

MEETING NOTES

Joint Regional Water Quality Monitoring/Middle Santa Ana River TMDL Task Force Meeting

April 28, 2025

PARTICIPANTS

Abigail Gomez, City of Jurupa Valley	Nicole Greenwood, City of Riverside
Abigail Suter, Riverside County Flood Control & WCD	Nicole Hemmans, City of Rialto
Adam Fischer, Regional Water Quality Control Board	Nisha Wells, City of Chino Hills
Amanda Grey, University of California, Riverside	Pat Boldt, Milk Producers Council
Ana Montoya-Horn, County of Orange	Rachael Johnson, Riverside County Farm Bureau
Anthony Ortega, City of Pomona	Rebekah Guill, Riverside County Flood Control & WCD
Betsy Hunter-Binns, Chino Basin Watermaster, Agricultural Pool	Regina Adigwe, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Chris Bland, San Bernardino County Flood Control	Robert Eland, City of Riverside
Cordell Chavez, City of Corona	Ryan Kearns, Riverside County Flood Control & WCD
Cynthia Gabaldon, County of San Bernardino	Shane Johnson
Favian Tong, Regional Water Quality Control Board	Steven Wolosoff, CDM Smith
Jagroop Khela, Regional Water Quality Control Board	Stormy Osifeso, City of Riverside
Jared Ervin, Geosyntec	Terri Reeder, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Kelcey Chung, GEI Consultants	Tess Dunham, Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP
Kevin Dunn, OCPW	Toyasha Sebbag, City of Rialto
Kimberly Colbert, Colbert Environmental Group (representing the City of Claremont)	Gil Botello, SAWPA
Lauren Briggs, Regional Water Quality Control Board	Jasmin Hall, SAWPA
Melanie Sotelo, CASC Engineering & Consulting, Inc (representing the City of Rialto)	Zyanya Ramirez, SAWPA
Menu Leddy, Essential Env. & Eng. Systems	Rick Whetsel, SAWPA

1. Call to Order & Introductions

The MSAR TMDL Task Force Meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m. by Rick Whetsel at SAWPA with all participants participating remotely.

2. Approval of Meeting Notes from the March 6, 2025 MSAR Task Force Meeting

The March 6, 2025 meeting notes were approved as posted.

Regional Water Quality Monitoring Meeting Items

1. Update: 2024-25 Santa Ana River Regional Bacteria Monitoring Program (Steven Wolosoff, GEI Consultants)

Steve Wolosoff of GEI Consultants provided an overview of monitoring efforts and results from across the watershed. He explained that sampling is conducted at four tiers of priority sites, with the most intensive focus on lakes and streams with high recreational use. The 2024 monitoring season experienced some disruptions due to wildfires, thunderstorms, and even a bear sighting, which required rescheduling certain collections. Despite these challenges, sampling goals were largely met, with both dry and wet weather data collected.

Several improvements were made to the data dashboard, including migration to SAWPA's domain, streamlined lab data integration, and enhanced visualizations showing both grab samples and geomeans. Results showed that priority one sites, including Big Bear Lake, Canyon Lake, and Lake Elsinore, generally met recreational water quality standards, though occasional spikes in bacteria were observed, particularly linked to algal activity. Mountain stream sites also reported lower levels this year compared

to past fluctuations. Priority three sites, which are impaired but lack TMDLs, showed mixed results, with Serrano Creek, Golden Star Creek, Warm Springs Creek, and Santa Ana River Reach 4 continuing to report elevated bacteria levels, while Borrego Channel was mostly dry.

Newer monitoring sites, such as those in Santa Mateo Creek, were also discussed, with observations of bacteria accumulation in effluent-dominated sections. Overall, priority one sites remain supportive of recreational uses, while several impaired creeks require continued investigation and monitoring.

2. RWQM Task Force Administration (SAWPA Staff)

Rick Whetsel reported that there were no administrative updates at this time. He noted, however, that a draft of the 2024-25 Santa Ana River Regional Bacteria Monitoring Program Report will be released to the Task Force and Regional Board on April 30. No questions or comments were raised.

Middle Santa Ana River TMDL Meeting Items:

1. Update: Limited MSAR Basin Plan Amendment (Tess Dunham/KSC and Steven Wolosoff/GEI)

Tess Dunham of KSC reported that there were no major updates on the limited revisions to the Basin Plan Amendment, as the draft technical report remains under review by the Regional Board's legal team. Terri Reeder confirmed the process is still pending legal completion. Steve Wolosoff then presented monitoring updates, noting improvements in Mill and Cucamonga Creek following the Mill Creek wetlands project, though with seasonal fluctuations in bacteria levels. He also discussed recent wet weather sampling, which showed expected spikes in bacteria loads during storm events and raised questions about how the high flow suspension criteria affect compliance considerations. Monitoring in Chino Creek revealed consistent exceedances of waste load allocations in dry weather, highlighting the need for further source identification. Prado Park Lake generally meets standards due to rerouted stormwater, but weekly bacteria variability suggests a potential link to algae blooms, prompting calls for more coordination with HABs monitoring.

Additional updates on Reach 3 and 4 of the Santa Ana River highlighted altered flow patterns from Corps of Engineers regrading work and ongoing tracking of bacteria trends, with some signs of improvement but continued variability across sites. Overall, discussions emphasized the importance of understanding seasonal and weather-driven fluctuations, high flow suspension applicability, and possible expanded monitoring approaches to inform compliance efforts.

2. Discussion: 2026 Triennial Report Scope of Work (Steven Wolosoff/GEI)

Rick Whetsel reminded stakeholders that the report is due to the Regional Board by February 15, 2026, and emphasized the need to begin preparations. Steve Wolosoff explained the importance of conducting a 2025 synoptic study to support the report, citing ongoing exceedances of waste load allocations and the need to evaluate the effectiveness of past CBRP efforts. He outlined how the study would prioritize Tier 1 outfalls, assess bacteria load reductions, and inform future mitigation actions. Stakeholders discussed refining the scope to reduce redundancy and costs, including reusing elements of the 2019 study plan and updating only where necessary. Ryan Kearns and Abigail Suter raised concerns about study design, quality assurance, and training components, suggesting opportunities to streamline efforts. Tess Dunham recommended an expedited approval process, proposing that a revised scope be circulated for stakeholder review and approved via email rather than waiting for the next meeting. The Task Force agreed with this approach, and Steve committed to providing a refined proposal for distribution.

3. Status Update: Bacteria Reduction Implementation Activities

Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFC&WCD)

Ryan Kearns (RCFC&WCD) provided an update on bacteria reduction activities. The district completed a technical memorandum summarizing five weeks of sampling at Tier 1 outfalls for E. coli and HF183, with results to be included in the next triennial report. In partnership with Geosyntec, the district also finalized a dry weather MS4 bacteria compliance strategy report

addressing 13 outfalls draining to Reach 3 of the Santa Ana River, including conceptual structural designs, cost estimates, and implementation schedules. A key challenge is collaborating with wastewater agencies and regulators to address high ambient TDS concentrations, which could complicate low-flow diversion projects due to effluent limit concerns under NPDES permits. Tess Dunham noted the need for further discussion regarding effluent limits and the Basin Monitoring Task Force's waste load allocation model.

Lastly, the district is preparing an RFP under its on-call contract to launch an outfall screening program in summer 2025. This visual screening effort will identify significant dry weather flows from major MS4 outfalls, update monitoring and reporting programs, and prioritize catchments for future bacteria source and Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) investigations.

San Bernardino County Flood Control District (SBCFCD)

Chris Bland (SBCFCD) reported that the district had no updates at this time but anticipates providing one at the next meeting. He noted that current efforts are focused on planning for summer activities. In response to a question from Adam Fischer, Bland clarified that the 15th Street Basin is not under SBCFCD jurisdiction but remains with the Colonies.

Orange County

Kevin Dunn (OCPW) reported that Orange County is continuing source investigation work in Newport Bay as required by their TSO, involving sampling across three prioritized subwatersheds. In addition, the County has identified septic tank locations in the unincorporated North Tustin area and has begun weekly upstream and downstream sampling to evaluate the impact of these septic systems on receiving waters.

City of Pomona and Claremont

The City of Pomona and Claremont reported no new updates at this time.

Agricultural Operators

Pat Boldt, representing the agricultural community and the Chino Basin Watermaster Ag Pool, reported that there were no new updates to share.

4. TMDL Task Force Administration (SAWPA Staff)

Rick Whetsel noted that there were no new items to report other than the upcoming draft annual report, scheduled for release on April 30. The report will cover monitoring sites under both the Regional Water Quality Monitoring Program and the Middle Santa Ana TMDL Task Force.

5. Other Business

Rick Whetsel noted that Rachel Gray has resigned from SAWPA and moved on to a new position. SAWPA is currently in the process of hiring a new Planning and Water Resources Program Manager. In the interim, Ian Achimore is serving as the lead. No additional questions or business were raised by the Task Force.

6. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting is proposed as a Joint RWQM and MSAR TMDL Task Force meeting and is scheduled for Thursday, October 9, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business for review, the meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.