

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



Tuesday, February 14, 2023
10:00am – 1:00 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)
*Madeline Chen, Central Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)
Dan Knapp, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)
*Noya Wang, Resident (Community)
*Sally Gee, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)
Gabrielle Weeks, Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment (Community)
Lisa Ann Rapp, Resident (Community), Vice-Chair
Mike O'Grady, Cerritos (Municipal)
Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal)
Melissa You, Long Beach (Municipal), Chair
Bernie Iniguez, Bellflower (Municipal)
*Konya Vivanti, Lakewood (Municipal)
Vicki Smith, Whittier (Municipal)
Fernando Villaluna, Unincorporated areas of LA County (Municipal)
Kekoa Anderson, OhanaVets (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

All members were present.
See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees.

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. Los Angeles County Flood Control District (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 January 10, 2023

District staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Dan Mueller motioned to approve the meeting minutes, which was seconded by Member Sally Gee. The Committee voted to approve the January 10, 2023 meeting minutes, with 13 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 January 10, 2023, the Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill (AB) 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it.

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- On October 17, 2022, Governor Newsom announced that the State of Emergency would be lifted February 28, 2023. Starting March 1, WASC meetings may not be conducted under the teleconferencing requirements of AB 361. Rather, they will need to meet the requirements of the Brown Act and/or AB 2449. The City of Lakewood's Executive Boardroom has been reserved for future in-person meetings through June 2023. The District is exploring the option of including a hybrid element. District staff provided additional detail about Brown Act and AB 2449 teleconferencing requirements.
 - Requirements under the Brown Act:
 - The physical location of each committee member participating via teleconference must be posted and included on the meeting agenda
 - Meeting agendas should be posted at all teleconferencing locations
 - Each teleconference location should be accessible to the public
 - Members of the public may address the committee at each teleconference location
 - Requirements under AB 2449:
 - A quorum of the Committee must participate in a single physical location
 - Committee members must submit a disclosure of "just cause" for not participating in person and they may only do so twice per calendar year
 - Committee member participating remotely must have audio and video connected
 - Members may not participate remotely for any reason for more than three consecutive months or for 20 percent of the regular meetings within a calendar year
- The District released the Regional Program Funding Process Handbook (Handbook) which provides consolidated information on existing Regional Program requirements and guidance. The Handbook is available under the Regional Program Call for Projects tab on the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) website.
- An email was sent out to the project developers for Fund Transfer Agreements and Addendums for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) fund disbursements.
- Quarterly Reports for FY22-23 Quarter 2 (Q2) covering October to December of 2022 activities are due February 15, 2023 for Round 1 and Round 2 projects. Regional Program Quarterly Reports must be completed even if there was no activity done on the project or if the Transfer Agreements have not yet been executed. To view Quarterly Reports, visit the [SCW Project Dashboard](#), select a project, then select Project Reports.
- The District has started to execute Round 3 Transfer Agreements and Addendums and distribute funds to new and continuing projects. Details have been sent to the project developers.
- WASC Community Stakeholder seats are up for reappointment August 2023, under Article 4, Section 5 of the WASC operating guidelines. Individuals interested in serving the 3-year term as a Community Stakeholder should submit the Interest to Serve Form, available [here](#).
- Municipal Annual Plans are due on April 1, 2023.
- It is important for the WASC and the work of the Regional Program to remain transparent and fair. These principles are built into the SCWP and are represented by the ex parte disclosure item on each agenda. WASC members whose job connects them to specific projects should ask colleagues or consultants to attend WASC meetings to share about, or advocate for those projects during SIP deliberations and should avoid using their position as WASC members to advocate for projects from their home entities.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Kekoa Anderson and Grace Kast provided an overview of annual funding allocations and recent or upcoming activities, which include groundbreaking on the Adventure Park Multi-Benefit Stormwater Capture project on February 22, 2023 and various educational events. The Watershed

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Coordinators distribute a monthly newsletter and are working to grow the contact list of community stakeholders. See slides available on the SCWP website.

Watershed Coordinator Anderson shared a table and map of the projects funded and under consideration within the LSGR Watershed Area. Fact sheets are available for each. Infrastructure Program (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

Scientific Studies (SS) under consideration include:

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

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.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures.

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

6. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, uploaded them to the SCWP website, and displayed them on-screen. Call-in users were also invited to provide public comment. No comment cards were received before the meeting.

There were no public comments.

7. Discussion

a. Gateway Area Pathfinding (GAP) Analysis Phase 1 Final Tech Memo (Memo) Presentation

Brad Wardynski (Craftwater Engineering) shared a presentation of the GAP Analysis Phase 1 Final Tech Memo on behalf of the Gateway Water Management Authority. The Memo is available on the SCWP LSGR WASC website.

The Memo presents a library of projects in the Watershed Area and demonstrates their interconnections and related benefits. The analysis demonstrates that the amount of runoff and pollutant loads captured in the Watershed Area have doubled through the interventions of projects funded through SCWP. Next, Wardynski presented the Working GAP Project Dashboard and how to use it. The Dashboard is hosted by Gateway Water at www.gatewaywater.org.

Upon request for clarification, Wardynski explained that the Watershed Management Modeling System model was used for the Memo.

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b. Project Updates for Previously Funded Projects

i) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY21-22 Q3 and Q4

The Committee reviewed projects from Rounds 1 and 2 that have reported changes in their FY21-22 Q3 or Q4 quarterly reports.

Joe Venzon (LA County) explained that although the quarterly reports show that no funds have been spent for the quarter shown, recent progress has been made on the Adventure Park Multi Benefit Stormwater Capture Project, which is breaking ground on Wednesday, February 22, 2023.

Oliver Galang (Craftwater Engineering) shared updates about the El Dorado Regional Project. The schedule has changed due to the discovery of a sensitive species found. The number of basins proposed has changed, though the same benefits will be achieved. In addition, the project will construct vegetative ponds rather than wetlands and achieve the same level of performance.

The WASC inquired about why the Hermosillo Park project has not spent funds yet and isn't included on the Active Phase List. The City of Norwalk has experienced staff changes which they intend to fill and have not yet contracted a consultant to create the design. The WASC discussed what they can or should do in circumstances where the project proponent is having difficulty demonstrating progress on projects. Chair You stated that the public expects funds to be used and project delays may affect future allocations.

The District reminded the WASC that at last year's SIP deliberations, funds for Hermosillo Park were pushed two years back. While the Transfer Agreement for \$2.24M was executed Q1 or Q2 of last year, Norwalk has five years from the disbursement to spend the monies to be in compliance with Lapsed Funds procedures as outlined in the Transfer Agreement.

Vice-Chair Rapp provided an update on the Mayfair Park project. The City of Lakewood has experienced significant delays with start-up and commissioning due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated supply chain issues. Construction is already complete. The City and its consultants are working towards having a schedule for startup, commissioning, and training of the staff developed by the end of February. They plan to commence startup in March, at which point operations and maintenance (O&M) funds would start to be used.

ii) Project Updates and Budget Confirmation for Projects with Continued Funding Requests

The WASC clarified details about Hermosillo Park's funding projections. The District confirmed that funds were deferred for two years and may receive funds next year if the WASC includes the project in their SIP recommendation. Vice-Chair Rapp stated that unless a consultant is hired and substantial progress (60-70%) is made on the design, Hermosillo Park should not receive more funding. Additionally, their costs would need to be adjusted as a result of the time delay. Michelle Kim (John L. Hunter and Associates) reported that the City of Norwalk intends to release a request for proposals for design this month. Vice-Chair Rapp requested staff from Norwalk attend a WASC meeting in person to provide an update.

The District addressed a request for clarification about the future FY projections in the SIP tool. Those funds have not been committed, though they are earmarked.

c. Formalize Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area Funding Priorities

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Watershed Coordinator Kast addressed the comments which surfaced in the discussion of the Funding Priorities document during the previous WASC meeting. The language regarding reserving funds for O&M and funding caps was updated as follows:

- “If a project intends to utilize SCWP regional funding to support ongoing O&M, the SCWP construction funding application should identify the intent and need prior to construction award. This will allow for the project’s O&M funding needs to be prioritized and considered for future O&M funds. Additional funds may also be reserved annually for non-SCWP funded construction projects.”
- “Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis.”

The revised document can now serve as a point of reference for WASC members’ decision making moving forward and to inform future project applicants.

d. Summary of Scientific Studies from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)

Chair You presented the summary of scientific studies prepared by the SCCWRP. There were no questions from the Committee.

e. Lower San Gabriel River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan (SCW Portal & Summary of Resources)

District staff explained how to utilize and analyze the SIP tool and clarified that the total funding available including rollover for this year is \$26.6M. Allocations from previous SIPs for this year amount to \$9.2M. District staff shared that it is recommended to cap percent allocations at 80%.

Member Marcela Benavides asked whether the La Mirada Creek Park project can demonstrate reduction of contaminants. Mark Stowell (City of La Mirada) shared information about water infiltration percentages that are available but did not have values about pollutant reduction on-hand.

The WASC discussed the construction and fund disbursement timeline for the La Mirada Creek Park project. The project has achieved 90% design and construction is anticipated to start in July 2024. Funds awarded for FY23-24 would likely be available between January and March of 2024, so they may want to include construction funds in their FY23-24 request and disburse over 2 years. District staff highlighted that under this scenario, they would need to submit CEQA documentation for concurrence by the District prior to fund disbursement.

District staff presented the WASC’s preliminary rankings of all five IP projects that received passing scores from the Scoring Committee. The SS projects were not evaluated in the ranking assessment and were instead reviewed by SCCWRP. 13 out of 17 WASC members responded to the survey and the preliminary rankings are as follows:

1. Progress Park Stormwater Capture Project (44 points)
2. Artesia Park Urban Runoff Capture Project (38)
3. La Mirada Creek Park Project (38)
4. La Habra Heights Stormwater Treatment and Reuse System The Park Hacienda Road (37)
5. Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project (30)

The WASC discussed the scenario for approving all projects and their projected construction costs. The future allocation percentages would also greatly exceed 80% over the next 5 fiscal years. Member Knapp suggested that without match funding, the WASC can’t include all five IP and two SS projects.

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The District updated the SIP tool to show the shifted funds for the La Mirada Creek Park project. Even with this update, the percent allocated was still much higher than 80%, with three of the fiscal years exceeding 100% allocation.

The WASC determined that they were not prepared to evaluate the SS projects and deferred discussion for the next meeting.

Richard Watson (Richard Watson and Associates) provided information about the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, which has been approved by five of the nine WASCs already. If LSGR chooses not to include it in their SIP, the study would still move forward in those Watershed Areas.

The WASC evaluated the scenario for funding all projects except the Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project. The percent allocated was still greatly above 80% (two fiscal years exceeded 100%).

Next, the WASC removed the La Habra Heights Stormwater Treatment and Reuse System The Park Hacienda Road project (herein referred to as the La Habra Heights project) from the scenario which still resulted in future percent allocations in excess of 80% (two fiscal years exceeded 100%).

The WASC reviewed the scenario for removing the La Mirada Creek Park Project (which had tied with the Artesia Park Urban Runoff Capture project in the preliminary rankings) and the SIP tool showed percent allocations close to 80% for all years besides FY26-27, which was 124% allocated.

The WASC then removed the Artesia Park Urban Runoff Capture Project and added the La Mirada Creek Park Project and the results were similar to the previous scenario, with a slightly lower percent allocation for FY26-27 (116%).

Chair You requested that every Committee Member resubmit their rankings and include the SS projects in their evaluation.

Member Benavides requested information about the extent of contaminant reduction for the La Mirada Creek Park and La Habra Heights projects. Christopher Rochfort shared that the La Habra Heights project removes contaminants at the 80-90th percentile for metals and 60-70th percentile for nutrients. Rochfort will forward additional details including the measurement of contaminants reduced in pounds. Rochfort also clarified that construction costs are included in the La Habra Heights project's total budgets. No further additional costs need to be assumed by the WASC in their projections. Vice-Chair Rapp voiced support for keeping the La Mirada Creek Park project since it uses nature-based solutions.

The WASC discussed how it has become more difficult to award funding to new projects because they have already invested in numerous design projects. Member Knapp suggested that projects be required to bring matched or leveraged funds.

District staff reminded project applicants that they should not send supplemental information about the projects under consideration directly to members of the WASC. In order for the work of the Regional Program to remain transparent and fair, the applications are to be evaluated as-is. Applicants may send supplemental information to District staff who will then determine whether it is acceptable to distribute to the WASC.

8. Public Comment Period

Watson shared a comment about the WASC's commitment to funding future construction costs as shown in the SIP tool. The Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project only planned to ask

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for Design and Phase 1 funding and would delay Phase 2. Additionally, the Progress Park Stormwater Capture Project does not intend to request construction funds through SCWP (instead, they will fund construction through matching funds).

Rochfort also shared a comment regarding construction costs assumed in the SIP tool. The La Habra Heights project includes construction costs in its request.

9. Voting Items

a. Formalize Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area funding priorities (as needed).

Vice-Chair Rapp made a motion to formalize the funding priorities document, seconded by Member Wang. The Committee voted to approve the Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area Steering Committee Funding Priorities document with, with 16 members in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

b. Lower San Gabriel River Project Selection for Inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan (as needed).

This voting item was postponed to the next meeting.

10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting of the LSGR WASC is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 28, 2023 from 10:00AM – 1:00PM. See the SCWP website for meeting details, including timing and length. Items on the agenda include:

- a. Findings to Continue Teleconference Meetings under Assembly Bill 361 (as needed).
- b. Lower San Gabriel River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan.

11. Adjournment

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

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| | | Quorum Present | | | | Voting Items (see meeting minutes for additional details) | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---|---|---|--------------|
| Member Type | Position | Member | Voting/ Present? | Alternate | Voting/ Present? | Approve the January 10, 2023 LSGR WASC Meeting Minutes | Approve the Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area Funding Priorities | Approve Scenario "x" as the final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the LSGR Watershed Area, including OhanaVets as Watershed Coordinator and advance to the ROC for review. | |
| Agency | FCD | Marcela Benavides-Aguilar | x | Ramy Gindi | | y | y | | |
| Agency | Central Basin | Alex Rojas | | Madeline Chen | x | y | y | | |
| Agency | Water Replenishment District | Rob Beste | | Asha Kreiling | x | y | y | | |
| Agency | Sanitation Districts | Kristen Ruffell | | Alysha Chan | x | y | 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 | a | y | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Rivers Mountains Conservancy | Mark Stanley | | Sally Gee | x | y | y | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment | Gabrielle Weeks | x | | | | | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Resident | Lisa Ann Rapp | x | | | a | y | | |
| 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 | | Konya Vivanti | x | a | y | | |
| Municipal | Long Beach | Melissa You | x | Wataru Kumagai | | y | y | | |
| Municipal | Unincorporated | Fernando Villaluna | x | Joseph Venzon | | y | 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) | 13 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Voting Members Present | | 17 | | | Nay (N) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Agency | | 5 | | | Abstain (A) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Stakeholder | | 5 | | | Total | 16 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| Municipal | | 7 | | | | Approved | Approved | Not Approved | Not Approved |

Attendance

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| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adam Galia | Konya Vivanti |
| Alexander Iglesias LACFCD | Larry Tran |
| Alysha Chan | Lisa Rapp |
| Andrew Kim | Lori Wolfe |
| Anna Philipp | MADELINE CHEN |
| Aric Martinez | Marcela Benavides (LACFCD) |
| Asha Kreiling | Maritza Alvarez |
| Bernie Iniguez | Mark Hall GLAмосquito |
| Brad Wardynski | Mark Stowell |
| Brianna Datti | Melissa You |
| Cecilia Cecilia I Salazar | Merrill Taylor |
| Chad Helmle | Michelle Kim |
| Christopher Rochfort | Mike O'Grady |
| Dan Knapp | Nancy Villasenor |
| Dan Mueller | Natalie Rivera-Estrada |
| Donna Tran | Noya Wang |
| Elizabeth Lambe | Oliver Galang |
| Fernando Villaluna | Richard Watson |
| Gabrielle Weeks | Robert Beste |
| Grace Kast | Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination) |
| Haris Harouny - LACFCD | Sally Gee |
| Jacqueline Mak | Thom Epps |
| Joe Venzon - LA County | Traci Gleason |
| john hunter | Vicki Smith |
| Kekoa Anderson | Wataru Kumagai |
| Kirk Allen | Yisak Kim |