



Option for 2026 Riverwalk Winter Pilot & Sucker Team Budget Update

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December 9, 2025

Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team
Meeting

Purpose of Presentation

- Facilitate discussion with Team on the desire to hold another winter Riverwalk pilot.
- Discuss the budget implications.
- Coordinate with US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding spawning season.
- Receive direction from Team.

Purpose of Riverwalk

- Habitat surveys are snapshots in time of vegetation canopy, river bottom substrate, river depth, and gravel bar locations during Fall (Oct/Nov) from 2006 to 2025
- All categories are indicators of native fish habitat.
- Keep in mind these are surveys conducted by volunteers who have been trained via video and meetings with SAWPA.



Past Discussion on River Flows

- Past discussion at Sucker Team meetings in 2024 were focused on understanding the possible changes in the River during other seasons, such as winter.
- Winter involves stormflows from precipitation.
- One of the conditions on the River that the Team can quantify relatively easily is the amount of surface water flowing. This is because there are several stream gages along the River that continually calculate surface water flow in cubic feet per second (CFS).

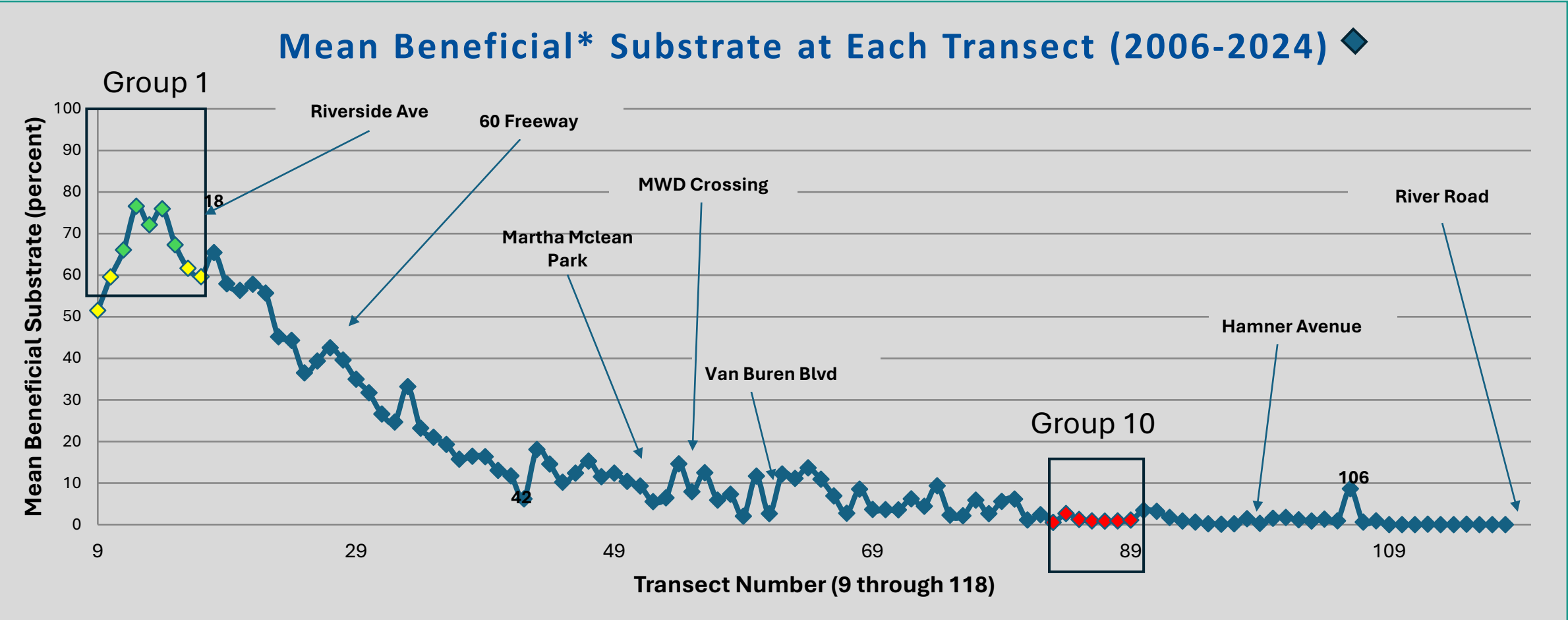


Credit: Press Enterprise

Purpose of Winter Riverwalk Survey

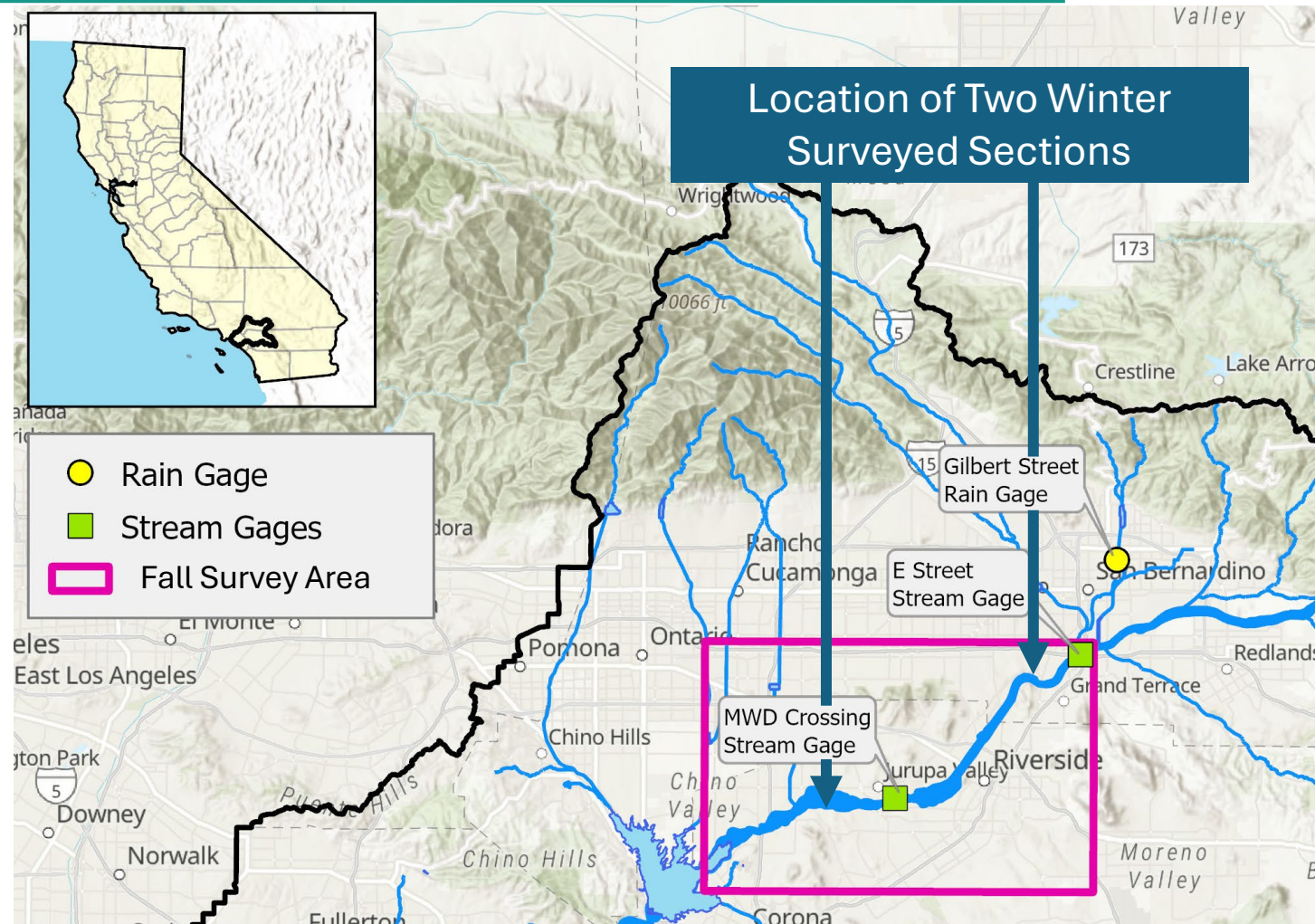
- Riverwalk past surveys are snapshots in time of canopy, substrate, stream depth, and gravel bars during Fall (Oct/Nov) from 2006 to 2025.
- A survey in the first quarter of the calendar year would provide a snapshot of those same items but after stormflows (if there are preceding storms in November, December, and early January).

Winter Riverwalk Groups Selected

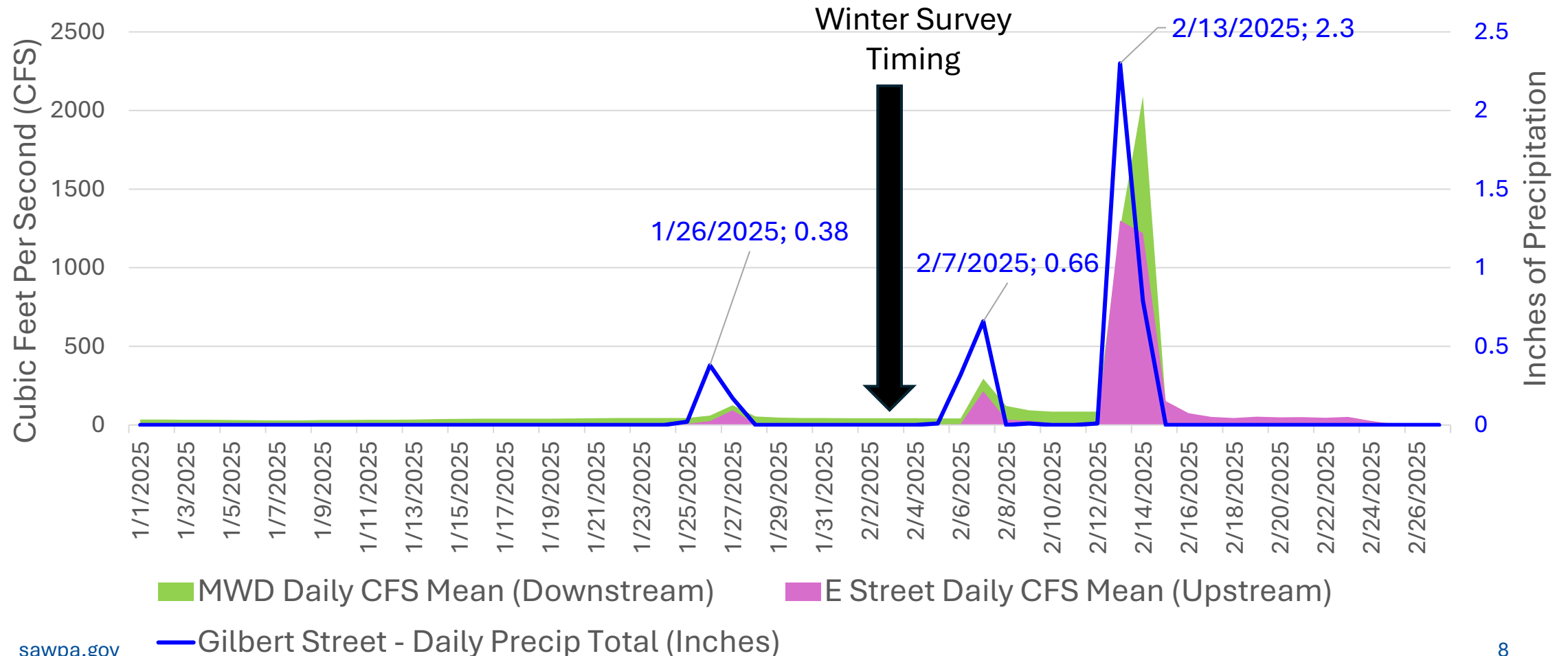


*"Beneficial" is sum of gravel, cobble and boulder detected visually at each transect point.
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Survey Sections Along Santa Ana River With Nearby Stream/Rain Gages Shown



Timing of 2025 Winter Riverwalk



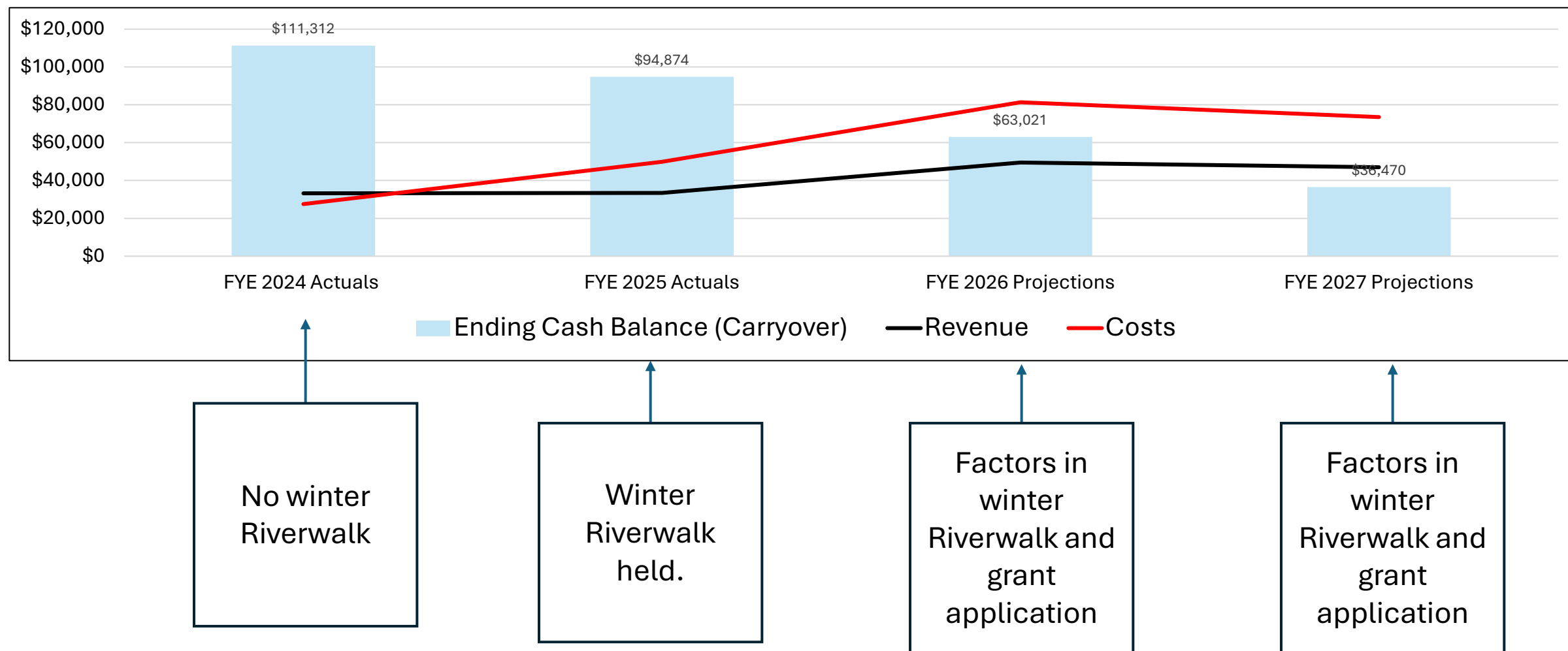


Lessons Learned from 2025 Pilot

- Safety officers from Colton Police Department and Riverside County Parks were much appreciated for safety of surveyors.
- Flows from the only major storm that took place from November 2024 to January 2025 (on January 26, 2025) did not seem to move or uproot riparian vegetation.
- Turbidity was not an issue following the January 26 storm (could easily see the bottom).
- Initial conclusions are that most winter seasons have earlier larger storms
 - Team needs to possibly determine a precipitation “trigger” as well as which rain gage(s) to use.



Budget Outlook



Recommendation

- Turbidity needs to be assessed at various rain thresholds before continuing with another winter Riverwalk.
- Budget can not withstand both Winter Riverwalk and grant applications.
 - After turbidity assessed, recommend just implementing Winter Riverwalk and no grant application.





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