the project developers for Funds Transfer Agreements and Funds Transfer Agreement addendums for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) fund disbursements.
- Quarterly Reports for FY22-23 covering October to December of 2022 activities are due February 15, 2023 for Round 1 and Round 2 Projects and Scientific Studies (SS). Regional Quarterly Reports must be completed even if there was no activity done on the project and if the transfer agreements have not yet been executed. To view Quarterly Reports, visit the [SCW Portal](#) Dashboard, select a project, then select Project Reports.
- Annual Reports for Infrastructure Program (IP) projects, SS, and Municipal Programs were due December 31, 2022.
- Attending meetings regularly is a requirement for WASC members under Article 5 of the WASC Operating Guidelines. An absence of two consecutive meetings or more than three meetings in one year will be considered failure to attend meetings and may result in the absentee member's removal from the WASC. If attendance by the Primary member is not possible for a particular meeting, it is requested that the Alternate member be present at the meeting.
- The Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) conducted two workshops on November 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. More Information is available on the SCWP website, under the resources drop down menu.

## 4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Kekoa Anderson and Grace Kast provided an overview of recent activities, which included an educational outreach event (Los Cerritos Wetlands Holiday Tour) at Zedler Marsh on December 10, 2022. See slides available on the SCWP website.

Watershed Coordinator Anderson shared a table and map depicting LSGR SCWP projects funded and under consideration. Watershed Coordinator Traci Gleason presented fact sheets on each. IP projects for consideration in this year's SIP include:

- Artesia Park Urban Runoff Capture Project
- La Mirada Creek Park Project
- Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project
- La Habra Heights Stormwater Treatment and Reuse System at The Park Hacienda Road
- Progress Park Stormwater Capture Project

SS projects for consideration include:

- Regional Pathogen Reduction Study
- Targeted Human Waste Reduction Strategy to Address Bacteria Related Compliance Objectives for the Los Cerritos Channel

Fact sheets and slides from the presentation can be found on the SCWP website. Notes from Scoring Committee deliberations are also available on the SCWP website. Watershed Coordinator Anderson promoted links to the community survey which can be found at [www.cleanwatervision.com](http://www.cleanwatervision.com).

## 5) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures.

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

## 6) Public Comment Period

John Hunter (John L. Hunter & Associates) provided public comment about the Watershed Management Plan, which was referenced at the December 13, 2022 LSGR WASC meeting during the Artesia Park Urban Runoff Capture Project Presentation. Hunter offered to distribute the updated Plan (which will soon be

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available) along with a summary of changes from the 2017 Master Plan and provide a 5-minute presentation to the Committee.

## 7) Discussion

### a) Infrastructure Program Presentations:

#### i) Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project

Presentation by Richard Watson & Associates, Inc. and Craftwater Engineering, Inc. *Regional stormwater capture and filtration/sewer diversion facility located at Heartwell Park beneath the open space of the existing park.*

Richard Watson (Richard Watson & Associates) and Merrill Taylor (Craftwater Engineering, Inc.) provided an overview of the Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project, including details about its benefits, timeline, and estimated budget. Presentation slides can be found on the SCWP website. During the overview, Richard Watson and Merrill Taylor highlighted that the location had been shifted from the western side of the channel to the eastern side at the request of the Parks Department and community.

While the project location is not directly located in a disadvantaged community, it will indirectly benefit nearby disadvantaged communities because they will have access to the fields and park. This project will include the addition of a sidewalk to provide access to the project site from Carson Street along with the development of pedestrian pathways along the Palo Verde Channel.

Richard Watson and Merrill Taylor further clarified the scope for Phases 1 and 2. This funding request is for Phase 1 only and will address dry weather flow TMDLs and divert dry weather flow to the sewer, while Phase 2 would include construction of the basin. The developers intend to submit a later funding request for activities under Phase 2. Most of the project's community benefits would be achieved under Phase 2 with the construction of walking paths. Phase 1 does include minor community improvements such as the construction of some sidewalk elements.

Future SCWP funding requests are anticipated for operations and maintenance. The project developers plan to pursue additional funding sources once they achieve 30% design.

#### ii) La Mirada Creek Park Project

Presentation by City of La Mirada and Harris & Associates, Inc.

*Removal of 2500 foot concrete low-flow channel and naturalization of existing La Mirada Creek Park to capture 168 AFY of dry weather flow.*

Brian Spindor (Harris & Associates, Inc.) presented an overview of the La Mirada Creek Park Project, including details about its benefits, timeline, and estimated budget. Presentation slides can be found on the SCWP website. The funding request is for construction only and includes removal of a concrete low-flow channel and reconfiguration of the creek bed. These improvements reflect the community's desire to enhance the natural features of the public space. The project will benefit disadvantaged communities in La Mirada and La Habra by providing clear access to the new park. Aside from improving the park, project benefits include sediment removal, aquifer recharge, treatment of pollutants, flood mitigation, and removal of 0.5 acres of impermeable area.

Mark Stowell (City of La Mirada) responded to a question from the Committee about silt buildup in the concrete channel, clarifying that the buildup occurred after it was constructed.

The Committee expressed support about naturalizing channels.

### b) Reselection of the Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Coordinator for the next term.

District staff shared that the Watershed Coordinator contract ends in March. The WASC may renew the OhanaVets Inc. contract for another year or decide that a different group should perform their role. Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) provided the list of alternative options for Watershed Coordinator

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which include S. Groner Associates, OhanaVets Inc., TreePeople, Inc., CASC Engineering and Consulting, and Fresh Coast Capital, LLC dba Greenprint Partners.

Members of the WASC expressed satisfaction with OhanaVets' performance.

## **c) Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area Priorities.**

Watershed Coordinator Grace Kast reviewed the results of the LSGR WASC Prioritization Criteria Survey, which 16 of 17 Members completed. A memorandum summarizing the results is available on the SCWP website.

The Committee previously discussed the need for prioritizing and reserving funds for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) requests. Because reserving funds for O&M could limit their ability to fund future projects, the WASC would prefer to be flexible and determine funding on a case-by-case basis.

Watershed Coordinator Grace Kast suggested the Committee discuss the minimum funding match, and the request that a good faith effort be made to identify funding matches before submitting requests to the WASC.

Member Kelli Pickler asked what would happen if the WASC did not grant O&M funds to an infrastructure project constructed with SCWP funds and the applicable cities did not take ownership of the project to fund its O&M - specifically, is the WASC responsible for either funding O&M in perpetuity or identifying O&M funding sources prior to awarding construction funds? Member Noya Wang stressed the importance of identifying a responsible party for O&M going forward and suggested that this could be included in the project evaluation criteria.

The Committee discussed compiling a list of lessons learned from funded SCWP projects. Member Kelli Pickler mentioned that Richard Watson and Craftwater funded a study for post-construction analysis of projects in place at the Los Cerritos Channel site and can present findings from the study to WASCs in the future. Chair Melissa You added that lessons about O&M funding could also come from projects built before Measure W was passed.

Committee Members expressed satisfaction with the document, particularly that the language is not binding.

The Committee will vote to approve the document at their next meeting, pending updates resulting from today's discussion about O&M language.

## **8) Public Comment Period**

Richard Watson (Richard Watson & Associates) expressed support for the WASC's discussion on prioritizing O&M funding, noting that the SCWP ordinance includes a focus on O&M funding in recognition that such funds are not available through state grants.

## **9) Voting Items**

### **a) Reselection of the Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Coordinator for the next term.**

Member Dan Knapp made a motion to reselect the current Watershed Coordinator. Member Nancy Villasenor seconded the motion. The Committee voted to reselect OhanaVets Inc. as Watershed Coordinator with 14 members in favor and 0 opposed (approved, see Vote Tracker sheet).

### **b) Formalize Lower San Gabriel River Watershed funding priorities (as needed).**

Committee Members discussed the phrasing of language in the document about O&M funding. Watershed Coordinator Grace Kast will finalize the phrasing and the Committee will vote to approve the document at their next meeting.

## **10) Items for Next Agenda**

The next meeting of the LSGR WASC is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 14, 2023. See the SCWP website for meeting details, including timing and length. Items on the agenda include:

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- a) Findings to Continue Teleconference Meetings under Assembly Bill 361 (as needed).
- b) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY21-22 Q3 and Q4.

Chair Melissa You requested the addition of the following item to the next meeting agenda:

- c) Formalize Lower San Gabriel River Watershed funding priorities (as needed).

The District will distribute a preliminary project ranking survey to WASC members ahead of the next meeting.

Peer reviews of submitted Scientific Studies and an updated SIP tool will soon be available to support future deliberations.

## **11) Adjournment**

Chair Melissa You thanked Committee members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

**LSGR WASC - January 10, 2023**

		Quorum Present				Voting Items (see meeting minutes for additional details)		
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve Meeting Minutes for December 13,2022	Reselect OhanaVets as Watershed Coordinator for LSGR WASC	
Agency	FCD	Marcela Benavides-Aguilar	x	Ramy Gindi		y	y	
Agency	Central Basin	Alex Rojas		Madeline Chen				
Agency	Water Replentishment District	Rob Beste		Asha Kreiling	x	y	y	
Agency	Sanitation Districts	Kristen Ruffell		Alysha Chan	x	a	y	
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation	Stephen Scott		Nancy Villaseñor	x	y	y	
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Dan Knapp	x	Irene Lopez-Muro		y	y	
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Adam Galia		Noya Wang	x	y	y	
Community Stakeholder	Rivers Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Sally Gee	x	a	y	
Community Stakeholder	Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment	Gabrielle Weeks						
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Lisa Ann Rapp						
Municipal	Bellflower	Bernie Iniguez	x	Len Gorecki		y	y	
Municipal	Cerritos	Mike O'Grady	x	Sergio Huizar		y	y	
Municipal	Downey	Dan Mueller	x			y	y	
Municipal	Lakewood	Kelli Pickler	x	Konya Vivanti		y	y	
Municipal	Long Beach	Melissa You	x	Wataru Kumagi		y	y	
Municipal	Unincorporated	Fernando Villaluna		Joseph Venzon	x	a	y	
Municipal	Whittier	Vicki Smith	x	Kyle Cason		y	y	
Non-Voting	Watershed Coordinator	Kekoa Anderson	x	Grace Kast	x			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yay (Y)	11	14	0
Total Voting Members Present		14			Nay (N)	0	0	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	3	0	0
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	14	14	0
Municipal		7				Approved	Approved	Not Approved

Attendance  
LSGR WASC - January 10, 2023

Aimee Zhao	Marcela Benavides (LACFCD)
Anna Philipp	Mark Hall GLAmosquito
Aric Martinez	Mark Stowell City of La Mirada
Asha Kreiling	Mark Rounds
Austine Racelis	Melissa You
Bernie Iniguez	Merrill Taylor
Brian Spindor	Michelle Kim
Cas, CWH	Mike O'Grady
Cecilia Salazar	Nancy Villasenor
Dan Mueller	Noya Wang
Dan Knapp	Randall Berry
Donna Tran	Richard Watson
Grace Kast	Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination)
Jenny Chau	Sally Gee
Joe Venzon - LA County	Sarai Jimenez
John Hunter	Tori Klug
Kala Anderson	Traci Gleason
Kekoa Anderson	Veronica Carrillo
Kelli Pickler	Vicki Smith
Larry Tran	Wataru Kumagai