

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



Thursday, November 16, 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)
Steve Cole, Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Agency)
Francisco Guerrero, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Hunt Braly, Poole & Shaffery (Community)
Mary Johnson, Agua Dulce Town Council (Community)
Sandra Cattell, Sierra Club (Community), Vice-Chair
Ivan Volschenk, Evolve Business Strategies (Community)
Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Santa Clarita Valley Community Hiking Club (Community)
Bruce Hamamoto, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
*Tyler Pledger, 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:

Jerrid McKenna, City of Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services (Agency)

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, provided an overview of the meeting agenda, 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 October 19, 2023

District staff presented the previous meeting minutes. Vice-Chair Sandra Cattell motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 19, 2023. The motion was seconded by Member Ali Elhassan. The Committee voted to approve the October 19, 2023 meeting minutes with 15 votes in favor and 1 votes in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

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

4. Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update, noting:

- The first term for the WASC Community Stakeholder seats are up for reappointment for the next three-year term. 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.
- Project proponents should ensure that the reporting module is up to date, including all phases, schedule and bid details for all projects. Bid/award details are publicly accessible and will allow the public to see estimated construction dates and potential future bid opportunities. 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.
- Fiscal Year (FY) 23-24 Q1 (July-September) reports were 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 Stormwater Investment Plan (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 District hosted an information session on October 19 about the process and the recording, presentation slides, and FAQ are available on the SCW Program website under the Adaptive Management section of the Regional Program dropdown menu.
- FY23-24 Transfer Agreements/Addendum distribution began last month and an email blast was sent out to project developers with instructions on how to use the new Transfer Agreement functionality within the Reporting Module.
- The Scoring Committee began to score Infrastructure Program (IP) applications on October 23. SCR did not receive IP applications in this round.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) shall biennially prepare a SCW Program 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 meeting is on December 7 at 1:00pm, and all Committee Members and members of the public are invited to attend to provide input. Meeting details can be found on the SCW Program website.
- An [instructional video and PDF guide](#) for the Spatial Data Library (SDL) are available on the SCW Program website, under the Regional Program dropdown menu or the teal popup window. Ryanna

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Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) provided additional background, noting that the SDL is a collection of over 40 datasets relevant to the SCW Program. The SDL is meant to help inform project decisions by exploring the interconnected relationships of data such as population density, stormwater channels, and the urban heat island index. Feedback is welcome and should be sent to the District.

5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Amanda Begley shared an update highlighting efforts under each general role of the Watershed Coordinator team, including the roles of project guide, connector, and educator. Watershed Coordinator Begley shared outreach efforts and events during October and November, status updates for projects that have been approved under the SCR SIP, new connections formed in the region, education initiatives, a numerical overview of events and meetings held, as well as people engaged, and upcoming events. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#) and attached.

Member Steve Cole asked whether informational materials used for the small water system outreach program are publicly available. Watershed Coordinator Begley noted that the slides used for the presentation will be shared to District staff to distribute to the WASC.

Member Hunt Braly inquired about the requests for funding for the Invasive Species Removal program. Watershed Coordinator Begley clarified that the requests for funding were submitted through TreePeople, in collaboration with other entities, and that TreePeople's role is to serve as the fund administrator.

Member Braly asked if there are efforts to involve schools within the SCR watershed area in ongoing stormwater tours. Watershed Coordinator Begley noted that outreach efforts are underway and any recommendations of schools in the area are welcomed.

Chair Seegmiller expressed gratitude for Watershed Coordinator Begley's consistent effort in developing educational components.

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. Two public comment cards were submitted.

Member Oliver Cramer (City of Santa Clarita) provided the bacteriological data requested at the last WASC meeting on October 19 during presentations about the Bacteria Mitigation- MTD 1643 Technical Resources Program (TRP) and the Old Orchard Park – PD 0717 Green Street TRP.

Ali Sharbat (Cal Poly Pomona) expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend the WASC meeting on October 19, and to present about the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity Scientific Study (SS). Sharbat noted the project aims to develop guidelines for the operation and maintenance of deep infiltration structures that will contribute to achieving a better return on investment for these infrastructures.

Comment cards are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

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7. Discussion Items

- a) **Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY2022-23 Q3 and Q4**
 - i) **Public Comment Period**

District staff showed the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY 22-23, Quarters 3 and 4. District staff noted that the reporting module is undergoing changes and the quarterly report summary template will be updated once those changes are implemented. District staff highlighted project modifications for the Newhall Park Infiltration Infrastructure Project and the Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project. Project developers were invited to attend the meeting to answer any questions.

Member Braly noted that \$2.8 million has been distributed to Los Angeles County for the implementation of the Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project through funding that was approved three years ago. Member Braly asked about the project timeline and when construction is expected to begin. Alexandro Garcia (LA County Public Works) noted that the project, is currently expected to begin construction in Quarter 2 or Quarter 3 of 2026 and expected to last one year. Based on the new total project cost estimate developed, the project's total cost is anticipated to be \$21 million.

Member Braly asked about the \$1.8 million that has been allocated to the Newhall Park Infiltration Infrastructure Project. Chair Seegmiller commented that those allocated funds have not been spent and are intended to be used for the design of park amenities and the preparation of the project for bid.

Upon inquiry, District staff noted that another project approved in FY22-23, Jake Kuredjian Park Stormwater Improvements Project, is a TRP project, which is why it is not included in the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary Table. District staff provided an update about the project noting that the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) has been assigned. The TAT is comprised of Paradigm Partners Consulting Group and members from Los Angeles County. The goal of the TRP is to develop a feasibility study that can later be used to apply for funding as an IP project.

Chair Seegmiller noted that the Via Princessa Project will be included on a subsequent Quarterly Report. The Via Princessa Project has been approved by the Board, but the transfer agreement has not yet been executed.

- b) **WASC Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) Preview**
 - i) **Public Comment Period**

District staff shared a spreadsheet on-screen that highlighted projects that have been funded by the SCR WASC to date and that are up for consideration for FY24-25. The spreadsheet is a tool that can be used to demonstrate the impact of funding allocations for new and continuing projects on the budget, and to see the percentage of funds that have been allocated to date (cumulatively or per year).

Chair Seegmiller reminded Committee Members that this agenda item is intended to preview the SIP and noted that a vote on the SIP will not occur at this meeting.

Chair Seegmiller commented that the funding for the Watershed Coordinator role can be considered a fixed item. Chair Seegmiller added that the future funds included for the Pico Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project and the Via Princessa Project are discretionary and will ultimately be decided by the WASC. If the projects under consideration are included in the FY24-25 SIP, the WASC will have allocated 88% of the funding for that year, and 95% of the funding cumulatively. District staff noted that the spreadsheet provides estimates for the next five years, up to 2029. Chair Seegmiller highlighted the total available budget that is projected for each year. Although more projects could be submitted, the numbers shown in the table provide an understanding of how existing projects could be funded through 2029.

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Upon request, District staff will share the spreadsheet with Committee Members. District staff additionally noted that the values used are estimates and will continue to be reviewed.

c) Project Modification Requests (PMR) Overview

i) Public Comment Period

District staff shared that the project modification guidelines were released in early October. District staff provided an overview of the PMR Form, which is due on November 30 for this round. District staff added that the PMR forms will streamline the project modification process and will serve as a compilation of all modifications, replacing the current practice of recording project modifications in the quarterly reports. . Once the District reviews the submitted PMR, the form will be shared with the WASC. Any significant changes to the scope, schedule, or budget requested will need to be reviewed and approved by the WASC to ensure that the original intent of the project is still being met. District staff noted that guidelines and a workshop recording are available for reference on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, District staff clarified that the WASC determines whether a modified project should be sent back to the Scoring Committee. Chair Seegmiller reiterated the procedures as explained by the District to confirm understanding. District staff added that it is the WASC's decision to decide whether a project is included in a given SIP. Additionally, the WASC does not need to continue funding a project that has been previously approved. District staff added that it is possible for a project which has requested substantial changes to be rescored and receive a new score below the 60-point threshold, in which case the project would not be approved to return to the WASC. The District understands that projects are bound to change as they continue to be developed and this new process for project modification requests is meant to help accommodate necessary changes.

Vice-Chair Cattell shared concerns about the impact of potential changes to the scoring criteria on continuing projects, noting: 1) the possibility that older projects that were approved using original criteria would not be approved under the new scoring criteria; and 2) even if funds have been allocated to a project for several years, the project is not guaranteed to be funded in following years. District staff noted that those scenarios are possible and that it is the project developer's responsibility to find a solution. District staff added that it is not expected for the WASC to send a project back to the Scoring Committee unless the goal or intent of the project changes. Vice-Chair Cattell added that allowing project developers to request modifications could also enable improvements to projects as they are developed.

District staff clarified that slight modifications will not be sent to the WASC for review. For example, if the project schedule is delayed by a month, the project does not need to be reviewed by the WASC. The District will only send project modification requests that require discussion.

Fossum added that the Project Modifications guidance document is extensive and includes examples and flow charts that can clarify scenarios in which the WASC is expected to get involved.

8. Public Comment Period

No public comment cards were received for this section of the agenda. There were no public comments.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

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10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2024, 1:00pm – 3:00pm. See the SCW Program website for details. Details on the agenda are to be determined.

Member Bruce Hamamoto inquired about the third-party review process of the Scientific Studies (SS). District staff noted that the review process will no longer be completed by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) and the District is in the process of identifying a new third-party reviewer.

District staff concluded that the next meeting is to be confirmed depending on whether the SIP tool is ready and if the SS reviews have been completed.

Upon inquiry, District staff noted that the Outlook calendar invite for the WASC meetings is a recurring invite that is updated to reflect the meeting details for each meeting.

Member Braly expressed concern about the delays in kicking off the Regional Pathogen Reduction SS. Chair Seegmiller will request updates on the status of the study to verify that the project is going in the correct direction and added that it is important to focus on the outcome of the project, which will remain the same. Vice-Chair Cattell noted that other WASCs have had projects reach completion and expressed frustration that that is not the case for this WASC. Chair Seegmiller noted that the City of Santa Clarita is aggressively using funds as fast as possible. Member Hamamoto apologized on behalf of LA County and noted that the County is behind on schedule.

Vice-Chair Cattell shared an idea to develop a program in which different high schools participate in developing solutions for the dog-waste issue. Member Diane Erskine-Hellrigel shared involvement with Canyon County High School and offered to connect Vice-Chair Cattell with the school. Chair Seegmiller expressed support and offered to invest staff resources towards the effort.

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 - NOVEMBER 16, 2023

		Quorum Present				Voting Items (see meeting minutes)
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 10-19-2023 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	x	Rick Viergutz		y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Francisco Guerrero	x	Christopher Lapaz		y
Agency	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	Jerrid McKenna		Susan Nelson		
Community Stakeholder	Poole & Shaffery	Hunt Braly	x			a
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	x	Peter Warda		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		Tyler Pledger	x	y
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)	15
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	1
Community Stakeholder		5			Total	16
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Webex Attendees
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November 16, 2023

Alberto Grajeda - LACPW
Alexandro Garcia
Ali Sharbat
Allen Ma - LA Co Public Works
Andrea Prado Iriarte

Chris Lapaz
Danielle
Haris Harouny - LACFCD
Jackie Stone - LACPW
Jennifer Aborida

Jenny Chau
JonPaul Sarro
Justin Jones - LACFCD
Mark Hall GLAmosquito
Melania Gaboyan - LACFCD

Nehemiah
Peter Massey
Ryanna Fossum Regional Coordination
SCR WASC
Santa Clarita City Hall

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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	
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@pooleshaffery.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>Mary Johnson</i>
Oliver Cramer	Santa Clarita	ocramer@santa-clarita.com	P	<i>Oliver Cramer</i>
Peter Massey (non-voting)	TreePeople	petermassey@treepeople.org	N/A	
Peter Warda	Evolve Business Strategies	ivan@evolvebizstrat.com	A	
Rick Viergutz	Santa Clarita Valley GSA	rviergutz@scvwa.org	A	
Sandra Cattell	Santa Clarita Sierra Club	sumcatt@yahoo.com	P	<i>Sandra Cattell</i>
Steve Cole	Santa Clarita Valley GSA	scole@scvwa.org	P	<i>Steve Cole</i>
Susan Nelson	Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services	snelson@santa-clarita.com	A	
Tyler Pledger	Santa Clarita	tpledger@santa-clarita.com	A	<i>Tyler Pledger</i>

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Ryanna	Fossum	Stantec	
Andrea	Prado - Inarte	Stantec	

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