

MEETING NOTES

Basin Monitoring Program Task Force July 28, 2025

STAKEHOLDERS PRESENT:

Chino Basin Watermaster, Edgar Tellez Foster
Chino Basin Watermaster, Justin Nakano
City of Corona, Melissa Estrada
City of Redlands, Karla Siordia
City of Rialto, Toyasha Sebbag
City of Riverside, Nicole Greenwood
City of Riverside (RPU), Drew Faherty
City of Riverside (RPU), Farid Ishak Boushaki
Eastern Municipal WD, Tom Henderson
Elsinore Valley Municipal WD, Jesus Gastelum
Elsinore Valley Municipal WD, Lenai Hunter
Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Bonita Fan
Inland Empire Utilities Agency, John Russ

Jurupa Community Services District, Bryan Smith
Orange County Water District, Kevin O'Toole
SBMWD/RIX/JPA, Jennifer Shepardson
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, Adekunle Ojo
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Cindy Li
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Eric Lindberg
WMWD/WRCRWA, Jennifer McMullin
WMWD/WRCRWA, Lyndy Lewis
WMWD/WRCRWA, Mallory O'Connor
YVWD, Ashely Gibson

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kahn, Soares, & Conway (KSC), Abby Taylor-Silva
Kahn, Soares, & Conway (KSC), Theresa (Tess) Dunham
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Gil Botello
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Ian Achimore
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Natalia Gonzalez
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, T. Milford Harrison

SBCCD, Vivian Trinh
WSC, Joe Kingsbury
WSC, Michael Cruikshank
West Yost, Sodavy Ou
Amber Velasco

STAKEHOLDERS ABSENT:

City of Beaumont
Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District
Irvine Ranch Water District

San Geronimo 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 with participants participating remotely. Brief introductions were made.

Approval of May 2025 Meeting Notes

The March 22, 2025 meeting notes were approved as posted.

Schedule of the Task Force's Long-Term Deliverables – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

Ian Achimore of SAWPA provided an updated overview of the Task Force's long-term deliverables, structured around three main components established by the 2004 Basin Plan amendment: the Santa Ana River Annual Report, the waste load allocation model, and ambient water quality recomputations. Key updates included ongoing work for the Reach 3 Special Study, continued efforts to understand potential groundwater data gaps in 11 high-priority management zones (due date to Regional Board December 31, 2025), and planning for the next ambient water quality recomputation (due to Regional Board October 31, 2028). The next waste load allocation model update is scheduled to begin scoping in 2028. Ian also noted future data collection to begin in 2027 by the State Water Board for their Integrated Report. The schedule will be updated regularly to track progress. Tess Dunham of KSC also announced that Eric Lindberg has been appointed the new Executive Officer of the Santa Ana Water Board, effective August 1, 2025.

Final 2024 Annual Report of Santa Ana River (SAR) Water Quality – Tess Dunham (KSC), Rick Whetsel (SAWPA), Ian Achimore (SAWPA)

The Task Force reviewed the final draft of the 2024 Santa Ana River Water Quality Annual Report, which fulfills annual reporting obligations under the 2004 Basin Plan amendment related to the Salt and Nutrient Management Program. Ms. Dunham provided background on the purpose of the report, which assesses surface

water quality for SAR Reaches 2–5 to ensure compliance with applicable water quality antidegradation objectives. This year’s report includes new data from the Task Force’s consultant CWE for Reaches 4 and 5 and incorporates an additional “alternative approach” for assessing compliance with the Santa Ana River Reach 3 baseflow-related objective, using the following three-part baseflow definition:

1. monitoring data collected between April 1 and October 31;
2. no precipitation events or imported water discharge within four days prior to sampling, and
3. the water level elevation of the conservation pool behind Prado Dam is at or below the level that the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) considers empty (472 ft-above mean sea level).

Three public comments were received and addressed: (1) adding language to the conclusions noting POTWs may operate well below discharge limits thus improving water quality in the Santa Ana River, (2) suggesting the inclusion of new historical graphs for Reach 3 TDS, and (3) questioning the inclusion of October baseflow data, which the Task Force chose to retain. Due to time constraints, the graphing request will be considered for next year’s report. The revised report will be finalized and submitted to the Regional Board by the August 1st deadline.

CWE Consultant Responses to the Task Force’s 2024 SAR Data Comments (Reaches 4 and 5) – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

Mr. Achimore provided a summary of consultant CWE’s responses to comments received on the 2024 quarterly surface water quality data collected for Reaches 4 and 5 of the Santa Ana River. This data was collected as part of a work plan adopted by the Task Force two years ago, which established three new monitoring locations: at Riverside Avenue, Mission Avenue, and E Street. The data was distributed in spreadsheet form and included a summary tab prepared by SAWPA comparing nitrogen and TDS levels to anti-degradation objectives. Two comments were received: one questioning a discrepancy between EC and TDS values at the Mission Avenue site, and another suggesting a potential date error for an August sampling event. CWE confirmed both items were not errors—field instruments recorded accurate values, and the August sample was indeed taken on August 29. With no corrections needed, CWE will now proceed to upload the validated data to the State Water Board’s CEDEN database, as required in their scope of work.

Special Study of Total Dissolved Solids for SAR Reach 3 – Joe Kingsbury, WSC

Joe Kingsbury, of WSC, presented progress on the mass balance analysis for Santa Ana River Reach 3. The analysis uses two baseflow definitions as requested by the Task Force. Mr. Achimore noted that the new analysis incorporates updated data beyond what was included in the Task Force’s Reach 3 2015 mass balance study, addressing previously unanalyzed time periods. Questions were raised regarding the potential impact of rising groundwater on TDS concentrations, particularly in Reach 3. Bryan Smith, of JCSD, inquired about the specific areas experiencing rising groundwater. Mr. Kingsbury and Mr. Achimore responded that rising groundwater areas were identified in the latest waste load allocation model and would be further examined using existing field studies. Kevin O’Toole, of OCWD, observed discrepancies between flow and TDS patterns in 2018 and 2022 and emphasized the importance of evaluating possible causes, including discharges from POTWs and non-storm urban runoff (MS4). Mr. Kingsbury acknowledged urban runoff as a possible contributor and indicated that all potential inputs to Reach 3 would be considered during the monitoring plan development in Task 3 of the scope of work. The meeting concluded with next steps, including finalizing data validation, completing mass balance calculations by mid-August, and drafting a technical memo by late August. Coordination with basin managers will also begin to inform the development of the monitoring plan. Lastly, Mr. Kingsbury highlighted ongoing field studies by CSU Fullerton, which use thermal and ground-truthing methods to locate areas of rising groundwater in Reach 3.

Potential Data Gaps & Summary of Recent Activities – Ian Achimore, SAWPA

Mr. Achimore provided an overview of recent activities related to identifying and addressing potential groundwater data gaps within the 35 Groundwater Management Zones in the Santa Ana River Watershed. He explained that this effort is in response to the 2019 Statewide Recycled Water Policy, which requires salt and

nutrient management plans to include effective monitoring networks and designate responsible stakeholders. The focus now is on 11 GMZs identified as high priority and having at least one potential data gap. These GMZs are required to assess and plan for addressing gaps by December 31, 2025. The update covered coordination with local agencies, data collection efforts, and strategies under development, such as utilizing existing wells, repurposing unused wells, and developing technical memoranda in alignment with understanding of GMZ aquifer properties. Cindy Li, of the Santa Ana Regional Water Board, clarified that responsibility for meeting the 2025 deadline lies with the individual GMZ agencies, not the Task Force as a whole. Ms. Dunham emphasized the need for a consistent process for submissions to the Regional Board to ensure clarity for both the agencies and Regional Board staff. Mr. Achimore agreed to propose a submission process to the 11 GMZs and coordinate further with Regional Board staff.

Approval of Procurement Document for Groundwater and Surface Water Items – Abby Taylor-Silva (KSC), Tess Dunham (KSC)

A closed session was held for the Task Force members to discuss and review the groundwater and surface water items.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.