

Rio Hondo

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, January 18, 2022
1:00pm - 3:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Tom Love, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Agency), Co-Vice Chair
Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster (Agency)
Kristen Ruffell, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency), Chair
Brent Maue, City of Pasadena Public Works (Agency)
Thomas Wong, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Community), Co-Vice Chair
Jill Fosselman, Resident (Community)
Mark Hall, Greater LA County Vector Control District (Community)
Edward Belden, Resident (Community)
Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society (Community)
Vanessa Hevener, Arcadia (Municipal)
Fernando Villaluna, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Gloria Crudgington, Monrovia (Municipal)
Frank Lopez, Monterey Park (Municipal)
James Carlson, Sierra Madre (Municipal)
Richard Watson, RWA Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

David Dolphin, Alhambra (Municipal)
Kris Markarian, Pasadena (Municipal)

See attached attendance sheet for full list of attendees.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The District facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

Kristen Ruffell, Chair of the Rio Hondo WASC, welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. District staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 21, 2021

District Staff provided the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Chair Ruffell delayed the approval of the meeting minutes as the text was indiscernible due to the corrupted PDF file.

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no Committee Member updates.

District Staff provided an update:

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- For the Regional Program, the District has initiated the process of sending Fund Transfer Agreements for projects approved under Round 2 of the Stormwater Investment Plan.
- For the Round 3 Call for Projects, the Rio Hondo WASC received two Infrastructure Program projects, four Scientific Study projects, and zero Technical Resource projects. The Scoring Committee reviewed both Infrastructure Program projects on November 22, 2021. One of the projects (East Los Angeles College Northeast Drainage Area and City of Monterey Park Biofiltration Project) scored below the threshold necessary to be brought to the WASC for consideration.
- Under the Municipal Program, FY 22-23 Annual Plans are due April 1 to the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP). Annual plans are required to receive the Municipal Program Funds.
- The Stormwater Investment Planning (SIP) tool data has been updated for WASC review. Please review the live beta version and provide feedback as needed.
- Claims for the Low-Income Senior-Owned Special Parcel Tax Exemption and General Income-based Income Tax Reduction forms are due May 1, 2022. The [tax exception or reduction forms](#) can be found on the SCWP website.
- On January 11th, 2022, the Board of Supervisors voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing every 30 days and will act to cover all the commissions and committees under their authority.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

a) Watershed Coordinator Quarterly Report, September 26th, 2021 – December 25th, 2021

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson provided a presentation summarizing the latest Quarterly Report (refer to the Watershed Coordinator Update and Quarterly Report).

Member Mark Hall asked for more information about the turnout generated at the outreach events. Watershed Coordinator Watson replied that turnout has not been great so far, which is why they will investigate how other Watershed Coordinators have achieved higher turnout. Events with Nature For All have not had high turnout, but the Watershed Coordinators have had insightful interactions with the public members who have turned out. Watershed Coordinator Watson noted that they will be working with other Watershed Coordinators and hope to attract larger audiences at outreach events in the 3rd and 4th quarters. Member Hall noted that the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District has also faced similar issues with public events.

Member Daniel Rossman asked whether there was any collaboration or coordination with other funding sources. Watershed Coordinator Watson reported that Los Angeles County's Measure A (of "WHAM") will be explored more, since community groups have expressed interested in greening shared spaces and there are connections between SCWP and Measure A.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

6. Public Comment Period

No public comments.

7. Presentation and Discussion Items:

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a) Presentations

i. **WaterTalks - Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program (DACIP)**

Presentation by Ariel Lew Ai Le Whitson (awhitson@treepeople.org), Director of Education and Community, TreePeople. Update on the WaterTalks program and the nexus with SCWP (refer to Resources). Whitson provided a land acknowledgement and a resource for communities to identify native lands (<https://native-land.ca/>).

Mike Antos (Stantec) noted that the WaterTalks program and tools developed by DACIP are available as resources for the WASC to identify community needs and goals and their relation to the projects that come through SCWP.

Watershed Coordinator Watson asked when the Needs Assessment results will be available. Whitson responded that the Needs Assessment results will be completed by the end of next month; the dashboard is available now.

Watershed Coordinator Watson asked if the materials will be translated into other languages. Whitson responded that in addition to Spanish, the survey was translated into Chinese and Farsi; the materials can be translated into other languages with the arrangement of a translator.

Member Thomas Wong echoed Watershed Coordinator Watson's comments about translating the materials into other languages and proposed inviting Whitson back to the WASC to share the results of the Needs Assessment. Chair Ruffell asked District Staff to arrange the meeting with TreePeople.

b) Discussion Items

i. **Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary**

Quarter 3 (January – March 2021) and Quarter 4 (April – June 2021)

District Staff presented a Microsoft Excel summary table of the Regional Program Quarterly Reports for Round 1 Projects in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. Project applicants that denoted a modification concern or delay were invited to contribute to the discussion. District staff provided an example of a common issue where the District cannot execute Transfer Agreements or disperse Program Funds for CEQA activities (i.e., construction). The process in turn is halted until the CEQA is approved. Full reports are available on the SIP Tool.

Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project (Infrastructure Project)

Member Julian Juarez noted that slight modifications to the plan's nature-based solutions have been made. The project proponents removed the bioswales and replaced them with a pre-filter system (hydrodynamic CDS). Tule Pond will still be soft bottom and the 85th percentile storm will be captured and treated. There were some delays in finalizing the design, but the design team is now proceeding with 60% designs.

Chair Ruffell requested clarification about the activity concern. Member Juarez added that the project team has received the notice to proceed with the 60% designs.

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Chair Ruffell asked the District what level of changes that would trigger an impact on the project's funding. District Staff said that is up to the WASC's discretion and the District has no legal recourse, as long as the project continues to meet the transfer agreements.

Member Hall asked whether the pre-treatment devices will be from the State Water Board's list of full trash capture devices. (This list compiles devices that allow for proper inspection and treatment.) Member Juarez responded that the design team will check that the devices are on the State Water Board's list. Watershed Coordinator Watson noted that the State Board may have permitted the use of the Los Angeles Regional Water Board's existing list of devices. Member Hall noted the Regional Board List may need to be verified and requested the project team to check that the devices are on the State Water Board's list. The Project Applicant later clarified with the Design Team and confirmed that the hydrodynamic separators (Aqua-Swirl Stormwater Treatment System) that will be installed for the Project is Board certified and since the filter media (AquaShield's Aqua Filter) is an added benefit to the process, it will not require any additional approval from the Water Board

Staff will coordinate with Member Juarez to responded to questions regarding their quarterly report.

District Staff referred back to Chair Ruffell's question regarding the activity concerns for the Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project and noted that the concerns were due to the delay of the 60% plans and the delay in receiving project partner comments from the City of Arcadia and DPR, which are required prior to moving forward with the project design concept report.

District Staff referred back to Chair Ruffell's question regarding changes affecting project funding and quoted the SCWP Ordinance – the WASC shall review the Infrastructure Program project developers' quarterly and expenditure reports and annual summaries to evaluate whether the schedules, budgets, scopes, and expected benefits are significantly changed and remain consistent with SCWP goals. Programs and projects that are over budget, behind schedule, or demonstrate reduced or revised scopes or benefits may be adjusted or removed from future SIPs.

Load Reduction Strategy (LRS) Adaptation to Address the LA River Bacteria TMDL for the ULAR Watershed Management Group (Scientific Study)

District Staff clarified that the LRS Adaptive plan to the Regional Board was pushed to August. Watershed Coordinator Watson asked whether there could be verification as to whether the plan was submitted. Chair Ruffell asked whether the Adaptive Plan would be of concern to the WASC committee. Chair Ruffell asked District to invite the project proponents of the two scientific studies (Load Reduction Strategy (LRS) Adaptation to Address the LA River Bacteria TMDL for the ULAR Watershed Management Group and preSIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration) to speak on the quarterly reports and to agendize the discussion for the scientific studies at the next WASC meeting.

East Los Angeles Sustainable Median Stormwater Capture Project (Infrastructure Project)

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Watershed Coordinator Watson had a conversation with TJ Moon (LA County Public Works) about the project, who said it was completed in December. Moon will be touring the completed project with the Upper Los Angeles River Enhanced Watershed Management Plan (ULAR EWMP) group.

Member Gloria Crudgington echoed that more information is needed for the WASC to confirm whether the project proponents will encounter additional problems as a result of changes or whether they can accomplish what they said they will.

Chair Ruffell proposed moving to the public comment period, to open the regional program updates discussion to public members.

Kevin Chang (LA County) presented an update on the East Los Angeles Sustainable Median Stormwater Capture Project. LACPW issued a notice of substantial completion before the Christmas holiday, however, the project still needs to touch up on a vault that settled by approximately an inch. There are no scope changes and the project is ahead of schedule. Chang offered to schedule a tour of the project with the WASC.

8. Public Comment Period

No public comments.

9. Voting Items

No voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, February 15, 2022, from 1:00 – 3:00 PM.

- a) Rio Hondo (RH) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Stormwater Investment Plan (SCW Portal)

District staff discussed the timeline and process for developing the SIP. Presentations for the Rio Hondo WASC are complete, so the WASC will begin developing the SIP for the new year. District staff requested WASC members review the SIP tool, portal, dashboard, and digital library created by Stantec. In previous SCWP rounds, the WASC conducted a preliminary ranking of projects and used that exercise as a discussion tool. The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) scientific study reviews are expected in February or March. The results from the study will be reviewed as an agenda item in future meetings. Deliberations on any new and continuing projects will need to be added to a future meeting agenda. The WASC will discuss and agree on the scenarios to use in the SIP and vote to approve and send the SIP to the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC). The ROC will review the SIP and provide any comments. The WASC will review those comments and return the SIP to the ROC, which will vote to approve and send to the Board of Supervisors. Approval from the Board is expected by the end of July.

District Staff asked whether the WASC would like to either rank the projects prior to the discussion or hold a preliminary discussion prior to ranking them.

Chair Ruffell responded that for new members of the WASC, it would be helpful to have a preliminary discussion of the projects, prior to ranking them. Member Love, Member Hall, and Member Crudgington agreed with Chair Ruffell.

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Watershed Coordinator Watson asked District Staff when the SCCWRP would complete peer reviews for the scientific studies. District Staff responded they will likely be complete late February or early March, but this is subject to change and the studies will be received individually.

Chair Ruffell concluded that a discussion will be held first to develop preliminary rankings prior to ranking the projects for the SIP. That discussion should be agendaized in a future meeting. Chair Ruffell encouraged new WASC members to reach out to District Staff for any resources on the process.

Chair Ruffell announced that Watershed Coordinator selection for the next term will likely take place in April 2022.

Chair Ruffell noted that in the next meeting, WASC will hear from the two projects that the WASC was not able to hear from during this meeting.

11. Adjournment

Chair Ruffell thanked WASC members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

Attendance
RH WASC - January 18, 2022

Stephanie Tong	Larry Tran
Tori Klug	Julie Millett
Kelly Gardner	Edward Belden
Julian Juarez	Kristen Ruffell
Capucine Hernandez	Mark Hall
Gloria Crudgington	Brent Maue
Kevin Chang	Fernando Villaluna
Jalaine Verdiner	Richard Watson
Daniel Rossman	Tom Love
Eddie Chan	Thomas Wong
Jill Fosselman	James Carlson
Frank Lopez	Vanessa Hevener
Ariel Whitson	Enrique Baul
James Tong	Latoya Waters
Aric Torreyson	Alfredo Camacho
Alexander Chin	Mike Antos (Regional Coord)
Bryan Matsumoto	Melanie Morita
Darin Son (NoteTaker)	