

MEETING NOTES

**Basin Monitoring Program Task Force
December 19, 2024**

STAKEHOLDERS PRESENT:

Chino Basin Water Master, Edgar Tellez Foster
Chino Basin Water Master, Justin Nakano
City of Banning, Shah Nawaz
City of Beaumont, Thaxton Van Belle
City of Redlands, Karla Siordia
City of Rialto, Toyasha Sebbag
Eastern Municipal WD, Doug Edwards
Elsinore Valley Municipal WD, Jesus Gastelum
Inland Empire Utilities Agency, John Russ

Jurupa Community Services District, Bryan Smith
Orange County Water District, Kevin O'Toole
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, Adekunle Ojo
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, Marissa Flores-Acosta
SBMWD/RIX/JPA, Jennifer Shepardson
WMWD/WRCRWA, Carly Pierce
WMWD/WRCRWA, Jennifer McMullin
WMWD/WRCRWA, Mallory O'Conor
YVWD, Ashley Gibson

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dudek, Steve Stuart
Kahn, Soares, & Conway (KSC), Theresa (Tess) Dunham
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Bruce Whitiker
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Gil Botello
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Ian Achimore
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Jasmin Hall
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Natalia Gonzalez
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Rachel Gray

Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Rick Whetsel
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, T. Milford Harrison
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Adriana Godinez
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Cindy Li
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Jagroop Khela
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Keith Person
WSC, Michael Cruikshank
West Yost, Garrett Rapp

STAKEHOLDERS ABSENT:

Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District
City of Corona
City of Riverside

Irvine Ranch Water District
San Geronio Pass Water Agency
Temescal Valley Water District

Call to Order/Introductions

The Basin Monitoring Program Task Force meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Ian Achimore at SAWPA with participants participating remotely. Brief introductions were made.

Approval of September 2024 Meeting Notes

The October 29, 2024 meeting notes were approved as posted.

Update on Basin Monitoring Task Force Basin Plan Amendments – Tess Dunham, KSC

Tess Dunham, of Kahn, Soares, and Conway, LLP (KSC), provided a short presentation on the Update of the Basin Plan Amendment. The update focused on the revision of the Basin Plan and the potential amendment that will be reviewed by the Regional Water Board. The planned amendment is designed to clarify existing provisions related to the Salt and Nutrient Management Plan, address minor errors, and update outdated information. The revisions are not intended to bring about substantial changes but rather to ensure clarity, particularly around antidegradation objectives and annual averages.

Ms. Dunham outlined a draft schedule for the revision process, which includes sending out updated amendments for the Task Force's review. Following Task Force review, a Substitute Environmental Document (SED) will be developed to meet CEQA requirements. The goal is to finalize the amendments and SED, after review and public comment processes.

SCCWRP Study on Wadeable Streams – Tess Dunham, KSC

Ms. Dunham provided a verbal update on the new Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) study related to bio integrity, titled, "*Technical Foundation for Bio Integrity and Eutrophication Indicators and Thresholds for Modified Channels, Intermittent Streams and Steams on The Central Valley Floor*" where channels are altered for flood control and water conveyance. This study, contracted by the

Central Valley Water Board and State Water Resources Control Board, may have implications for the Santa Ana region, especially in terms of water quality objectives and permit compliance.

Ms. Dunham highlighted that once the draft of the study is released, there will be a 30-day plus public comment period where the Basin Monitoring Task Force can review the study and potentially submit comments. Ms. Dunham also suggested, with possible input from John Rudolph, of GEI Consultants, Inc., drafting a letter of comment.

There was broad agreement and feedback among the Task Force members to move forward with reviewing the study and drafting comments, as it could have significant implications for stakeholders in the Santa Ana Watershed region, particularly with the potential development of new water quality objectives. Tess estimated that the review would require around 5 to 10 hours of her time and cost approximately \$5,000, all within the current budget. The Task Force will be kept informed as the study progresses.

Potential Data Gaps Framework Reminder – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

Ian Achimore, of SAWPA provided an update on the Potential Data Gaps Framework, which was discussed in previous task force meetings and outlined in an email sent September 30, 2024. Mr. Achimore reminded Task Force members about the importance of reviewing the framework document and table listing potential data gaps in each GMZ along with the “Dischargers/Agencies Designated to Resolve” them.

As a reminder to the Task Force, for those in high-priority GMZs with potential data gaps, there is a 3-step process in the Framework where agencies can review the table, coordinate with other agencies in their GMZs, and work towards the critical deadline of December 31, 2025.

As a great example, Mr. Achimore mentioned the Beaumont GMZ had made progress by initiating meetings, collaborating with other agencies, and seeking expert guidance. Also highlighted was the importance of reaching out for assistance if needed, particularly for help with researching grant applications or general technical assistance. Reminders for the Task Force will continue to be sent out throughout 2025 to keep everyone on track.

Reach 3 TDS Special Study Review and Approval – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

Mr. Achimore provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the Reach 3 TDS Special Study Request for Proposals (RFP) released. The presentation outlined the RFP schedule. The RFP for the study was released on November 19, 2024, after being reviewed by the Scoping Committee and Task Force over the course of 10 months. Mr. Achimore outlined key dates for the RFP process, noting that consultants had a deadline of January 13, 2025, to submit questions, with SAWPA responding to those questions by January 16, 2025. RFP responses were due by January 23, 2025, and interviews with consultants would take place from January 27 through January 31, 2025. Following this, the selected consultant's proposal would be presented to the SAWPA Commission for approval on February 18, 2025, with a kick-off meeting scheduled for February 19, 2025.

Mr. Achimore encouraged sharing the RFP link with other potential consultants to ensure a competitive process.

Update on Quarterly Santa Ana River Monitoring – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

Mr. Achimore provided a PowerPoint presentation for the update on the Quarterly Santa Ana River Monitoring, highlighting the completion of the first full year of quarterly monitoring. The initiative began after the amendment of the Basin Plan in December 2021, which updated elements of the TDS nitrogen management plan and monitoring program requirements. In response to the update, SAWPA and the Task Force developed a Santa Ana River Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and Total Inorganic Nitrogen (TIN) Work Plan, submitted to the Regional Board in March 2023. This plan led to an RFP process, resulting in CWE being contracted to conduct monitoring over three calendar years – 2024, 2025 and 2026. CWE also collaborated with the Task Force to develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and obtained necessary access to monitoring sites.

The monitoring focuses on three key points along the Santa Ana River - E Street, Riverside Avenue, and Mission Boulevard. Sampling is scheduled to occur quarterly for various constituents, including TDS, Nitrate as Nitrogen, TIN calculated, and other measures. The sampling schedule was carefully planned to capture the state of the Santa Ana River throughout the year, with samples taken during January, April, August, and November. Mr. Achimore proceeded to update Task Force members by summarizing the progress of the first year's monitoring. An interesting observation was made during the August 2024 sampling at E Street, where no surface water flow was detected, but flow was present during the November 2024 sampling, illustrating the variability of the river's conditions.

Next steps, CWE is expected to upload the 2024 data to the California Environmental Data Exchange Network once they receive the lab results from the November 2024 sampling. The upload will occur at least annually, with completed data templates provided to SAWPA. Monitoring will continue in 2025 as planned. Mr. Achimore concluded the update by summarizing the progress of the first year of monitoring.

A brief intermission was then held for the next Task Force Members Only Item:

Adoption of FYE 2026/FYE 2027 Budget – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

A closed session was held for the Task Force members to discuss and review the upcoming two-year budget.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.