



...A United Voice for the Santa Ana River Watershed

OWOW STEERING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 28, 2024

| Committee Members | |
|---|---|
| <u>Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Representatives</u> | |
| Brenda Dennstedt, Convener, Western Municipal Water District | Present |
| T. Milford Harrison, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District | Present |
| <u>County Supervisor Representatives</u> | |
| Vicente Sarmiento, Orange County Board of Supervisors | Absent |
| Karen Spiegel, Riverside County Board of Supervisors | Absent |
| Jesse Armendarez, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors | Present |
| <u>County Municipal Representatives</u> | |
| Deborah Robertson, Mayor, City of Rialto | Present |
| Wes Speake, Councilmember, City of Corona | Absent |
| Nicholas Dunlap, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Fullerton | Absent |
| <u>Business Community Representative</u> | |
| James Hessler, Director of West Coast Operations, Altman Plants | Present |
| <u>Environmental Community Representative</u> | |
| Garry W. Brown, President, Orange County Coastkeeper | Absent |
| <u>Regional Water Quality Control Board Representative</u> | |
| William Ruh, Regional Water Quality Control Board [11:05 a.m.] | Present |
| Others Present | |
| <u>SAWPA COMMISSIONERS:</u> | Bruce Whitaker, Denis Bilodeau, Jasmin Hall, Gil Botello |
| <u>SAWPA STAFF:</u> | Ian Achimore, Jeff Mosher, John Leete, Marie Jauregui, Melissa Bustamonte, Pete Vitt, Rachel Gray, Sara Villa, Zyanya Ramirez |
| <u>OTHERS PRESENT:</u> | Andrew D. Turner, Lagerlof LLP; Chris Jones, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District; Christy Suppes, Orange County Public Works; David Lawrence, Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency; Lisa Fernandez; Manuel Escamilla, County of Orange; Melissa Matlock, Western Municipal Water District; Toyasha Sebbag, City of Rialto. |

The OWOW Steering Committee meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Brenda Dennstedt, Convener, at the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, CA 92503.



1. CALL TO ORDER | PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments; there were no public comments received via email.

4. ITEMS TO BE ADDED OR DELETED

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: NOVEMBER 16, 2023

B. GRANT ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

MOVED, approve the Consent Calendar.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Result: | Adopted by Roll Call Vote |
| Motion/Second: | Milford/Ruh |
| Ayes: | Armendarez, Dennstedt, Harrison, Hessler, Robertson, Ruh |
| Nays: | None |
| Abstentions: | None |
| Absent: | Brown, Dunlap, Sarmiento, Speake, Spiegel |

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. GRANT FUNDED PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS: REPLENISH BIG BEAR PROJECT (SC#2024.1)

David Lawrence, General Manager of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency (BBARWA), provided a PowerPoint presentation titled Replenish Big Bear contained in the agenda packet on pages 33-50.

The Replenish Big Bear project involves upgrading the BBARWA wastewater treatment plant, laying around 7 miles of pipeline, and building a new pump station in Bear Valley. The upgraded plant will benefit Big Bear Valley, recognized as a “disadvantaged community,” by providing a new water source. Additionally, it will supply water to the Stanfield Marsh Wildlife and Waterfowl Preserve, supporting habitat sustainability and educational activities for the community and visitors. BBARWA hosted an Open house; about 240 residents attended.

Mr. Lawrence noted that a lesson learned from implementing the project was the slowdown caused by the reeducation process for new board members. He thanked the Committee for their support.

Committee member Hessler inquired about the disposal of brine pellets resulting from the Reverse Osmosis process. Mr. Lawrence responded, explaining their exploration of various markets for resale or donation, with a priority on identifying reuse possibilities. Following this, Convener Dennstedt commended BBARWA for their efforts and applauded the successful turnout at their recent Open House event. She sought clarification regarding community feedback, to which Mr. Lawrence indicated minor concerns from a few community members regarding project costs, microplastics, and PFAS, but noted that these concerns were addressed through during their presentation.

This item was for discussion purposes; no action was taken on Agenda Item No. 6.A.



B. INTEGRATED CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCY PROGRAM REGIONAL RESILIENCE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM AWARD AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SANTA ANA RIVER WATERSHED CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE PLAN (SC#2024.2)

Rachel Gray provided a presentation titled Round 1 Regional Resilience Grant Program Award – Santa Ana River Watershed Climate Adaptation Plan (SARWCRP) contained in the agenda packet on pages 53-66.

SAWPA, along with co-applicants Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians (Soboba) and the Inland Southern California Climate Collaborative (ISC3), successfully secured a \$644,190 grant from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) for the development of SARWCARP. Soboba will contribute expertise in Tribal Perspective and Tribal Engagement, while ISC3 will primarily focus on Stakeholder and Community Engagement. The planning process will be overseen by two groups: the Watershed Resilience Community Advisory Panel (WRCAP) and the Watershed Resilience Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC). These groups will facilitate implementation planning by ensuring that the appropriate stakeholders and partners are included in resilience portfolios. The phases of SARWCARP development were presented, highlighting Community and Stakeholder Engagement, Vulnerability Assessment, Adaptation Analysis, and Implementation Planning.

A grant term timeline was presented. SAWPA is working toward the executing grant application and sub-agreements. An RFP is scheduled for release within the next month to aid in plan development.

This item was for discussion purposes; no action was taken on Agenda Item No. 6.B.

C. OVERVIEW OF HEADWATERS RESILIENCY PARTNERSHIP AND FOREST FIRST JOINT PRESENTATION BETWEEN SAWPA AND SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT (SC#2023.9)

Ian Achimore provided a presentation titled Forest First and Headwaters Resiliency Partnership Overview, contained in the agenda packet on pages 73-79. An overview of the Forest First partnership between SAWPA, the Cleaveland National Forest, and the San Bernardino National Forest was given. The Forest First next steps include ongoing coordination with national forests to identify mutually beneficial projects, regular engagement with the forest service for operations and monitoring activities like stream water quality and aerial imagery, involving additional partners such as downstream water agencies and municipalities, and collaborating with national forests on the Santa Ana River Watershed Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan.

Chris Jones, from San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, provided a presentation titled Headwaters Resiliency Partnership, contained in the agenda packet on pages 81-95. An overview of the headwaters management efforts was provided.

This item was for discussion purposes; no action was taken on Agenda Item No. 6.C.

D. WEATHER MODIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE (SC#2024.4)

Rachel Gray provided a presentation titled Santa Ana River Weather Modification Pilot Program Status Update, contained in the agenda packet on pages 99-121. A brief background on the beginning of the Weather Modification Pilot Program (Pilot Program)



was provided. The pilot project began on November 15, 2023.

SAWPA is working with the Desert Research Institute (DRI) on the validation aspect of the Pilot Program. DRI will independently review the cloud seeding pilot operations and verify the resulting increases in precipitation and stream flows.

This item was for discussion purposes; no action was taken on Agenda Item No.6.D.

7. GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

No additional comments.

8. CHAIR’S COMMENTS/REPORT

No additional comments.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ COMMENTS

Committee member Robertson would like to provide a future presentation to this Committee regarding the Inland Empire Utilities Agency and the City of Rialto’s recycled water collaboration efforts.

10. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 12:29 p.m.

APPROVED: November 21, 2024

Signed by:

Brenda Dennstedt

Brenda Dennstedt, Convener

Attest:

Signed by:

Zyanya Ramirez

Zyanya Ramirez, Executive Assistant II