

Safe, Clean Water Program

Upper San Gabriel River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



Meeting Minutes:

Thursday, April 22, 2021

1:00pm - 3:00pm

WebEx Meeting

Attendees

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez (LA County Flood Control District)

Kristen Ruffell (Sanitation Districts)

Sean Woods* (Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation)

Debbie Enos (Watershed Conservation Authority)

Miguel Luna* (Urban Semillas)

David Diaz (Active SGV)

John Beshay (Baldwin Park)

Kevin Kearney* (Bradbury)

Alison Sweet (Glendora)

Joshua Nelson (Industry)

Fernando Villaluna* (LA County)

Julie Carver (Pomona)

Lisa O'Brien (La Verne)

Committee Members Not Present:

Tom Love (Upper San Gabriel District)

Kelly Gardner (Main San Gabriel Basin)

Bob Huff (Huff Strategies)

Bryan Urias (Former USGVMWD Board Member)

*Committee Member Alternate

See attached attendance report for the full list of attendees.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Joshua Nelson, Chair of the Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) WASC, called the meeting to order. He discussed WebEx functions and the public comment process. Kevin Kim (District) conducted roll call, and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from March 25, 2021

The District provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Joshua Nelson asked the committee members for comments or revisions. David Diaz motioned to approve the March 25, 2021 meeting minutes. Joshua Nelson seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes. (Approved, see vote tracking sheet)

3. Committee Member and District Updates

Julie Carver noted the approval of the San Gabriel Valley Regional Confirmation of Infiltration Rates Scientific Study and reached out to Upper San Gabriel Cities to ask if they were interested in joining in the study.

Lisa O'Brien asked if the District could provide information on Regional project returns to each City compared to Regional funds generated by the respective Cities. The District previewed an online heatmap of project funding allocations and funding requested over funds generated by each municipality. The District emphasized the program ordinance calls to track Municipal benefits, while the heatmap tool displayed investments. Several committee members described additional features they would like to see included in Municipal Benefits tool.

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Kevin Kim (District) provided the District update noting: The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) scientific study summary on the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study was distributed today to USGR WASC members and alternates and will be linked in the 5/13 agenda.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 Annual Plans for Fund Transfer Agreements are currently due. The District requested that Municipalities submit their Annual Plans if they have not already done so. Approximately half of Annual Plans have been received. There is a goal to disperse Municipal program funds by August 2021. Regarding the Regional Program, 18 out of 48 agreements have been executed. The reporting module is now live and ready for the submittal of quarterly reports. Quarterly reports are due May 15, 2021. WASCs are encouraged to finalize their Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) by the end of May or early June. The Regional Oversight Committee will meet in June to review the SIPs and give recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

As for Watershed Coordinators (WCs), 6 out of 12 agreements have been executed while the remaining WCs are working with contracting staff. Mike Antos, from Stantec, will continue in the Regional Coordination role.

4. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Lisa O'Brien and Julie Carver had group-centered discussions touching on Projects.

5. Public Comment Period

Nature for All Executive Director Belén Bernal, representing OurWaterLA, presented a letter formally supporting the Zamora Park Renovation Project. See attached comment letter.

Richard Watson acknowledged the complexity of assessing Municipal multi-benefits by Regional projects.

6. Discussion Items:

a) Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Stormwater Investment Plan (SCW Portal & USGR Scoring Rubric).

The District discussed the Ranking Sheet that will be sent to WASC members as well as the SCW SIP Tool.

The WASC discussed that the WASC isn't allocated enough regional funding to approve all submitted projects, even if the WASC approves design-only for projects requesting funding for design and construction.

i) Infrastructure Program (IP)

(1) Zamora Park Renovation Project – City of El Monte

Several Committee members expressed concern for the tributary area of the Zamora Park Project being only in Zamora Park. Allison Sweet recommended the WASC narrow their focus around hot topics such as considering the SIP Tool, partial funding, local or regional benefits, compliance, and disadvantaged communities. Julie Carver suggested asking project proponents if they have reduced Project costs or have additional funding sources. Ed Suher and Edna Robidas of the Zamora Park Renovation Project replied that they have already leveraged committed funds, will not be reducing their funding request, and highlighted the community the project would benefit. Joshua Nelson discussed cost effectiveness per acre foot stored, 24-hour capacity, or event-based inflow for the IP projects.

(2) Lone Hill Park – East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group

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- (3) Washington Park – East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group
- (4) Fairplex – East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group
- (5) Larkin Park – East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group

Jonathan Abelson, project proponent of the Lone Hill Park, Washington Park, Fairplex, and Larkin Park Projects, offered to alter the projects' funding request. He offered to reduce contingencies in the cost estimates, use the partial funding application, shift Projects into future funding rounds, and investigate outside funding sources. Fernando Villaluna responded that the four projects would cost approximately \$100M and asked the Project Proponents if any of the Projects had a priority. Jonathan Abelson responded that there was no consensus at the time within the group on which project to prioritize but he suggested that the Lone Hill Project would be the easiest to implement and would be open to move it forward in phases. David Diaz inquired about community outreach of the Project and if there was a Project Labor Agreement (PLA). The project proponent indicated that the East San Gabriel Valley Management Group has done community outreach through the watershed management program, and the projects have been incorporated into public plans. Public outreach for the Lone Hill Park project has been through the Mayor's office and City Council meetings. Additionally, that there is no PLA but that it would be addressed in the construction documentation. David Diaz suggested organizations that could potentially assist with Workforce Development Agreements, such as Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) and Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. David Diaz commented on a lack of support from the community and lower score.

Joshua Nelson asked if the Fairplex project drained into street areas. Jonathan Abelson indicated that the Fairplex Project drains from 3 Cities and that it is a priority due to the amount of pollutants the tributary area generates. Fernando Villaluna asked if the Project had received a Letter of Support from the Fairplex Association. Jonathan Abelson indicated that the Fairplex Association is yet to provide a Letter of Support and noted that the Fairplex Association does not need County approval to proceed.

- (6) Finkbiner Park Stormwater Capture Project – City of Glendora

Allison Sweet commented that Finkbiner Park Project is only requesting design funds and that additional construction funding opportunities would be explored after design. Joshua Nelson asked if the capacity provided was the storage capacity or treating and discharging capacity. Oliver Galang (Craftwater) responded that it is a storage facility.

ii) Technical Resources Program (TRP)

- (1) Sunset Crossing Park Multi-Benefit Stormwater Project – City of Diamond Bar

Joshua Nelson and the District discussed funding the TRP and planning to fund the project after the Feasibility Study is developed.

Kristen Ruffell asked if there was an alignment with the scope the TRP offers and the scope the Project Proponents are requesting. Debbie Enos supported the TRP to review the feasibility of drainage from the multiple areas listed in presentation. Fabian Aoun, Project Manager for the project, replied that they are looking to incorporate nearby waterways and the natural basin. He also indicated that part of the area is potentially under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and that their team has been in contact. Fabian Aoun noted that the purpose of applying to the TRP would be to have the backing of a Regional Committee as a higher level of analysis would require coordination from multiple jurisdictions. The District noted that the goal of the TRP is to develop feasibility information for the project to apply for the Infrastructure Program.

iii) Scientific Studies (SS)

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(1) Regional Pathogen Reduction Study – Gateway Water Management Authority

David Diaz uplifted that the letter submitted by Our Water LA had concerns about the legitimacy of the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. See attached comment letter.

Kristen Ruffell asked how the WASC could receive such letters in a timely manner for consideration prior to meetings. [The District can post on the website comment letters received at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting. Otherwise, comment letters will be provided with the meeting minutes.] Miguel Luna highlighted that it is not required to send public input prior to meetings.

7. Public Comment

Richard Watson commented on varied project costs per acre-foot stored and noted that Caltrans is considering the possibility of joining the Watershed Groups and contributing matching funds. He also mentioned that Fernando Villaluna was on the call. Richard Watson offered to provide explanation in response to the SCCWRP summary. Lastly, he offered to consider Year 1 partial funding for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study.

8. Items for Next Agenda

Preliminary Ranking Sheet Review and Prepare Draft SIP

9. Adjournment

Joshua Nelson thanked the members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

USGR WASC - March 25, 2021

		Quorum Present				Voting Items (see meeting minutes for additional details)
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Approve Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Julian Juarez	X	Ramy Gindi		Y
Agency	Upper San Gabriel District	Tom Love		Robert O. Tock		
Agency	Main San Gabriel Basin	Kelly Gardner		Tony Zampiello		
Agency	Sanitation Districts	Kristen Ruffell	X	Martha Tremblay		Y
Agency	Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation	Alina Bokde		Sean Woods	X	Y
Community Stakeholder	Huff Strategies	Bob Huff				
Community Stakeholder	Former USGVMWD Board Member	Bryan Urias		Brian Villagomez		
Community Stakeholder	Watershed Conservation Authority	Debbie Enos	X	Jane Tsong		Y
Community Stakeholder	Ed P. Reyes & Associates	Ed Reyes		Miguel Luna	X	A
Community Stakeholder	Active SGV	David Diaz	X	Wesley Reutimann		Y
Municipal Members	Baldwin Park	John Beshay	X	Mark Persico		Y
Municipal Members	Duarte	Amanda Hamilton		Kevin Kearney	X	Y
Municipal Members	Glendora	Alison Sweet	X	Sharon Gallant		Y
Municipal Members	Industry	Joshua Nelson	X	John Di Mario		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Paul Alva		Fernando Villaluna	X	Y
Municipal Members	Pomona	Julie Carver	X	Fabian Aoun		Y
Municipal Members	La Verne	Lisa O'Brien	X	Shari Garwick		Y
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yay (Y)	12
Total Voting Members Present		13			Nay (N)	0
Agency		3			Abstain (A)	1
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	13
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Attendance
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Alex Iglesias - SCWP	John Mendoza
Alexis Holmdal	Jon Abelson
Alfredo Camacho	Jorge Anaya
Algis Marciuska	Joshua Nelson
Alison Sweet	Julian Juarez
Andrea Dell'Apa	Julie Carver
Belen Bernal	Katie M
Belinda Faustinos	Kevin Kim -LACFCD
Brian Villagomez	Kevin Kearney
Carlos Moran	Kirk Allen
Clarasophia Gust	Kristen Ruffell
David Diaz	Lauren Marshall
Debbie enos	Lauro Alvarado
Drew Ready (Council for Watershed Health)	Lisa O'Brien
Ed Othmer	Maritsa DRA Inc.
Ed Suher, CASC	Martin Reyes
Edna Robidas	Megan Murray
Elizabeth Ruedas	Miguel Luna
Enrique Baul	Oliver Galang, Craftwater DVBE
Eva Flore	Richard Watson
Fabian Aoun	Ryan Kearns - CWE
Fernando Villaluna	Sean Woods
guadalupe duran-medina	Sharon Gallant
I EC	Stephanie Tong (LACFCD)
John Beshay	YOUSSEF CHEBABI



Date: April 22, 2021

To: Upper San Gabriel Watershed WASC Committee Members
cc: SCWP Staff, Watershed Coordinator

From: OWLA Core Team (Heal the Bay, LAANE, LA Waterkeeper, Nature for All, NRDC, Pacoima Beautiful, SCOPE, The Nature Conservancy and TreePeople)

RE: Input on Project Prioritization for SCWP SIP

OurWaterLA is a diverse coalition of community leaders and organizations from across Los Angeles County united to create a strong water future for Los Angeles. Our goal is to secure clean, safe, affordable and reliable water for drinking, recreation and commerce now and for the future. We have a deep commitment to ensuring that the trust of the voters in passing this measure is upheld and that projects which achieve the three Safe Clean Water Program objectives of water quality, water supply and community investments are prioritized. Your active participation on this body is appreciated and we are excited about the prospects of working together to achieve a better water future for our region.

As we have identified in previous letters to this body, this program is dynamic, and based on the first round of project reviews, interested stakeholders such as OWLA, committee members and staff recognize the need for improvements to program metrics. With contributions from various stakeholders we are optimistic that future rounds of program funding will yield projects that not only improve water quality and water supply, but also provide community investments that are developed with community participation from concept to implementation and operations. The priorities for OWLA have always been clear, community led project designs using nature based solutions. These types of designs will not only address MS4 permit issues, but will also result in projects that can meet the multiple priorities for our region including addressing climate change, providing healthy recreational opportunities and developing engagement tools so that water issues are more broadly understood and supported by our communities.

As has been reported by staff to the committee, there is currently an assessment being conducted to determine how DAC investments and "benefits" are attributed to DAC communities. The position of OWLA on this issue is very clear; projects must be located in DACs in order to be counted. We are expecting that the reports in development by the SCWP staff working with subject matter experts for Round 4 projects will provide us the metrics necessary to plan for and achieve our DAC investment goals. Until that time, we are urging all WASCs to use only the benchmark of projects located in a DAC to count toward the 110% threshold.

The task before you is to consider the prioritization of projects for funding in this round for the 2021-22 SIP. After careful review of the project submissions, **OWLA strongly recommends** that you approve only those projects that:

- clearly demonstrate they have a strong community engagement plan,
- include a significant community investment element and
- as, applicable, are located in a DAC.

For this WASC the following project is recommended for approval:

Zamora Park - This is an exemplar project proposed by the City of El Monte which has included robust community engagement from the onset with ActiveSGV and design led by the Trust for Public Land.

With respect to the special studies presented to this WASC, our recommendation is as follows:

Regional Pathogen Reduction Study – Gateway Water Management Authority:

We recommend that no funding be allocated for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study as no scientific professionals were involved in the development of the study, which is required under the SCWP Scientific Studies Program when feasible. This proposal targets a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and will potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study will not support many of the program goals. Additionally, there are other potential funding sources for a study like this including the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, which already has a similar study in its 5-year plan.

Funding should instead be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects. Significant work has been done to better understand bacteriological pollution throughout southern California. We would encourage the WASC to invite scientific experts to present at a future WASC meeting about the work that has been done on bacteriological pollution, and what potential next steps should be taken to refine this work through legitimate scientific studies in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to continuing our engagement with this committee and the new watershed coordinators to ensure a better water future for the region.