

# Safe, Clean Water Program

Upper San Gabriel River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



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## Meeting Minutes:

Monday, May 4, 2020

1:30pm-4:30pm

WebEx Meeting

## Attendees:

### Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez (LA County Flood Control District)

Tom Love (Upper San Gabriel District)

Kelly Gardner (Main San Gabriel Basin)

Kristen Ruffell (Sanitation Districts)

Mark Glassock\* (Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation)

Bob Huff (Huff Strategies)

Debbie Enos (Watershed Conservation Authority)

Ed Reyes (Ed P. Reyes & Associates)

Wesley Reutimann\* (Active SGV)

John Beshay (Baldwin Park)

Amanda Hamilton (Bradbury)

Alison Sweet (Glendora)

Joshua Nelson (Industry)

Paul Alva (LA County)

Julie Carver (Pomona)

Lisa O'Brien (La Verne)

### Committee Members Not Present:

Brian Urias (Former USGVMWD Board Member)

\*Committee Member Alternate

See attached WebEx Usage report for the full list of attendees

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The District staff conducted a roll-call of Committee members, and with a majority present, quorum was established. Mr. Alva, the Chair of the Upper San Gabriel River WASC, called the meeting to order.

Mr. Alva welcomed the committee members and the public attendees. Mr. Kim (District) went over the various WebEx housekeeping items for both the Committee members and the general public's participation and discussed the process for public comments.

## 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 24, 2020

The District uploaded a copy of the meeting minutes from the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting on the SCW website. Mr. Alva asked the committee members for comments or revisions. The committee had no comments. Mr. Bob Huff motioned to approve the meeting minutes as presented, with Mr. Joshua Nelson seconding this motion.

**The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from February 24, 2020 (unanimous).**

## 3. Committee Member and District Updates

Mr. Kevin Kim (District) provided a brief update on the Fund Transfer Agreements (FTAs). The public notice period for FTAs ended on April 21<sup>st</sup>. The District received over 50 comment letters and emails. SCW staff is working with County Counsel on addressing comments that were received. The FTAs are expected to go to the Board of Supervisors in June.

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Mr. Kim provided a brief update on the new timeline. All WASCs are encouraged to complete their Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) by late May or Early June. The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) is anticipated to meet in June to review and provide recommendations to the WASCs on their SIPs. Mr. Kim also provided an update on the Watershed Coordinators and that SCWP Staff is working with our contracts division to release the solicitation (Request for Statement of Qualifications) sometime in June.

Mr. Alva asked about the disbursement of Municipal program funds, approval of the Stormwater Investment Plan by the Board of Supervisors, and revenue shortfall from COVID 19. Mr. Kim mentioned that upon execution of the Fund Transfer Agreement between the City, the earliest the municipalities can receive funds will be in August. Adoption of the SIPs by the Board of Supervisors is still tentatively for now but will most likely occur in September or October. Mr. Kim mentioned that there may be potential shortfall from COVID 19 and recommended that the WASCs be conservative when programming their SIP.

Mr. Glassock asked about the timeline for on-boarding Watershed Coordinators and stressed the importance of having Watershed Coordinators push and advocate for projects within Disadvantaged Communities (DAC).

#### **4. Public Comment Period**

The District received two letters from Our Water LA, which will be included in the meeting minutes. Mr. Bryan Matsumoto, who is with Nature4All and part of the Our Water LA coalition, recommended that the WASC only approve projects that are consistent with the goals of the SCW program. In this watershed area, Our Water LA recommends the WASCs to provide funding for the Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-benefit project and no funding for the Regional Bacteria Study. Our Water LA recommends funding for project development phases only to ensure more funds are available next year, and that technical resources program applications include development and implementation of the community engagement plan.

Ms. Laura Santos voiced her support for the Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefit Project and recommended that there be more community engagement opportunities during the implementation phase of the project.

Ms. Anna Morales voiced her support for the Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-benefit Project.

Mr. Bryan Matsumoto (Nature4all) voiced their support for the Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefit Project and stated that the project still lacks community engagement. Mr. Matsumoto emphasized the need for a robust community engagement plan and recommended funding dedicated to this cause.

#### **5. Discussion Items**

##### **a) SIP Programming Guidelines**

Mr. Kim discussed the SIP Programming Guidelines, including a brief discussion on the Infrastructure Program, Technical Resources Program, and methods for funding multi-year projects.

The programming guidelines suggests an 80 percent funding allocation for the first year in the SIP. However, due to the recent COVID pandemic and the uncertainties that the program may encounter in the next few years, the district recommends a lower threshold. The District understands that these funds will provide beneficial in the current economy, so these are circumstances that each Committee will need to take into account when designating a percent funding SIP allocation. If the Committee

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ultimately elects to move forward with a higher allocation near the initial 80 percent recommendation, a written justification will be required to accompany the request percent allocation as it moves forward for approval consideration.

#### **b) Disadvantage Communities Benefit**

Mr. Kim shared a list of Infrastructure Program applications claiming DAC benefits and asked the Committee member for their concurrence/confirmation on projects claiming DAC benefits. Mr. Alva asked the District to call on each project applicant and have them provide justification for claiming DAC benefits.

Encanto Park Stormwater Capture Project and Wingate Park Regional EWMP applicants provided a brief justification on how their projects provide benefits to Disadvantaged Communities and requested that the committee members take those into consideration.

Mr. Antos stated that there are many ways to measure different census boundaries and that there are many ways to categorize benefits to Disadvantaged Communities rather than just looking at proximity to a DAC census boundary.

Mr. Glassock encouraged the WASC committee members to get scientific on their approach when assessing DAC benefits and review applications to ensure that there is a community engagement aspect to DACs.

#### **c) Pre-discussion rankings, new online worksheet, and ranking tool**

Ms. Morita (District) shared and previewed the online ranking worksheet and provided instruction on how to rank projects using this platform. Ms. Morita also discussed how projects will be assigned points based on the aggregate rankings from the committee members.

Mr. Alva recommended an alternative ranking method, where the projects are separated by categories and ranked within the 3 sub-programs. Committee members concurred with this new approach. The District to revise and share the online ranking worksheet with the alternate ranking method.

#### **d) Public Comment Period**

Ms. Belinda Faustinos wanted to emphasize the issue of community engagement. In order the community engagement to be effective, funding will be needed during implementation phase of the projects.

Mr. Richard Watson provided a brief update to the committee on his recent conversation the Regional Board. Mr. Watson mentioned that Santa Clara River WASC approved the Study and requested that the WASC consider the Regional Bacteria Study for funding during this cycle because it will help the region save money in the long run by focusing on mitigating human markers.

#### **e) General discussion of submitted projects, project concepts and scientific studies**

##### **i) Infrastructure Program Applications**

###### **(1) Barnes Park Project**

The Project will feature an underground stormwater vault that would capture and infiltrate runoff from an 81-inch storm drain that collects stormwater from the residential area northeast of Barnes Park.

The Committee did not have any questions for this project.

###### **(2) Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefits Projects**

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The proposed Bassett High School project, located in the City of La Puente, will improve water quality, incorporate LID feature and create new open space to promote healthy lifestyle in a disadvantaged community.

Ms. Iwen Tseng mentioned that recent community outreach was done through SD1 Resource Fair (October 2018) but is always looking for additional partnerships and collaboration with the community. Ms. Tseng mentioned that the County worked with the science club at the school to promote community engagement in 2016. The County will work with the local stakeholders to address the community engagement shortfalls during implementation.

Ms. Enos voiced her support for this project and asked questions about matching funds, shovel readiness of the project and timeline, and the pocket park. The project was phased into two phases in case the project didn't receive matching funds. The project requested for IRWMP Prop 1 funding and funding from the cities and the intent is to build the project in one phase. There is slight delay in the design due to comments received from the school and the pocket park will be part of phase 2.

Mr. Glasscock asked about the size of the pocket park and the timeline for executing an agreement with Bassett Unified. Ms. Tseng stated it is a size of a softball field, around 2 to 3 acres. She also stated that the County will attend their board meeting this month. Mr. Glasscock stated that this pocket park is an important feature for County.

Mr. Nelson asked if the WASCs can change project applicant's funding requests over a longer period, so that the project applicant can borrow funds or apply for other grants. The District stated that it is possible but will need to work with the applicant.

### **(3) Encanto Park Stormwater Capture Project**

The proposed Project consists of a regional multi-benefit stormwater capture facility beneath the parking lot of Encanto Park and capturing storm and urban runoff from the adjacent storm drain. This project was identified for implementation in the RH/SGR revised Watershed Management Plan.

The Committee did not have any questions for this project.

### **(4) Finkbiner Park Multi-Benefit Stormwater Capture Project**

The proposed project consists of a regional multi-benefit stormwater capture facility that will divert stormwater and urban runoff from a local storm drain and from Little Dalton Wash (USGR EWMP Program)

Mr. Alva asked about leverage funding. Ms. Sweet stated that the City of Glendora will use their municipal funds.

### **(5) Garvey Avenue Grade Separation Drainage Improvement Project**

The project proposes a new storm drain and infiltration system (galleries beneath street) to alleviate local flooding. An additional design objective is to improve the water quality of the San Gabriel River by capturing pollutants from low flows and stormwater runoff from rain events.

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Mr. Alva asked about the first-year funding request. Mr. Suher stated that the City would prefer to receive their entire request the first year to expedite the construction of this project because it impacts traffic and nearby businesses.

Mr. Enos asked about public facing and educational signage. Mr. Suher mentioned that they can work with the nearby school to educate students about the project.

Mr. Huff mentioned that it would be beneficial to incorporate education signage and that there is merit in funding the Project this Fiscal Year as the benefits can be realized relatively quickly.

## **(6) Pedley Spreading Grounds**

This project proposes to deepen existing basins at the Pedley Spreading Grounds in order to accommodate 1.3 acre-feet of stormwater from a 45.8-acre drainage area during the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, 24-hour storm.

Mr. Alva asked about capturing additional runoff from the nearby watershed area. Mr. Othmer stated that they would do additional technical analysis to determine that. Capturing additional runoff was not included in the original application.

Mr. Nelson and Mr. Alva asked if the project applicant is willing to absorb the cost to treat additional runoff, since the WASC cannot increase the funding request. Mr. Othmer stated that he will have to defer that question but stated that the analysis will be done to determine the cost-effectiveness of taking additional runoff. Mr. Alva reiterated that if there is a change in project scope or cost, the project will need to be rescored.

Member of the public asked about vector control. Mr. Othmer stated that the existing spreading ground has not caused any vector issues and does not foresee that issue moving forward.

## **(7) Wingate Park Regional EWMP Project**

The proposed project included in in the Upper San Gabriel River EWMP and Upper San Gabriel IRWMP is a regional multi-beneficial project that will capture, treat, and infiltrate urban stormwater from the cities of Covina, Glendora, San Dimas, and surrounding unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

Mr. Alva clarified and confirmed the total funding request. During the first year of the project, the SCW funds will be used to fund design and CEQA. The total SCW request is over \$24 million over 5 years.

## **ii) Technical Resources Program Applications**

### **(1) Brackett Field Stormwater Infiltration**

This project proposes to install an underground infiltration gallery within Brackett Field Municipal Airport in order to infiltrate 15.5 acre-feet of stormwater from a 321-acre drainage area during the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, 24-hour storm.

The Committee did not have any questions for this project.

### **(2) Fairplex Regional Stormwater Project**

This project proposes to install an underground infiltration gallery within the Fairplex's Grandstand Field in order to infiltrate 31 acre-feet of stormwater from a 488-acre drainage area during the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, 24-hour storm.

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Ms. Enos asked about infiltration and impact of water supply to the receiving water. Mr. Othmer stated that water is captured before it reaches the receiving water to capture water compliance credits.

Mr. Othmer mentioned that the Technical Resources Program is needed to assist with community engagement for both Brackett Field and Fairplex Regional Stormwater Projects.

Ms. Ruffell asked his engagement with the County. Mr. Othmer stated that they have been engaged with the County and have received their full support.

### **(3) Glendora Avenue Green Street Feasibility Study Regional Stormwater Project**

Project concept seeks to develop a green street project on Glendora Avenue and nearby streets tributary to little Dalton Wash that will capture and treat stormwater and dry-weather runoff.

The Committee did not have any questions for this project.

### **(4) MacLaren Hall Property Park and Sports Fields Project**

The project concept seeks to develop the MacLaren Hall Property (a former LA County Child Services Facility) into a park and sports fields complex. Water quality improvements could include diverting some of the off-site runoff from the nearby storm drain into the park for infiltration and landscaping improvements to beautify the park and sports field complex.

The Committee did not have any questions for this project.

## **iii) Scientific Studies Program:**

### **(1) Regional Bacterial Study**

Overview of a proposed Regional Scientific Study that will use the latest available technologies and approaches to measure waterborne pathogens across Safe Clean Water Program watersheds to help identify key sources of human health risk, develop cost-effective strategies that better protect human health, and support the regulatory shift needed to accommodate a modernized approach.

Mr. Huff asked about the value of this study for this Watershed Area. Mr. Watson stated that there are three groups that have Bacteria TMDLs, that have not been met. Mr. Huff asked about TMDLs requirement in engineered channels. Mr. Watson stated that there is still a TMDL requirement for engineered channels.

### **(2) San Gabriel Valley Regional Confirmation of Infiltration Rates**

This scientific study proposes to identify field measured infiltration rates across the Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Area by utilizing standard methods of practice in order to optimize project design and prioritize project implementation for water quality enhancement and water supply augmentation.

Ms. Enos asked how this study will be used in conjunction with Technical Resources applications and asked about the purpose of the study. Mr. Othmer mentioned that the purpose of the study is to confirm the regional infiltration rates with better science and will directly benefit both Brackett Field and Fairplex Regional Stormwater Projects and other projects in the future. Mr. Kim stated that the District will conduct a desktop analysis for TRP applicants.

## **6. Voting Items (if time permits):**

### **a) Assign percent allocation target**

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There was not sufficient time to vote on percent allocation target. This will be included or discussed at the next agenda.

## **7. Items for next agenda**

Mr. Alva mentioned that the District will send out an online worksheet for Committee members to complete before the next meeting. Items for next agenda include ranking and SIP programming discussion, and confirm final SIP.

## **8. Adjournment**

Mr. Alva thanked the committee members and public for their time and participation and adjourned the meeting.



## USGR WASC - MAY 4, 2020

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		Quorum Present			Voting Items
Member Type	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Meeting Minutes
Agency	Julian Juarez	X	Carolina Hernandez		Y
Agency	Tom Love	X	Robert O. Tock		Y
Agency	Kelly Gardner	X	Tony Zampello		Y
Agency	Kristen Ruffell	X	Martha Tremblay		Y
Agency	Alina Bokde		Mark Glassock	X	Y
Community Stakeholder	Bob Huff	X			Y
Community Stakeholder	Bryan Urias		Brian Villagomez		
Community Stakeholder	Debbie Enos	X	Jane Tsong		Y
Community Stakeholder	Ed Reyes	X			A
Community Stakeholder	David Diaz		Wesley Reutimann	X	Y
Municipal Members	John Beshay	X	Romany Basilyous		A
Municipal Members	Amanda Hamilton	X	Kevin Kearney		Y
Municipal Members	Alison Sweet	X	Sharon Gallant		Y
Municipal Members	Joshua Nelson	X	John Di Mario		Y
Municipal Members	Paul Alva	X	Fernando Villaluna		Y
Municipal Members	Julie Carver	X	Fabian Aoun		Y
Municipal Members	Lisa O'Brien	X	Shari Garwick		Y
Total Non-Vacant Seats	17			Yay (Y)	14
Total Voting Members Present	16			Nay (N)	0
Agency	5			Abstain (A)	2
Community Stakeholder	4			Total	16
Municipal Members	7				Approved



## Attendees

### USGR WASC - MAY 4, 2020

Stephanie  
Drew Ready  
Vincent Ramos  
MFRARY  
OliverGalang  
Laura Santos  
Ben Shorofsky  
Alison Sweet  
Wesley Reutimann  
Wesley Reutimann  
Yesenia Solorzano  
Kevin Kim - LACFCD  
Mark Glassock  
Kirk Allen  
Ed  
Cameron McCullough (JLHA)  
Sharon Gallant  
Imarshall  
Bryan Matsumoto  
gjaquez  
atachiki  
Ryan Kearns - CWE  
Jud Warren  
Richard Watson  
Blake Whittington  
OliverGalang  
IEC  
Tom Love  
kruffell  
Richard Watson  
Oliver Galang  
Julie Carver  
John Beshay  
Amanda Hamilton  
Julian Juarez  
Hans Tremmel  
Safe Clean Water LA  
Javier Yescas  
Lisa  
Lisa  
Tori  
Deborah Enos  
hal  
Blake

youssef chebabi  
Belinda Faustinos  
Belinda Faustinos  
Belinda V Faustinos  
Melanie Morita-LACFCD  
Iwen Tseng  
Amanda Hamilton  
Jonathan Abelson  
Jonathan Abelson  
Jonathan Abelson  
Elizabeth Ruedas  
Egomez  
John Beshay  
Kelly Gardner  
Laura Santos  
Vincent Ramos  
Julian Juarez  
BobiMac2017  
Fabian Aoun  
Joshua Nelson  
Ryan Kearns - CWE  
Bryan Matsumoto  
Ed Suher, CASC  
Jud Warren  
Deborah Enos  
Hugo Garcia (JLHA)  
Mike Antos (Stantec)  
PALVA  
Bronwyn  
Jonathan Abelson  
Mike Antos (Stantec)  
IEC



DATE: March 10, 2020

TO: WASC Chair & Members  
CC: LAC SCWP Staff

RE: **OurWaterLA Recommendations Concerning the Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plan for 2019-2020**

OurWaterLA (OWLA) is a diverse coalition that has engaged communities, businesses, and organizations across Los Angeles County, building support to reinvent and reinvest in our water future using nature based infrastructure that provides community health benefits, environmental health benefits, and economic benefits. OWLA recommends that funding priority be given to the projects that best exemplify the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP), and that consideration should be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects.

## **FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR STORMWATER PROJECTS**

The Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) must achieve the fourteen programmatic goals clearly laid out in the SCWP Implementation Ordinance (Attachment 1), including the goals to improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements, as well as multiple additional community investments such as prioritization of nature based solutions, community engagement, equity, and quality jobs. Our top issues are shown below in bullet point format and described more robustly in Attachment 1.

### **Nature Based Solutions**

The prioritization of nature based solutions is a specific programmatic goal of the SCWP, and therefore must be reflected in the projects for the SIP.

### **Community Engagement**

A plan for future community outreach is not sufficient for true community engagement in a project. Priority should be given to projects for which local community engagement, designed specifically for the proposed project, has already been initiated.

### **Equity**

One of the most innovative aspects of the SCWP is the written requirements for the equitable distribution of community investments. When assessing the 110% benefit return on investments

for disadvantaged communities, it is important to clarify what type of benefits a project provides, and whether the proposed investments directly benefit the receiving community and verified by local community groups.

### **Quality Jobs**

At a minimum, funding through the SCWP SIP must be contingent upon providing direct community investments, such as high quality local job and training opportunities.

We recommend that all of these programmatic goals be considered when selecting projects for full or partial funding for the 2019-2020 SIP, and that consideration be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects. One opportunity to reserve future funding is to fund projects in phases, to get projects through initial project development, such as project design.

## **FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDIES**

There have also been proposals for funding through the SCWP Scientific Studies Program. The purpose of the Scientific Studies Program is to provide funding for scientific and technical activities, including, but not limited to, scientific studies, technical studies, monitoring, and modeling related to *stormwater and urban runoff capture and pollution reduction*.

OWLA recommends that no funding be allocated for the Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study. It has no hypothesis or clear methodology, and no scientific professionals were involved in the development of the study, as is required under the SCWP Scientific Studies Program when feasible.

This proposal is asking for nearly \$10 million region-wide over the next five years to target a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and to potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study will not support many of the program goals, listed in Attachment 1. Additionally, there are other potential funding sources for this study including the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, which already has a similar study in its 5-year plan. **This nearly \$10 million should be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.**

Further, for those WASCs considering the Wet Weather Zinc study, this proposal is asking for \$500K to potentially weaken water quality objectives, rather than improving our water quality. Funds should instead be spent on multi-benefit stormwater capture projects. The Safe, Clean Water Program is not the right funding source for this study because this study does not support many of the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program or its Scientific Studies Program. There are other potential ways to achieve this type of recalculation, including working with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Thank you all for the considerable time and effort that you have contributed to the implementation of the Safe, Clean Water Program. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with each of you, with the County of Los Angeles, and with our communities to most efficiently and effectively reinvest in our water future. Many of us, including WASC members, recognize that this is a complex process, and we would be remiss not to stop and strongly re-evaluate the context for making these critically important funding recommendations. OWLA core team members want to work with you to be part of the solution for meeting water quality standards by implementing multi-benefit projects. Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

OWLA Core Team

## ATTACHMENT 1

### **Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance: Section 18.04 SCW Program Goals.**

- A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.
- B. Increase drought preparedness by capturing more Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff to store, clean, reuse, and/or recharge groundwater basins.
- C. Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.
- D. Leverage other funding sources to maximize SCW Program Goals.
- E. Invest in infrastructure that provides multiple benefits.
- F. Prioritize Nature-Based Solutions.
- G. Provide a spectrum of project sizes from neighborhood to regional scales.
- H. Encourage innovation and adoption of new technologies and practices.
- I. Invest in independent scientific research.
- J. Provide DAC Benefits, including Regional Program infrastructure investments, that are not less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area.
- K. Provide Regional Program infrastructure funds benefiting each Municipality in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred and ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible.
- L. Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.
- M. Promote green jobs and career pathways.
- N. Ensure ongoing operations and maintenance for Projects.

## Addendum

OWLA has worked in coordination with Los Angeles County staff as well as the communities they serve to create, pass, and implement the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP). In November 2018, Los Angeles County voters elected to pay an additional parcel tax to reinvest in their communities and address stormwater pollution region wide. As you make decisions concerning how to spend that revenue in the Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP), we urge you to consider the commitments made to the taxpayers when the SCWP Implementation Ordinance was adopted in July 2019.

As a region, we have been faced with the challenges of stormwater discharge for decades, and we now have the opportunity to fund the development, operation, and maintenance of new multi-benefit and nature-based stormwater capture projects to address stormwater pollution while also providing additional community investments. We must take advantage of this opportunity to take action against the discharge of polluted stormwater. However, the funding decisions made during this first round of funding allocation can have significant impacts on future funding availability, as new projects will be proposed each year.

### Nature Based Solutions

Projects should take into account local recreational needs, provide local support, and include education on both native plants and indigenous culture. Projects should consider climate adaptation and mitigation in their design and implementation. Project proponents should follow native landscaping best practices to plant native and culturally relevant species - especially engaging local indigenous leadership, as well as scientists and academic partners to ensure that natural space is created and enhanced based on the needs of local ecology, hydrology, geography, geology, etc.

### Community Engagement

There should be different outreach strategies for different communities depending on unique community types and needs, designed and conducted in coordination with community-based organizations with legitimate credibility in the communities they represent. At the very least, the project should have a detailed plan of how community engagement will be sustained throughout project development, implementation, operation, and maintenance.

### Equity

Examples of these investments include clean water, local hire, community engagement, access and safety around the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers and their tributaries, field trips and educational opportunities, culturally relevant recreation, jobs and training, health benefits, habitat restoration, cooling, recreational access improvements, climate resilience and amplified community voice.

## Jobs

One of the many community investments discussed above is local hiring for the equitable distribution of funds and to help foster a sense of community pride and stewardship for local projects. Priority should be given to projects that utilize these kinds of direct community investments.





DATE: April 24, 2020

TO: Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASC), Scoring and Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) Members  
Los Angeles County Safe Clean Water Program Staff  
Los Angeles County Board Public Works Deputies

RE: **OurWaterLA Recommendations - Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plan for 2019-2020**

On March 10, 2020 OurWaterLA (OWLA) submitted a memo for distribution to the WASC committees specifying our recommendations for the Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plans (SIP) under consideration by the WASCs prior to the Safer at Home order. However, only a few of the WASC groups had the opportunity to review the memo. Given our new reality and the conditions under which extremely important decisions will be considered by the WASCs we wish to summarize and update the points we believe are extremely important to ensure that the decision-making process is transparent and results in only the best projects being funded during these unprecedented times.

The following are the major issues that we believe are critically important for your consideration as you deliberate on the recommendations you will be making for this first round of funding recommendations. Given the vast number of issues you will have to consider we are providing “bullet” points but encourage all members to review our more in-depth recommendations provided in the attached March 10, 2020 memo (Attachment 3). OWLA recommends the following:

### **Best Practices for Public Participation**

- Notify the public of all meetings and hearings at least 72 hours in advance. Information on public meeting times, topics, and how public comments will be received should be easy to find on the SCWP website home page and within the meeting agendas (*currently not the case*). This information, as well as any additional accompanying meeting materials, should be translated into at least Spanish and Mandarin.

- Ensure language access needs are met by providing interpretation during public meetings. For remote meetings, use teleconference lines or audio channels.
- Consider participation barriers for members of the public that may not have access to the internet or a computer. Provide adequate telephone options, with interpretation, for virtual meetings and receiving public comments. Having multiple avenues to engage in a given meeting will ensure more robust dialogue and input.
- Use best practices for public comment periods in virtual hearings and meetings. This includes giving ample time for the public to submit comments prior to a meeting through multiple avenues and live during a meeting.
- Provide links to all materials including presentations at least 72 hours prior to each meeting.

### **Project Funding Recommendations**

- Fund projects that best exemplify the goals (Attachment 2) of the SCWP. The best projects out of the 53 that are eligible for funding are listed in Attachment 1.
- No funding for the Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study.
- Fund projects in phases to get projects through initial project development, such as project design in order to preserve funds for future years.
- Require that all Technical Resources allocations include the development and implementation of a Community Engagement Plan.

### **Community Engagement, Equity, Community Investments & DAC Benefits**

- Require that all project funding recommendations include a sustained community engagement element with the assistance of local experienced NGOs from design through construction and operations and maintenance.
- Require that all projects which claim points for Community Investments submit letters from local community groups verifying that the project includes tangible community investments.
- Those projects which claim that jobs will provide direct community investments, such as high quality local job and training opportunities must include documentation as to how they will achieve this goal.

# ATTACHMENT 1

## Projects Recommended for Funding

Project Name	WASC	Notes
MacArthur Lake Rehabilitation Project	Central Santa Monica Bay	<u>SCORE: 70</u> A strong water quality improvement project that uses nature-based solutions and provides DAC benefits and some additional community investment benefits.
Monteith Park and View Park Green Alley Stormwater Improvements Project	Central Santa Monica Bay	<u>SCORE: 80</u> A strong nature-based water quality improvement project that provides DAC benefits and some additional community investment benefits.
Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern	Lower Los Angeles River	<u>SCORE: 76</u> A strong nature-based water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds to provide DAC benefits and some additional community investment benefits.
Hermosillo Park Regional Stormwater Project	Lower San Gabriel River	<u>SCORE: 84</u> A good water quality improvement project which will provide additional community investment benefits.
East Los Angeles Sustainable Median Stormwater Capture Project	Rio Hondo	<u>SCORE: 83</u> A good water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide significant water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.
Hasley Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project	Santa Clara	<u>SCORE: 63</u> A good water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide some additional community investment benefits.
Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project	Upper Los Angeles River	<u>SCORE: 96</u> Strong water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide significant water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.
Strathern North Stormwater Capture Project	Upper Los Angeles River	<u>SCORE: 89</u> Good water quality, nature-based elements and community benefits project that would benefit DAC communities and had support letters from local groups.

Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefit Project	Upper San Gabriel River	<u>SCORE: 92</u> Strong water quality improvement project that leverages funds and uses nature-based solutions to provide some water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.
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## **Attachment 2**

### **Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance: Section 18.04 SCW Program Goals.**

- A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.
- B. Increase drought preparedness by capturing more Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff to store, clean, reuse, and/or recharge groundwater basins.
- C. Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.
- D. Leverage other funding sources to maximize SCW Program Goals.
- E. Invest in infrastructure that provides multiple benefits.
- F. Prioritize Nature-Based Solutions.
- G. Provide a spectrum of project sizes from neighborhood to regional scales.
- H. Encourage innovation and adoption of new technologies and practices.
- I. Invest in independent scientific research.
- J. Provide DAC Benefits, including Regional Program infrastructure investments, that are not less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area.
- K. Provide Regional Program infrastructure funds benefiting each Municipality in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred and ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible.
- L. Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.
- M. Promote green jobs and career pathways.
- N. Ensure ongoing operations and maintenance for Projects.

**Attachment 3**  
**March 10, 2020 Letter from OWLA to WASCs**



DATE: March 10, 2020

TO: WASC Chair & Members  
CC: LAC SCWP Staff

RE: **OurWaterLA Recommendations Concerning the Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plan for 2019-2020**

OurWaterLA (OWLA) is a diverse coalition that has engaged communities, businesses, and organizations across Los Angeles County, building support to reinvent and reinvest in our water future using nature based infrastructure that provides community health benefits, environmental health benefits, and economic benefits. OWLA recommends that funding priority be given to the projects that best exemplify the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP), and that consideration should be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects.

**FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR STORMWATER PROJECTS**

The Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) must achieve the fourteen programmatic goals clearly laid out in the SCWP Implementation Ordinance (Attachment 1), including the goals to improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements, as well as multiple additional community investments such as prioritization of nature based solutions, community engagement, equity, and quality jobs. Our top issues are shown below in bullet point format and described more robustly in Attachment 1.

**Nature Based Solutions**

The prioritization of nature based solutions is a specific programmatic goal of the SCWP, and therefore must be reflected in the projects for the SIP.

**Community Engagement**

A plan for future community outreach is not sufficient for true community engagement in a project. Priority should be given to projects for which local community engagement, designed specifically for the proposed project, has already been initiated.

**Equity**

One of the most innovative aspects of the SCWP is the written requirements for the equitable distribution of community investments. When assessing the 110% benefit return on investments

for disadvantaged communities, it is important to clarify what type of benefits a project provides, and whether the proposed investments directly benefit the receiving community and verified by local community groups.

#### **Quality Jobs**

At a minimum, funding through the SCWP SIP must be contingent upon providing direct community investments, such as high quality local job and training opportunities.

We recommend that all of these programmatic goals be considered when selecting projects for full or partial funding for the 2019-2020 SIP, and that consideration be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects. One opportunity to reserve future funding is to fund projects in phases, to get projects through initial project development, such as project design.

#### **FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDIES**

There have also been proposals for funding through the SCWP Scientific Studies Program. The purpose of the Scientific Studies Program is to provide funding for scientific and technical activities, including, but not limited to, scientific studies, technical studies, monitoring, and modeling related to *stormwater and urban runoff capture and pollution reduction*.

OWLA recommends that no funding be allocated for the Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study. It has no hypothesis or clear methodology, and no scientific professionals were involved in the development of the study, as is required under the SCWP Scientific Studies Program when feasible.

This proposal is asking for nearly \$10 million region-wide over the next five years to target a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and to potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study will not support many of the program goals, listed in Attachment 1. Additionally, there are other potential funding sources for this study including the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, which already has a similar study in its 5-year plan. **This nearly \$10 million should be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.**

Further, for those WASCs considering the Wet Weather Zinc study, this proposal is asking for \$500K to potentially weaken water quality objectives, rather than improving our water quality. Funds should instead be spent on multi-benefit stormwater capture projects. The Safe, Clean Water Program is not the right funding source for this study because this study does not support many of the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program or its Scientific Studies Program. There are other potential ways to achieve this type of recalculation, including working with the State Water Resources Control Board.



Thank you all for the considerable time and effort that you have contributed to the implementation of the Safe, Clean Water Program. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with each of you, with the County of Los Angeles, and with our communities to most efficiently and effectively reinvest in our water future. Many of us, including WASC members, recognize that this is a complex process, and we would be remiss not to stop and strongly re-evaluate the context for making these critically important funding recommendations. OWLA core team members want to work with you to be part of the solution for meeting water quality standards by implementing multi-benefit projects. Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

OWLA Core Team

ATTACHMENT 1

**Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance: Section 18.04 SCW Program Goals.**

- A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.
- B. Increase drought preparedness by capturing more Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff to store, clean, reuse, and/or recharge groundwater basins.
- C. Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.
- D. Leverage other funding sources to maximize SCW Program Goals.
- E. Invest in infrastructure that provides multiple benefits.
- F. Prioritize Nature-Based Solutions.
- G. Provide a spectrum of project sizes from neighborhood to regional scales.
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- I. Invest in independent scientific research.
- J. Provide DAC Benefits, including Regional Program infrastructure investments, that are not less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area.
- K. Provide Regional Program infrastructure funds benefiting each Municipality in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred and ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible.
- L. Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.
- M. Promote green jobs and career pathways.
- N. Ensure ongoing operations and maintenance for Projects.



# Public Comment Form

Name:\* Laura Santos Organization\*: Community, N4A, Mt SAC  
Email\*: laurasantos3454@gmail.com Phone\*: 626 261-9358  
Meeting: Upper SGV River Watershed Committee Date: 5/4/2020

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

\*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to [SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov). All public comments will become part of the official record.

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## Comments

Given southern California's dire need for water, the great amount of rainfall that flow to the ocean, and the county's open space/park assessment findings that Bassett is one of the most park poor communities in the county I very much support the application for Bassett multi benefit storm water capture project. But I would like to request a strong community engagement plan. It has been like pulling teeth to get any information about this project. I've try to follow and have asked many people, include those at the school district, and nobody knows what's going on with it. Regarding prior greening work that was done on campus, I've had both the high school teacher that is the Ecology Club advisor, and the advisor of the Science Club complain that they could not get any info and when they asked questions or tried to get their students engaged, they couldn't get answers. And the community has no idea what is going on.

In addition to everything else, this could be a great learning opportunity for both students and community members. Please approve the application and take the steps necessary to ensure strong community engagement.

I would like to make oral public comment at the meeting.



# Public Comment Form

Name:\* Ana Morales Organization\*: Community  
Email\*: anamorales1231@yahoo.com Phone\*: 626 918-5927, cell 626 664-6600  
Meeting: Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Committee Date: 5/4/2020

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

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## Comments

I would like to make public comment at Monday's meeting



# Public Comment Form

Name:\* Dolores Rivera Organization\*: Community, Bassett USD  
Email\*: dlcastrorivera@gmail.com Phone\*: 626 506-8220  
Meeting: Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Committee Date: 5/4/2020

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## Comments

I would like to make public comment at Monday's meeting



# Public Comment Form

Name:\* Bryan Matsumoto Organization\*: Nature for All  
Email\*: bryan@lanatureforall.org Phone\*: 626-246-8634  
Meeting: USGR 5/4/20 Date: 5/1/2020

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## Comments

Provide equal or greater live public comment at all WASC meetings.

The Lower Los Angeles River WASC successfully employed live public comments in their meeting on 4/28/20. All WASCs should be expected to employ this standard, and use the full features of the video conferencing technology to ensure that "equal or greater" live public comment is provided as at in-person meetings. The District facilitator tracked which participants used the "raise hands" feature, and called on them to speak. This worked well.

SIP project selection

The stormwater investment plan must achieve the fourteen programmatic goals clearly laid out in the Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance including the goals to improve water quality, prioritize nature-based solutions, foster community engagement, ensure the equitable distribution of funds, and provide local quality jobs.

I understand that resources are limited, and that is why I urge you to fund only the best of these projects; ones that truly exemplify the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program. Consider reserving the remainder of your funds for exemplary projects that may be proposed in the next few rounds of funding allocation.

[Page 1]



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## Comments

Analysis/Critique of Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefit Project:

Overall, this is a strong plan which we support. It scored 92 points, and it is a strong water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide some water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.

However we have 2 areas to call out, with recommendations:

For community engagement, it appears no Outreach Plan was conducted, and there is very little documentation of community-based support. The application asks: what outreach was conducted, and the applicant provided a proposed plan. The main project partner is the school district, with letters of support from cities. The one documented community-based organization, Amigos de los Rios, has a greening project on the campus. The presentation does show photos of some student engagement, but - much more significant community outreach is necessary. The WASC and SCWP need to reiterate to applicants that the application states: projects must already demonstrate strong local, community-based support and/or have been developed as part of a partnership with local NGOs/ CBOs. The proposed community outreach plan by the County is basic: mailers, a website and information sessions, with no partnership with CBOs nor a defined stakeholder reach.

For community engagement best practices, we urge the applicant to improve the outreach plan by 1) partnering with local CBOs and the school community to actually engage with residents and students, 2) intentionally incorporate water education into the process, and 3) use multilingual translation. We recommend the outreach budget be increased if needed to do so. [Page 2]





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## Comments

Analysis/Critique of Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefit Project, cont'd:

For community benefits and nature-based solutions, looking at the renderings from the presentation slides, the new public park appears to have two very large unshaded, and unprogrammed hardscape plazas. In fact, the project application states there is no net removed impermeable area by this project. Both the pre- and post-project impervious area are 13 acres. If there is no specific purpose for these large hardscape areas, this may be too much hardscape, and the community may benefit more from increased usable landscape area instead. In addition, the renderings of picnic areas show unshaded picnic tables in full sun as well.

So while the project says it will install 200 new trees, we must emphasize that with this, and all projects, trees must be positioned to provide usable shade benefit for people over walking areas, benches, seating areas, and plazas, and more trees and landscape area need to be considered versus hardscape.

[Page 3]



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## Comments

As part of the Our Water LA Coalition of over 50 organizations, I am also here today to oppose the following program:

The Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution.

- There are serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study.
- This study will not support many of the Safe Clean Water Program goals.
- There are other potential funding sources that would be much more appropriate for a study like this.
- Our funding should be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.

Please see attached Our Water LA coalition letter for further comments and recommendations, dated 4/24/20.

Thank you all for the considerable time and effort that you have contributed to the implementation of the Safe, Clean Water Program, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the stormwater investment plan.



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## Comments

In addition, the following community members may request to speak during public comment; they did not have access to email at this time.

Jazzari Taylor  
Yuriko Ruizesparza  
Diane Velez

Thank you.



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Sam Tayag  
Elizabeth Leonard  
Erica Law  
Linh Diep  
April Tamashiro  
Nora Torres  
Kathryn Melendez  
Maricela Rodriguez  
Leslie Yick

Thank you.

## Comments to Upper San Gabriel River WASC for 5/4/20

*From Nature for All, member of the Our Water Los Angeles Coalition of 50+ organizations.*

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I understand that resources are limited, and that is why I urge you to fund only the best of these projects; ones that truly exemplify the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program. Consider reserving the remainder of your funds for exemplary projects that may be proposed in the next few rounds of funding allocation.

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  - For **community engagement**, it appears *no* Outreach Plan was conducted, and there is very little documentation of *community*-based support. The application asks: what outreach was *conducted*, and the applicant provided a *proposed* plan. The main project partner is the school district, with letters of support from cities. The one documented community-based organization, Amigos de los Rios, has a greening project *on* the campus. The presentation does show photos of some student engagement, but - much more significant *community* outreach is necessary. The WASC and SCWP need to reiterate to applicants that the

application states: projects must already demonstrate strong local, *community-based support* and/or have *been developed as part of a partnership* with local NGOs/ CBOs. The proposed community outreach plan by the County is basic: mailers, a website and information sessions, with no partnership with CBOs nor a defined stakeholder reach. For community engagement best practices, **we urge the applicant to improve the outreach plan by 1) partnering with local CBOs and the school community to actually engage with residents and students, 2) intentionally incorporate water education into the process, and 3) use multilingual translation. We recommend the outreach budget be increased if needed to do so.**

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**Lastly, as part of the Our Water LA Coalition of over 50 organizations, I am also here today to oppose the following program:**

1. The Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution.
  - There are serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study.
  - This study will not support many of the Safe Clean Water Program goals.
  - There are other potential funding sources that would be much more appropriate for a study like this.
  - Our funding should be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.

Please see attached Our Water LA coalition letter for further comments and recommendations, dated 4/24/20.

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