

Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake TMDL Task Force

April 22, 2025

PARTICIPANTS PRESENT:

Abigail Suter, Riverside County Flood Control & WCD
Aldo Licitra, Riverside County Flood Control & WCD
Ali Trollier, EC02/Misco
Andrew Morris, EVMWD
Ann Marie Loconte, City of Banning
Brian Covellone, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Chris Stransky, GEI Consultants
Carlos Norvani, City of Lake Elsinore
Cynthia Gabaldon, City of Menifee, Perris, San Jacinto, and March JPA
Dan Cortese, City of Hemet
Dawn Rourk, CalTrans
Garth Engelhorn, NV5
Hannah Kranz, WSP USA
Jagroop Khela, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Jileen Ferris, City of Hemet
Jim Klang, WRCAC
John Rudolph, GEI Consultants
Kris Hanson, City of Wildomar (Interwest)
Lauren Briggs, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Liset Hernandez, City of Perris
Lynn Merrill, City of San Jacinto
Mayra Martinez, City of Canyon Lake

Mike Ali, EVMWD
Natasha Thandi, Caltrans (MBI)
Pat Boldt, WRCAC
Rachael Johnson, Riverside County Farm Bureau
Rae Beimer, City of Moreno Valley
Regina Adigwe, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Richard Boon, Riverside County Flood Control & WCD
Ryan Kearns, Riverside County Flood Control & WCD
Samuel Wilson, City of Moreno Valley
Sharon Erb, March JPA
Shirley Colvin, City of Perris
Steven Wolosoff, GEI Consultants
Stormy Osifeso, City of Riverside
Sudhir Mohleji, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District
Terri Reeder, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Tess Dunham, Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP
T Milford Harrison, SAWPA
Gil Botello, SAWPA
Jasmine Hall, SAWPA
Zyanya Ramirez, SAWPA
Rick Whetsel, SAWPA

Call to Order & Introductions

The Lake Elsinore/Canyon Lake TMDL Task (Task Force) meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Rick Whetsel, with participants participating remotely.

Approval of Meeting Notes from March 3, 2025 Task Force Meeting

The March 3, 2025 meeting notes were approved as posted.

Status: Regional Board Update (Regional Board)

Lauren Briggs, Regional Board, stated that the Regional Board is scheduled to adopt the revised TMDLs for Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake at the Santa Ana Water Board meeting on July 25, 2025. She mentioned that adjustments are being made based on received comments, and a limited public comment period will be reopened by May 9th. The July 25th meeting will be held in the City of Orange, with limited comments accepted only on revisions.

Brian Covellone, Regional Board, introduces Regina Adigwe as the new Irrigated Lands and Non-Point Source Program contact, replacing SueAnn Nieal.

Update: TMDL Update Activities (Tess Dunham, KSC and Steve Wolosoff, GEI)

Tess Dunham, KSC, indicated that once the limited revisions are available for review by the Task Force, she will work on a general comment letter in support of the revisions for the TMDL on their behalf. As a result of the February Regional Board public hearing, the City of Banning will be removed as a responsible party with this Basin Plan Amendment, due to their lack of prior involvement. This results in minor updates to summary milestones and wasteload allocation tables.

Pat Boldt indicated that WRCAC would like to be excluded from the support letter if they are unable to review responses from Regional Board on their comments submitted. Lauren Briggs mentioned that the response to the comments document will be available at least 10 days before the Board hearing.

Minor Source Study Process

Tess proposed a process for the Minor Source Study, including convening a small group in early May to address criteria for identifying minor sources and their responsibilities within the TMDL context. The group will meet virtually from May through September, with consultants preparing a draft document for task force review in November. Anne Marie from Banning expresses interest in participating, but Tess notes that non-paying members' involvement requires further discussion regarding financial participation.

A copy of the presentation prepared by Tess Dunham is available on the SAWPA website under Agendas and Meeting Materials: <https://sawpa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/April-22-2025-LECL-Task-Force-Meeting.pdf>

Update: LEAMS Future Options Study (Steve Wolosoff, GEI)

Steve Wolosoff from GEI provided a brief verbal update on the LEAMS Future Options Study, noting that the full draft report—spanning over 500 pages—was submitted to the TMDL Task Force around April 14–15, with comments requested by May 15. For accessibility, the report includes an executive summary that highlights the major findings, scientific and engineering analysis, scoring, costs, and recommendations. Supporting appendices cover sediment nutrient release and oxygen demand, hydrodynamic modeling led by Dr. Michael Anderson, detailed cost breakdowns, and an assessment of the existing LEAMS system, which was found to be serviceable in the short term but needing updates. Sudhir Mohleji from EVMWD emphasized that the report's conclusions and the ranking of alternatives remain unchanged from prior presentations—specifically, that oxygenation remains the recommended alternative. Once comments are received, GEI aims to quickly proceed to the next design and construction phases. The item will remain on the agenda for one more meeting to allow for a final wrap-up and possible public posting of the report.

Update: Lake Elsinore Water Quality Plan (Adam Gufarotti, City of Lake Elsinore)

No discussion.

Update: Canyon Lake (LESJWA Staff)

Rick Whetsel provided an update on the recent alum application at Canyon Lake, which took place during the week of April 24–28, 2024. During this period, a sudden temperature increase likely triggered an algal bloom mid-application, particularly affecting the shallow, warmer East Bay where floating alum floc persisted. While the application was generally considered successful, the presence of floating floc raised concerns, and a follow-up review with consultants and stakeholders is planned to evaluate the process, timing, and potential improvements. Additionally, the team is working on amending the CEQA documentation before its expiration in December 2025 to maintain alum as a viable treatment option. Whetsel also reported a fish kill incident this past weekend about a month after the application, though he emphasized that alum typically binds quickly and is not expected to have lingered in the water column. LESJWA is collaborating with EVMWD staff and consultants to investigate possible causes, including lake stratification, sulfides, ammonia, or a potential golden algae bloom.

Chris Stransky, GEI, confirmed the team is conducting further analysis, including examining fish gills under a microscope and checking for ammonia levels, which can be more toxic at higher pH levels. Early indicators from recent monitoring show dissolved oxygen levels were acceptable at the surface, although stratification had occurred. The exact number and species of affected fish remain unclear, though initial photos suggest mostly bass, while previous events involved threadfin shad. Terri Reeder of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board suggested improving documentation of such events through better public communication to support future investigations and avoid assumptions about alum's role. Whetsel acknowledged the need for a thorough review of alum application timing, as recent years of wetter weather have increased nutrient loads, complicating scheduling. Despite these challenges, he reaffirmed alum's long track record of success in reducing phosphorus levels in Canyon Lake.

Task Force Administration (LESJWA Staff)

Rick Whetsel presented the following items for the Task Force to consider:

A. Approve draft amendment #4 to extend the LE&CL TMDL Task Force

Rick Whetsel presented a draft amendment #4 to extend the LE&CL TMDL Task Force Agreement, for consideration by the Task Force through an administrative action.

A motion was put forward by Lynn Merrill representing the City of San Jacinto and second by Cynthia Gabaldon representing the Cities of Menifee, Perris, San Jacinto, and March JPA to approve.

MOVED, to approve Amendment #4 to extend the LE&CL TMDL Task Force Agreement for a period of two years to June 30, 2027.

B. Approve second year option to extend Aquatechnex Agreement for Services for Canyon Lake Alum Dosing.

Rick Whetsel stated that in February 2022 the Task Force approved a three-year agreement for services with Aquatechnex to conduct up to two (2) semi-annual Canyon Lake alum dosing. This agreement included two 1-year options to extend the agreement (four additional application events).

A motion was put forward by Lynn Merrill representing the City of San Jacinto and second by Anthony Budicin representing the Eastern Municipal Water District to approve.

MOVED, to direct LESJWA staff to exercise the second 1-year option to extend the Agreement for Services with Aquatechnex to provide semi-annual Canyon Lake alum dosing to support the Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake TMDL Task force for CY 2026.

Other Business

No other business to discuss.

Schedule Next Meeting

The next LE/CL TMDL Task Force meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 19, 2025, at 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Table Summary of Agreements and Actions

Date of Action/Agreement	Action/Agreement	Responsible Entities Reaching Agreement
September 28, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve funding in the amount of up to \$30,000 to CDM Smith to assist Task Force technical issues, including but not limited to, initial discussions regarding content and scope of TMDL Implementation Plan revisions should the Task Force decide to provide resources for further revising the 2018 draft TMDL. 	Voting Task Force members.
November 3, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve moving forward with the proposed step-wise approach to updating the TMDL Technical Report and its timeline. 	Voting Task Force members
January 10, 2022	-	-
March 2, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Task Force agreed to submit a comment letter to the Draft Staff Working Proposal for MS4 Permit by March 18, 2022. Regional Board confirmed that they would accept the comments past their soft deadline of March 10. Approved the alum application to the Canyon Lake if the February monitoring data exceeds 0.09. 	Voting Task Force members
April 20, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved execution of the Key Principles for Technical TMDL Revision by Mark, Norton Task Force Administrator on behalf of the voting members of the task force subject to revisions discussed at the 4/20/2022 task force meeting. Approved submittal of the Task Force Comment letter to Regional Board on the Staff Working Proposal for the MS4 Permit upon revision discussed at the 4/20/2022 task force meeting. Regional Board abstained from action and conversation of this matter. Approved amendment #3 to extend the LE/CL TMDL Task Force Agreement for a period of three years to June 30, 2025, with the option that the Agreement, while still in full force and effect, may be extended an additional two years, to June 30, 2027, by means of Administrative Action by the Task Force Administrator 	Voting Task Force members; Excludes Regional Board in relation to the Comment Letter to Regional Board on the Staff Working Proposal for the MS4 Permit.
June 27, 2022	-	-
August 17, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved execution of the Key Principles for Technical TMDL Revision by Mark Norton, Task Force Administrator on behalf of the voting members of the LE&CL TMDL Task Force. Approved a proposal by CDM Smith and a recommendation to the LESJWA Board to authorize a Task Order to update and revise the technical document and additional TMDL technical support services. 	Mark Norton, Task Force Administrator on behalf of the voting members of the LE&CL TMDL Task Force
September 27, 2022	-	-
November 14, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer the remaining balance of the contract work supported by Steven Wolosoff as of December 31, 2022 from CDM Smith and enter into an agreement with GEI Consultants to complete work starting on January 1 2023. Exercise an option for a two year extension with WSP USA to oversee and implement TMDL Compliance Monitoring. Program. 	Voting Task Force members
January 10, 2023	-	-
February 15, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Task Force moved to provide LESJWA staff in coordination with the Task Force consulting team the authority to make a determination on the need for a Spring 2023 alum application based upon review of the February 2023 Canyon Lake monitoring results to be provided by WSP USA. 	Voting Task Force members.
March 28, 2023	-	-
April 25, 2023	-	-
June 5, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task Force approved LESJWA staff to rework the nutrient offset credits based solely on the need for total phosphorus offset credits and to invoice stakeholders for only 2022 TP offset credits. All 	Voting Task Force members.

	remaining funds are to be applied to stakeholders 2023 LEAMS budget allocation.	
August 7, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task Force approved for LESJWA staff to prepare a Change Order for WSPUSA for an amount not to exceed \$10,330 to perform two additional Lake Elsinore in-lake monitoring events, one each in November and December 2023 using funds available from the LE&CL TMDL Task Force reserve. 	Voting Task Force members.
August 27 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task Force approved LESJWA staff to extend Agreement for Services with Tess Dunham, Kahn, Soares & Conway to serve as Regulatory Compliance Expert for the Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake TMDL Task Force for two additional years for FYEs 2026 and 2027. Task Force approved LESJWA staff to extend Agreement with Aquatechnex in one-year increments. At this time LESJWA staff will extend the agreement for CT 2025 to provide for two semi-annual Canyon Lake alum dosings to support the Lake Elsinore and Canyon Lake TMDL Task force. 	Voting Task Force members.