

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



Thursday, October 19, 2023
1:00pm - 3:00pm
Santa Clarita City Hall
23920 Valencia Blvd. Valencia, CA 91355
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Ali Elhassan, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (Agency)
*Rick Viergutz, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency)
Francisco Guerrero, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Jerrid McKenna, City of Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services (Agency)
Mary Johnson, Agua Dulce Town Council (Community)
Sandra Cattell, Sierra Club (Community), Vice-Chair
*Peter Warda, 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)
Oliver Cramer, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
Damon Letz, Santa Clarita (Municipal)
Darin Seegmiller, Santa Clarita (Municipal), Chair
Amanda Begley, TreePeople (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Hunt Braly, Poole & Shaffery (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Darin Seegmiller, Chair of the Santa Clara River (SCR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

The Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District) staff gave a brief WebEx tutorial. 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 August 17, 2023

District staff presented the previous meeting minutes. Member Peter Warda motioned to approve the meeting minutes from August 17, 2023. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Sandra Cattell. The Committee voted to approve the August 17, 2023 meeting minutes, with 14 votes in favor and 2 votes in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Vice-Chair Cattell disclosed a conversation with Chair Seegmiller about the plant palette for Via Princessa project.

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4. Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update, noting:

- The first term for the WASC Community Stakeholder seats ended with the end of the last fiscal year. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) is to appoint WASC Community Stakeholder seats for the next term. Appointments may start by the end of the year.
- On August 8, the Board approved all 9 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) awarding \$130 million in Safe, Clean Water funding for 25 new Infrastructure Program (IP) projects, six new scientific studies (SS), five new Technical Resources Program (TRP) feasibility studies, and twelve renewed contracts for Watershed Coordinators to continue liaising with communities and agencies.
- Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 Q4 Regional Quarterly Reports (April-June) were due on August 15. FY23-24 Q1 (July-September) reports are due November 15. Quarterly reports must still be completed even if there was no activity done on the project or the Transfer Agreement has not been executed for projects included in the FY22-23 SIP.
- The Project Modification Guidelines are finalized. The purpose of this document is to provide more specific guidance to WASCs, applicants, recipients, and other interested stakeholders when modifications to a project, project concept or study are proposed. The deadline to submit the Project Modification Request (PMR) form for the current fiscal year has been extended to November 30. The Project Modification Guidelines can be found in the Adaptive Management section in the Regional Program dropdown of the SCW Program website. The October 23 implementation update newsletter will provide additional supporting information. The District hosted an information session on October 19 about the process and a recording will be available on the SCW Program website.
- The Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) hosted a project briefing to share final updates, results of the study, and next steps. There were two workshop sessions on October 11 at 10:30 am and 5:00 pm for participants to provide feedback.
- Municipal progress/expenditure reports are due December 31 for activities between July 2022 through June 2023.
- Project proponents should make sure the reporting module is up to date, including phases, schedule and bid details for all projects. Additionally, any media events that project proponents may be aware of should be included in the reporting module. Opportunity for attendance should be provided to the District at least 14 days in advance.
- FY23-24 Transfer Agreements/Addendum distribution is set to begin in late October. More information about this process will be provided via email.
- On July 25, the Board approved a motion authored by Supervisor Horvath, "Accelerate Implementation of the SCW Program." The three actions in the motion include 1) watershed planning, 2) simplified application process, 3) resources and staffing for dedicated adaptive management. The report back to the Board is due in 120 days from the motion and is currently being drafted in parallel with the Regional Oversight Committee's (ROC) Biennial Report.
- The ROC shall biennially prepare a SCWP Progress Report for the Board every two years, which includes a summary of the progress of the Regional Program, Municipal Program, and the District Program. The ROC has been meeting to discuss the Biennial Progress Report Draft. The next ROC meetings are on October 26 and December 7, and all Committee Members are invited to attend to provide input. Meeting details can be found on the SCW Program website.
- The [Bids and Schedules](#) page provides information on upcoming bid opportunities and construction schedules provided by SCWP Regional and Municipal Project Developers in the Reporting Module.
- The [Reporting Repository](#) page contains reports from the Regional and Municipal Programs such as Project Applications, Executive Summaries, and Progress Reports (Annual & Quarterly).
- Total Program Tax Collection 2022-23 is available on the SCW website, in the [Estimated Revenues webpage of the SCW Program Website](#).

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- Round 5 Call for projects applications were due on July 31. The District has reviewed all project applications for completeness based on SCWP guidelines. Applications are available on the SCW Program website for review. The Scoring Committee will begin scoring projects on October 23.

5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Amanda Begley shared an update highlighting the role of the Watershed Coordinator team, recent activity, and the project status for all SCR funded projects, including Via Princessa Park and Regional BMP Project, Newhall Park Infiltration, Hasley Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project, Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvement Project, Jake Kuredjian Park Stormwater Improvements Project, and the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. Watershed Coordinator Begley provided an overview of upcoming events. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#) and attached.

Chris Imhoff (TreePeople) presented the SCR mobile educational display and highlighted additions and improvements being incorporated to improve the model. A script associated with the educational display was provided to Committee Members and in-person participants, which can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). TreePeople is seeking feedback on the model updates. A link to a form will be made available for Committee Members and members of the public to submit feedback and ideas.

Vice-Chair Cattell noted that the Santa Clara River has different hydrology than the Los Angeles River, and that most of the water in the SCR watershed infiltrates to the region's two major aquifers. Vice-Chair Cattell suggested making the front part of the educational display transparent so that viewers can see how the water is infiltrated into the aquifers.

Chair Seegmiller praised the efforts to improve the educational display and highlighted SCR's unique hydrology, compared to other areas. Chair Seegmiller suggested the display have a connection to pollution mitigation. Imhoff noted that pollution mitigation is already included in the educational display's script. Watershed Coordinator Begley added that this resource is available for schools and other groups to use and learn from.

6. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, uploaded them to the SCW Program website, and displayed them on-screen. One comment card was submitted by Jacqueline Ayer (Acton Town Council).

Ayer provide public comment in person and expressed appreciation for the WASC's ongoing efforts. Ayer provided a set of hydrology maps related to a WaterTalks project for the Regional Coordination team to scan and return.

7. Discussion Items

a) Technical Resources Program Presentations

i) Bacteria Mitigation - MTD 1643

Presentation by City of Santa Clarita (Oliver Cramer)

Member Oliver Cramer (City of Santa Clarita) gave a presentation about the Bacteria Mitigation- MTD 1643 Project, a TRP project that uses a combination of nature-based solutions to address an ongoing issue with high bacteria levels from the outfall MTD 1643 drainage area. The presentation included an overview of the project objectives, project details, funding request, and schedule. See slides available on the [SCW Program website](#) and attached.

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Upon inquiry, Member Cramer confirmed the project location and cross streets.

Vice-Chair Cattell asked if conversations about reimbursement procedures have been held with Newhall Land and Farming, the owners of the open space areas on private land within the project boundaries. Member Cramer noted that those conversations have not yet occurred. Member Cramer added that analytical studies have been done to try to determine the source of the bacteria contamination. Different biomarkers have been detected, mostly biomarker K-9, which is associated with dog waste.

Vice-Chair Cattell raised concerns about the challenge of getting community members to clean up after their dogs and the financial repercussions it represents for the community. Chair Seegmiller shared about ongoing efforts and campaigns to try to address this issue in Santa Clarita.

Member Mary Johnson asked for specific levels of bacteria detected, including the range, average, and the accepted maximum level. Member Cramer noted that bacteria levels fluctuate based on the specific circumstances and external factors, including weather. Member Cramer will follow-up with data on values detected.

ii) Old Orchard Park – PD 0717 Presentation by City of Santa Clarita (Oliver Cramer)

Member Cramer gave a presentation about the Old Orchard Park – PD 0717 TRP funding request. The project is exploring diverting flow from the concrete storm drain along Lyons Avenue to a subsurface infiltration system underneath Old Orchard Park. Member Cramer highlighted project objectives, project details, including the project location and status, funding request, and schedule. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#) and attached.

Vice-Chair Cattell asked if the bacteria levels would still surpass the acceptable levels if there were no challenges associated with dog waste. Member Cramer said that it is hard to answer that question with certainty as current data identifies dog waste as the major source of the bacteria contamination.

Upon inquiry, Member Cramer noted that there are dog waste bags and trash cans available at multiple locations within the area, and although data on waste bag usage is not available, bacteria levels are being triggered by high levels of bacteria with K-9 DNA markers.

Vice-Chair Cattell noted that the challenges associated with dog waste extend across the entire Newhall community. Member Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel suggested running an educational campaign to explain to the public the impacts that leaving dog waste has on water quality. Member Cramer noted that there are ongoing public outreach efforts on the topic, but it is challenging to find effective outreach strategies.

Member Ali Elhassan asked for details on the efficiency of the suggested methods for treating bacteria. Member Cramer noted that the project is hoping to study different treatment methods to determine the best way to address the bacteria contamination. Member Cramer explained that generally, there would be a pre-treatment system prior to the infiltration system, in which soil acts as a purifier as water flows through, but the details of the design would be determined by the study.

Vice-Chair Cattell reiterated the repercussions that irresponsible dog ownership may have on drinking water aquifers and highlighted that educating the public about the connection between stormwater quality and drinking water in SCR is important. Member Johnson added that it may be worth looking into utilizing SCW Program funding for educational and outreach activities related to this effort.

Member Cramer clarified that the City has collected the most data from the project's two storm drains.

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b) Scientific Studies Program Presentation

i) Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity Presentation by California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Ali Sharbat, PhD, PE and Mehrad Kamalzare, PhD, PE)

Ali Sharbat (Cal Poly Pomona) and Mehrad Kamalzare (Cal Poly Pomona) gave a presentation about a SS with the objective to identify best practices for maintaining stormwater drywell capacity. Sharbat and Kamalzare provided an overview of the study's goals, scope of work, cost and schedule, and funding request. The project is inviting all WASCs to participate. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#) and attached.

Vice-Chair Cattell noted that although it makes sense that each watershed interested in participating is responsible for their corresponding funding, the project costs represent a larger percentage of the total budget available for WASCs with less available funds. Sharbat noted that the team is looking into other funding opportunities, including partnerships with the United States Department of Labor, which may be interested in supporting students participating in the project. Sharbat added that not all watersheds need to approve the project for the study to continue. The project would move forward even if only one WASC decides to fund it.

Committee Members discussed the number of drywells that exist in the area and agreed that there are some on private property, but none have been installed by the City of Santa Clarita or the County.

Sharbat clarified the difference between a drywell and an infiltration basin, noting that an infiltration basin is generally horizontal, whereas a drywell is vertical and occupies less area.

Member Rick Viergutz inquired about the objectives of the study. Sharbat shared that the study is based on the observation that over a few years, drywell capacity seems to reduce significantly, even if the drywell was designed to last for decades. The study is seeking to understand the best maintenance practices to avoid the drop in drywell capacity. Member Jerrid McKenna asked project proponents if the observation of drywell capacity reduction has been quantified. Sharbat shared an example in which drywell capacity decreased by about 30% in three years and mentioned that existing research confirms this observation. Different explanations have been proposed, some related to the formation of pores and soil composition. Sharbat and Kamalzare expressed the desire to study this topic further.

Chair Seegmiller noted that although the City of Santa Clarita has not installed any drywells, it may be a viable BMP for areas in which land is not available to install an infiltration basin.

8. Public Comment Period

No public comment cards were received for this section of the agenda. There were no raised hands or call-in users.

Jacquelyn Ayer commented that this WASC has shown support for infiltration basins over the years, and not drywells. Ayer inquired how the SS could convey information and results relevant to this WASC and the projects the WASC has funded, specifically asking if there is a possibility of focusing on infiltration basins instead of drywells. Ayer also noted that project developers mentioned that the SS will help determine improvements in the design of drywells, which is not a maintenance strategy.

Sharbat noted that factors in design influence maintenance issues that may come up in the future. Sharbat added that if the WASC is more interested in looking at infiltration galleries instead of drywells, the project

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may be tailored to that BMP type. Sharbat added that the SS will have individual funding agreements with each participating WASC, which adds flexibility to adapt the project to specific interests and needs.

Chair Seegmiller clarified that the three presentations shared under agenda item number seven will be discussed at future meetings and considered during the deliberation of SCR's SIP.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2023, 1:00pm – 3:00pm. See the SCW Program website for details. Chair Seegmiller noted that it is possible that the December 21 meeting will be cancelled.

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 - OCTOBER 19, 2023

		Quorum Present				Voting Items (see meeting minutes)
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 8-17-2023 Meeting Minutes
Agency	District	Julian Juarez	x	Jennifer Aborida		y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	Ali Elhassan	x			y
Agency	Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency	Steve Cole		Rick Viergutz	x	a
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Francisco Guerrero	x	Christopher Lapaz		y
Agency	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	Jerrid McKenna	x	Susan Nelson		y
Community Stakeholder	Poole & Shaffery	Hunt Braly				
Community Stakeholder	Agua Dulce Town Council	Mary Johnson	x			y
Community Stakeholder	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	Sandra Cattell**	x	Diane Trautman		y
Community Stakeholder	Evolve Business Strategies	Ivan Volschenk		Peter Warda	x	y
Community Stakeholder	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	x	Heidi Webber		y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x	Allen Ma		y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Jason Gibbs	x	Tyler Pledger		a
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Oliver Cramer	x			y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Damon Letz	x	Dan Duncan		y
Municipal Members	Santa Clarita	Darin Seegmiller*	x			y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	TreePeople, Inc.	Amanda Begley	x	Peter Massey		
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	14
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	2
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	16
Municipal Members		7				Approved

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Ali Elhassan	Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	aelhassan@scvwa.org	P	
Allen Ma	LA County Public Works	ama@dpw.lacounty.gov	A	
Amanda Begley (non-voting)	TreePeople	abegley@treepeople.org	N/A	
Bruce Hamamoto	LA County Public Works	bhamamo@dpw.lacounty.gov	P	
Christopher Lapaz	LA County Sanitation Districts	christopherlapaz@lacsds.org	A	
Damon Letz	Santa Clarita	dletz@santa-clarita.com	P	
Dan Duncan	Santa Clarita	dduncan@santa-clarita.com	A	
Darin Seegmiller	Santa Clarita	dseegmiller@santa-clarita.com	P	
Diane Trautman	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	d.trautman@icloud.com	A	
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	zuliebear@aol.com	P	see public sign in sheet below
Francisco Guerrero	LA County Sanitation Districts	fguerrero@lacsds.org	P	
Heidi Webber	St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation	hwebber50@gmail.com	A	
Hunt Braly	Poole & Shaffery	hbraly@poole-shaffery.com	P	
Ivan Volschenk	Evolve Business Strategies	ivan@evolvebizstrat.com	P	
Jason Gibbs	Santa Clarita	kgibbs@santa-clarita.com	P	

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Jennifer Aborida	FCD	jaborida@dpw.lacounty.gov	A	
Jerrid McKenna	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	jmckenna@santa-clarita.com	P	
Julian Juarez	FCD	jjuarez@dpw.lacounty.gov	P	<i>Julian Juarez</i>
Mary Johnson	Agua Dulce Town Council	maryjohnson767@gmail.com	P	<i>M. Johnson</i>
Oliver Cramer	Santa Clarita	ocramer@santa-clarita.com	P	
Peter Massey (non-voting)	TreePeople	petermassey@treepeople.org	N/A	
Peter Warda	Evolve Business Strategies	ivan@evolvebizstrat.com	A	<i>P. Warda</i>
Rick Viergutz	Santa Clarita Valley GSA	rviergutz@scvwa.org	A	<i>R. Viergutz</i>
Sandra Cattell	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	sumcatt@yahoo.com	P	<i>S. Cattell</i>
Steve Cole	Santa Clarita Valley GSA	scole@scvwa.org	P	
Susan Nelson	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	snelson@santa-clarita.com	A	
Tyler Pledger	Santa Clarita	tpledger@santa-clarita.com	A	

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Mehrad	Kamalzare	CAL Poly Pomona	mkamalzare@cpp.edu
JonPaul	Sarro	LACPW	jsarro@dpw.lacounty.gov
Amanda	Begley	Tree People	abegley@treepeople.org
Chris	Imhoff	Tree People	cimhoff@treepeople.org
Amanda	Nidelian	STANTEC	amanda.nidelian@stantec.com
Francisco	Guerrero	LACSD	fguerrero@lacsd.org
Emily	Huang	stantec	emily.huang@stantec.com
Patricia	Wanda	San Antonio	patricia.wanda@sanantonio.com
Oliver	Cramer	City of Santa Clara	ocramer@santa-clara.ca.gov
Ryanna	Fossum	stantec	
Jerrid	McKenna	City	jmcKenna@santaclarita.gov
Ali	Sharbat	Cal Poly Pomona	sharbat@cpp.edu
Dianne	Hellrigel	St. Francis Dam	zuliaberra@aol.com
Jason	Gibbs	City of Santa Clara	JGibbs@santa-clara.com

*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public

Webex Attendees
Santa Clara River WASC Meeting
October 19, 2023

Andrea Prado Iriarte
Chris Lapaz
Haris Harouny - LACFCD
Jennifer Aborida

Marisela Velasquez
Mark Hall GLAmosquito
Melania Gaboyan - LACFCD
Peter Massey

Presenter
Ryanna Fossum Regional Coordination
Safe Clean Water LA
Santa Clarita City Hall

Uriel Cobian - SCWP
gabriela gonzalez
julian juarez