

# Rio Hondo Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes

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Tuesday, February 21, 2023  
1:00pm - 4:00pm  
WebEx Meeting

## Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)  
Tom Love, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Agency)  
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)  
Jill Fosselman, Resident (Community)  
Mark Hall, Greater LA County Vector Control District (Community)  
Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society (Community)  
David Dolphin, Alhambra (Municipal)  
Carmen Masud, Arcadia (Municipal)  
Jalaine Verdiner, Los Angeles County (Municipal)  
\*Alex Tachiki, Monrovia (Municipal)  
Sal Mendez, El Monte (Municipal)  
Dawn Petschauer, Pasadena (Municipal), Vice-Chair  
Sarah Rocha, Irwindale (Municipal)  
Richard Watson, Richard Watson and Associates Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)  
\*Committee Member Alternate

## Committee Members Not Present:

Edward Belden, Resident (Community)

See attached attendance sheet for full list of attendees.

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### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Kristen Ruffell, Chair of the Rio Hondo (RH) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members, and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District) staff and Chair Ruffell facilitated Committee Member introductions. A quorum was established.

District staff and Chair Ruffell provided a brief WebEx tutorial and direction on submission of public comments to the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) website.

### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 17, 2023**

District staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve meeting minutes by Member Tom Love, seconded by Member David Dolphin. The Committee voted to approve the January 17, 2023 meeting minutes, with 12 votes in favor and 4 abstained (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

### **3. Committee Member and District Updates**

District staff provided an update, noting the following:

- On January 10, 2023, the Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill (AB) 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without

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complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it.

- District staff shared an update on how WASC meetings will be conducted after the State of Emergency for California ends on February 28, 2023. The presentation is available on the SCWP website and includes information regarding future teleconferencing requirements. This WASC's in-person meeting location will be the Monrovia Room for meetings through June 2023. If future meetings are hybrid, WebEx teleconferencing will be used.
- The District distributed the first batch of Transfer Agreements and Transfer Agreements Addendums for new and continuing projects approved in the Round 3 Fiscal Year (FY) 22-23 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs). Project developers should look out for emails from the District and provide requested items in a timely manner. Developers should create an account on the portal and submit the Infrastructure Project (IP) Project Developer form, signed Transfer Agreement or Transfer Agreement Addendum, Scope of Work, Resolution or Authorization to execute the Transfer Agreement, and Vendor Identification Form. If projects require California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, proponents should send their CEQA documentation so that the District can make determinations.
- FY22-23 Q2 Quarterly Reports from the period of October through December were due February 15, 2023. Quarterly reports must still be completed even if there was no activity done on the project.
- Under the Municipal Program, Municipal Annual Plans are due on April 1, 2023.
- It is important for the WASC and the work of the Regional Program to remain transparent and fair. These principles are built into the SCWP and are represented by the ex parte disclosure item on each agenda. WASC members whose job connects them to specific projects should ask colleagues or consultants to attend WASC meetings to share about, or advocate for those projects during SIP) deliberations and should avoid using their position as WASC members to advocate for projects from their home entities.
- WASC Community Stakeholders seats are up for reappointment August 2023, under Article 4, Section 5 of the WASC operating guidelines. This WASC has five community stakeholder seats. Individuals interested in serving as a Community Stakeholder should submit the Interest to Serve Form which is linked [here](#).

#### 4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Julie Millett gave an update on activities conducted since the previous WASC meeting and their planned upcoming activities. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website and attached.

Member Jill Fosselman brought up the LA Times article about more needing to be done to convert school yards with asphalt into sites for stormwater infiltration. Watershed Coordinator Millett stated that the Watershed Coordinators have an active subgroup focused on school projects. Rio Hondo is not a part of LA Unified School District. Working with different Districts introduces different legalities that need to be figured out. Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson described the work that is going on at a small charter school. Another group, Amigos de los Rios, is working on multiple school greening projects with SCWP funding.

Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer thanked the Watershed Coordinators for their outreach activities and asked if there were plans to conduct an audit of the SCWP in the community to get feedback on the SCWP. Vice-Chair Petschauer also mentioned the idea of having workshops with school districts to determine how Measure W can benefit campuses, such as with stormwater capture and education.

#### 5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

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There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

#### **6. Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

#### **7. Presentation and Discussion Items**

##### **a) Watershed Coordinator Overview of the Rio Hondo Watershed Projects Presentation and Technical Resource Program Projects Status Update**

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson gave a presentation and status updates of the Rio Hondo Watershed Projects from FY20-21 to FY23-24. Watershed Coordinator Watson also presented known potential future projects. Watershed Coordinator Watson showed a map and discussed relationships between the different washes and how projects will work together as a whole. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website.

Chair Kristen Ruffell brought up the Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project's delayed schedule and asked if they will miss the deadline to spend their funding. Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson clarified that they have five years to spend funding and stated that the project was planning to start construction in October 2024.

##### **b) Reselection of the Rio Hondo Watershed Coordinator for the next term**

The Watershed Coordinators were asked to leave the call while deliberation occurred.

The Committee discussed reselection of the Watershed Coordinator. The RH WASC may renew the Richard Watson and Associates' contract for another year or decide that a different group should perform their role.

Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer expressed satisfaction with Richard Watson and Associates' performance and stated that the City of Pasadena supports their reselection as Watershed Coordinator.

Member Brent Maue and Member Tom Love also praised Richard Watson and offered support for renewing their contract.

Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer asked if there is a way to extend their term for longer than one year. Member Daniel Rossman asked what would happen if they did not reselect the current Watershed Coordinators. The District clarified that the current Watershed Coordinators would continue until the contract end date in June and the District would provide a list of other watershed coordinators for WASC consideration.

Member Tom Love proposed two- or three-year contracts in the future. Chair Kristen Ruffell added that it may not be up to the RH WASC to decide on contract terms but can recommend that the District consider altering term conditions.

#### **8. Public Comment Period (moved up on the agenda)**

This public comment period is for the reselection of the current Watershed Coordinators. There were no public comments.

#### **9. Voting Items (moved up on the agenda)**

##### **a) Reselect the current Rio Hondo Watershed Coordinator for the next term**

Vice Chair Dawn Petschauer made a motion to reselect the current Watershed Coordinator. Member David Dolphin seconded the motion. The Committee voted to reselect Richard Watson and Associates as Watershed Coordinator with 14 members in favor and 0 opposed (approved, see Vote Tracker sheet).

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## 7. Presentations and Discussion Items (continued)

### c) Summary of Scientific Studies (SS) from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)

Chair Kristen Ruffell introduced the SCCWRP review process and asked for comments from the WASC. The SCCWRP document can be found on the SCWP website.

Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer stated that previously in the Rio Hondo Watershed Area, the WASC has funded load reduction strategy adaptation work. Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer stated that the data that has already been collected may work in cohesion with the Regional Pathogen Reduction Strategy Study rather than duplicate data, giving the watershed area a leg up with the Regional Board. Vice Chair Dawn Petschauer also stated that the time frame seems ambitious and asked if the study would split into phases and only ask for funding for “design” at this time.

Bruce Hamamoto stated that there are a lot of unknowns with the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study and that the workplan details are still being worked on. Funds have already been secured to start the scoping and selection process. If the RH WASC approves the SS then they will have a member on the committee who will be able to voice the group’s concerns.

District staff pulled up the SIP Tool to show funding requests for each year for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. This year’s request is for \$30,414. The future yearly funding will be voted on each year by the WASC to approve funding, as it is only earmarked for now.

Bruce Hamamoto explained he cannot agree to break down funding into phases at the moment. Bruce Hamamoto also reiterated that the WASC is not committed to the five years of funding and that it must be reapproved each year.

### d) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY21-22 Q3 and Q4

The District Presented the Quarterly Report Summary for Round 1 and 2 Projects and pointed out which projects had changes.

Joshua Felton spoke on behalf of Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project’s schedule delay. The project had delays due to issues with completing documentation, onboarding, contracting with consultants, and additional site assessments. Chair Kristen Ruffell confirmed with Joshua Felton that they will use the funding. The project’s funding schedule was previously adjusted and will now be used by FY26-27.

Jason Casanova (Council for Watershed Health) spoke on behalf of the Merced Ave Greenway (Phase 1 – South Residential Corridor) Project’s budget plan modifications, total activity costs, and funded activity modifications. The project went out to bid last spring and came back \$3.5M over the 100% engineering estimate. They have since sought supplemental funding through state sources and will go back out to bid in late March or April if they receive supplemental funding. There is enough cushion in the schedule to be able to spend this funding within the five-year requirement.

### e) Project Updates and Budget Confirmation for Projects with Continued Funding Requests

District staff clarified this discussion item is for projects with more recent updates. Chair Kristen Ruffell requested that for future meetings, project proponents are asked about updates beforehand.

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Greg de Vinck (San Gabriel Public Works) on behalf of Vincent Lugo Park Stormwater Capture Project stated there is no change in funding; however, they are being held up at the design stage due to the city requesting the District to be the Project Lead, and awaiting an official response.

No other projects had funding changes.

Member Thomas Wong requested that projects completed within the next year return to give a final update to the WASC.

#### **f) Rio Hondo Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan**

District staff presented the RH WASC's preliminary project rankings of the four Infrastructure Program Projects (IP) that received passing scores from the Scoring Committee and the 1 Scientific Study. 14 out of 17 WASC members submitted preliminary rankings. The order, as a result of those preliminary rankings, is as follows:

1. Kinneloa Yard Stormwater Capture Project Preliminary Design and Feasibility Study, IP, (54 points)
2. Burke Heritage Park & Marengo Yard Stormwater Capture Project, IP, (48)
3. Merced Avenue Stormwater Capture Project, IP, (45)
4. El Monte Norwood Elementary School Stormwater Capture Project, IP, (37)
5. Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, SS, (16)

The District prepared three scenarios in the SIP Tool:

1. Top Three IPs
2. Top 2 IP, 1 SS
3. Top 3 IP, 1 SS

All three scenarios allocated below 80% of funding.

Several additional scenarios were reviewed.

Member Thomas Wong asked if in the cases where there is over 100% allocation in a future fiscal year, the WASC could move funding to different years. The District stated that the WASC would have to ask Project Applicants if this works for their projects. The WASC could request for applicants to reevaluate their budgets as they cannot allocate over 100%. The District reminded the WASC that these construction costs are projections and that the WASC should stay around 80% allocation to be safe.

Chair Kristen Ruffell confirmed with the District that when all four Infrastructure Program Projects are funded without the assumed construction costs scenario, funding allocation is below 80%. When the Scientific Study is also funded, percent allocation remains below 80% without the assumed construction costs scenario.

Member Mark Hall asked about delaying construction costs for an additional year. Chair Kristen Ruffell stated that was one way to look at the assumed construction costs. Chair Kristen Ruffell shared her experiences with 6 other WASCs and explained the routes of making decisions and how some WASCs prioritize design rather than saving for construction.

Member Jill Fosselman asked what would happen if the WASC decided not to fund a project. Chair Kristen Ruffell shared that proponents often return with funding requests in future years. Compared to other WASCs, Rio Hondo has more funding to allocate and is in a position to fund all projects this year.

Member Jill Fosselman asked if the WASC can add a caveat to an approval requiring a project to find leveraged funds. For example the Kinneloa Yard Stormwater Capture Project Preliminary Design project

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and Regional Pathogen Feasibility Study. Chair Kristen Ruffell added that, because the construction funding is currently not before the WASC for this SIP, this deliberation cannot bind a future WASC to guarantee any leverage funding. By noting that it is difficult to guarantee future funding availability on the record, the proponent may be encouraged to consider match funding.

Member Brent Maue stated that the RH WASC should look closely at the merits of projects.

Member Sal Mendez asked if the projects will meet the 30% funding to disadvantaged communities requirement if the WASC only ends up funding the top two projects. The WASC checked the SIP tool and confirmed it meets the requirement.

Member Thomas Wong reiterated that the WASC cannot be relied on solely for construction funding and that projects should look for future construction funding. Member Wong is in favor of moving forward with all four projects. Member Wong stated that the WASC is only approving the SIPs one year at a time and that future funding is not guaranteed.

Regional Coordinator Ryanna Fossum shared that the Lower San Gabriel River WASC created a Prioritization Criteria that helped the WASC define minimum funding matches, how to categorize projects, when to reserve funding, etc. Chair Kristen Ruffell said that the WASC could have this discussion if they would like to.

Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer explained how the City of Pasadena is trying to use internal funds. Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer stated that the WASC should make sure they are putting funds towards funding projects that are making maximum impact for capture.

#### **8. Public Comment Period (continued)**

David Diaz spoke in favor of the WASC funding the El Monte Norwood Elementary School Stormwater Capture Project. Diaz stated the community has been working to realize the project for years. The city is lacking park space with only 0.41 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. Retrofitting abandoned schools to create greenspace was a main goal for the community of El Monte.

Merrill Taylor commented the Merced Avenue Stormwater Capture Project would be looking for matching funds. They have secured \$4.6M from Caltrans Clean CA to cover 25% of the project.

#### **9. Voting Items (continued)**

##### **a) Reselection of the Rio Hondo Watershed Coordinator for the next term**

A separate public comment period for Voting Item a) and Voting Item a) itself were moved up on the Agenda to follow Item 7b.

##### **b) Approve the Final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the Rio Hondo Watershed Area and Approve submission to the Regional Oversight Committee for review (as needed).**

Chair Kristen Ruffell explained that the approval of projects will be voted on in stages, with an initial vote to approve Infrastructure Program Projects and an additional vote to approve Scientific Studies.

Member Thomas Wong made a motion to approve all four IP projects only. Member Daniel Rossman seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve all four IP projects as the final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the RH Watershed Area, including Richard Watson & Associates as Watershed Coordinator and advance to the ROC for review with 14 members in favor, 0 opposed, and 2 absent at time of vote (approved, see Vote Tracker sheet).

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Member Jalaine Verdiner made a motion to approve the SS. Chair Kristen Ruffell seconded. The Committee voted to approve All Considered Projects as the final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the RH Watershed Area, including Richard Watson & Associates as Watershed Coordinator and advance to the ROC for review with 14 members in favor, 0 opposed, and 2 absent at time of vote (approved, see Vote Tracker sheet).

Member Jill Fosselman stated reluctance in approving the SS and wanted to hear more information regarding Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer's previous comments on the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. Member Jill Fosselman seek clarification if the RH WASC will have a say as to what occurs in the Scientific Study.

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson was asked to respond and stated that the WASC will have a role in determining how the study proceeds as a member on the stakeholder committee. Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson added that the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study team will listen to what the group has to say. Member Jill Fosselman was happy with this response and stated that her main concern was getting the right data and spending time effectively.

#### **10. Items for Next Agenda**

The next meeting may be held Tuesday, March 21, 2023, from 1:00pm - 3:00pm. The Committee is to keep the date in the calendar, but it may be cancelled as the WASC no longer needs to discuss the SIP.

#### **11. Adjournment**

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

**RH WASC - February 21, 2023**

Member Type	Quorum Present				Voting Item			
	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 1/17/2022 Meeting Minutes	Reselect Richard Watson & Associates as Watershed Coordinator for RH WASC	Approve Scenario "All 4 IP Only" as the final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the RH Watershed Area, including Richard Watson & Associates as Watershed Coordinator and advance to the ROC for review.	Approve Scenario "All Considered Projects" as the final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the RH Watershed Area, including Richard Watson & Associates as Watershed Coordinator and advance to the ROC for review.
Agency	Julian Juarez	x	Ramy Gindi		y	y	y	y
Agency	Tom Love	x	Patty Cortez		y	y		
Agency	Kelly Gardner	x	Tony Zampielo		y	y	y	y
Agency	Kristen Ruffell	x	Alysha Chan		y	y	y	y
Agency	Brent Maue	x	Kris Markarian		y	y	y	y
Community Stakeholder	Thomas Wong	x	Bryan Matsumoto		a	y	y	y
Community Stakeholder	Jill Fosselman	x			a	y	y	y
Community Stakeholder	Mark Hall	x	Mark Daniel		y	y	y	y
Community Stakeholder	Edward Belden							
Community Stakeholder	Daniel Rossman	x	Liliana Griego		a	y	y	y
Municipal Members	David Dolphin	x	Latoya Waters		y	y	y	y
Municipal Members	Carmen Masud	x	Paul Cranmer		a	y	y	y
Municipal Members	Jalaine Verdiner	x	Fernando Villaluna		y	y	y	y
Municipal Members	Gloria Crudgington		Alex Tachiki	x	y	y	y	y
Municipal Members	Sal Mendez	x			y	y	y	y
Municipal Members	Dawn Petschauer	x	James Tong		y	y	y	y
Municipal Members	Sarah Rocha	x			y			
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member (RWA Planning)	Richard Watson	x	Julie Millett	x				N/A
Total Non-Vacant Seats	17			Yay (Y)	12	15	14	14
Total Voting Members Present	16			Nay (N)	0	0	0	0
Agency	5			Abstain (A)	4	0	0	0
Community Stakeholder	4			Total	16	15	14	14
Municipal Members	7				Approved	Approved	Approved	Approved



**Attendance**  
**RH WASC - February 21, 2023**

Sal Mendez	Edna Robidas
Bruce Hamamoto	Richard Watson
Nikolas Aquino	Roberto Gomez
Jason Casanova	Greg de Vinck
Larry Tran	Eric Bonilla
Kristen Ruffell	Jalaine Quintrell Verdiner
Dawn Petschauer	Paul Choy
Don Nguyen	Daniel Rossman
Tom Love	Capucine Hernandez
Mark Hall GLAmosquito	Enrique Baul
Jenny Chau	Andrea Dell'Apa
David Diaz	Priya Aggarwal
Brent Maue	Carmen Masud
Nicholas Ryu	DAVID DOLPHIN
Daniel Apt	Merrill Taylor
Katie Harrel	Brad Wardynski
Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination)	claire robinson
Alex Tachiki	Jill Fosselman
Gloria Crudgington	Kelly Gardner
Anna Philipp	Matt Rich
Sarah Rocha	Briget Arndell
Haris Harouny - LACFCD	Joshua Felton
Julie Millett	Travis Diaz
Oliver Galang (Craftwater)	Rene Salas
Larry Tortuya - CWE	Eddie Viilegas
Julian Juarez	Chris Lee
Yisak Kim	Brianna Datti
Latoya Waters	Thomas Wong
Brad Parks	Angela Cheng