

**MINUTES**  
**Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA)**  
**held on**

**Thursday, May 15, 2025**  
**at 1:30 p.m.**

at  
Garvey Community Center  
9108 Garvey Ave  
Rosemead, CA 91770

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple Street, Conference Room 830  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**TELECONFERENCE MEETING VIA ZOOM ADDRESS:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82527974711?pwd=Mr2SfsgkilOdSVDVRxaXQOFTmBv8O8.1>

**Meeting ID: 825 2797 | Password: 408315 | And by phone at: 1-669-444-9171**

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Chang called the meeting to order at approximately 1:40 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**Voting Members Present**

Vincent Chang, First District/Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles

Victoria Paul, Fifth District/Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles

Roberto Uranga, Councilmember/City of Long Beach (Arrived: 2:01)

Joe Kalmick, Councilmember/City of Seal Beach

Francisco Lopez, Second District/Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles (Designee)

**Voting Members Absent**

Daritza Gonzalez, Fourth District/Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles

Ali Saleh, Mayor/City of Bell

**Non-Voting Members Present**

Ernesto Rivera, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

**Staff Present**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General

Chad Oberly, Natural Resources & Tribal Affairs Project Manager  
 Alison MacCarley, Conservancy Project Analyst  
 Rochelle Cole, Accountant  
 Aimee Nguyen, Education & Outreach Coordinator

### 3. Public Comment

John Norvell, Mt. Baldy resident, stated his concern of WCA's management of the Mt Baldy Wilderness Preserve including the lack of ranger presence and safety measures after the drowning incident of two years ago. Novel mentioned ongoing issues such as littering, illegal activities, and fire risks. He urged better enforcement or temporary closure until adequate supervision was possible. Norvell emphasized the need to balance public access with safety and environmental stewardship.

### 4. Approval of Minutes

One set of minutes from the March 20, 2025 meeting was approved.

**Board member Kalmick moved to approve. Board member Paul seconded. Approved.**  
**Roll call vote: Ayes = 4; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0**

### 5. Chair's Report

There was no Chair's Report.

### Executive's Report

### 6. Liaison and Activities Report

Mark Stanley stated Prop 4, which passed in the general election in November 2024, funding will become available July 1st. It will provide new grants for wildfire restoration, resiliency, and nature-based solutions. State funding advances for nonprofits may increase from 25% to support capital projects. Stanley mentioned WCA is exploring expanding existing grants, including wildfire resilience and river-related projects.

Stanley mentioned bill AB 100 was signed which provides early action dollars, meaning funding is immediately available. The RMC will receive \$31 million to enhance forest and vegetation management to prevent catastrophic wildfires. WCA's grant with RMC for wildfire resiliency may be expanded using these additional funding opportunities.

Stanley mentioned bill AB 1039, State-funded assistance grants and contracts: advance payments. State funding advances for nonprofits may increase from 25% to support capital projects. WCA is exploring expanding existing grants, including wildfire resilience and river-related projects.

Stanley provided a brief highlight of the Community Connection to Wildlands program services stating WCA is entering its second year. The program provides overnight trips to youths of Southeast Los Angeles. These overnight experiences in the wildlands, mostly in the forest, provide educational outdoor experiences. Both Nunez & Nunez and Catalina Island

Conservancy have provided their first camping trips of the year. Funding covers all aspects including transportation and food.

Stanley then mentioned the River Ranger Program stating the program has been with WCA for two years and funded by the state. Due to the extra funds currently available, the program will continue into next year. At the end of the year, staff will evaluate the program, which is actually a pilot program. The pilot program is part of a study where it will be decided if it would be beneficial to extend it all along all the jurisdictions along the Los Angeles River. Stanley stated staff will be reporting at the conclusion of next fiscal year the study results.

Alison MacCarley highlighted the San Gabriel River Center (River Park House) and Gardens project. Project construction began on December 9, 2024 and is currently 70 percent completed. MacCarley stated irrigation systems have been installed and rough and fine grading has been completed. DG and permeable pavers have also been installed. With the completion of Phase one, project is now at the Phase two junction which includes the exterior renovation of the farmhouse and two external restrooms. Staff anticipate gardens to be open by November 2025.

MacCarley highlighted the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network Strategic Implementation Plan project. The project consists of a plan to develop bike and pedestrian pathways along public roads in the San Gabriel Valley. Staff with the LA County Public Works have worked together to complete outreach and engagement. Active SGV, Amigos de los Rios, and the Rowland Heights Women's Club have assisted and supported these activities. MacCarley stated the community public comment period opened on March 27th and continued for 30-days completed on April 27th. The last and final event was held at Arcadia County Park on May 3rd at its WaterFest. All outreach comments have been consolidated into a final draft report which will be given to LA County Public Works. MacCarley further mentioned that the communities are very excited about the projects that have been showcased in the implementation plan.

Stanley highlighted briefly the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open space project stating CCLB (Conservation Corp of Long Beach) was brought in to assist in some of the deconstruction of the structures and fuel clearance. These activities will continue seasonally, especially with fuel clearance. Next step would involve working with the community to continue and advance this restoration.

Stanley highlighted the Azusa Wilderness Park project stating the next steps for the project was to move into construction. Construction is anticipated to start prior to the end of 2025 which includes installation of a new sewer line, undergrounding of utilities, and construct calming feature of the road. Staff is also working with a contractor for the informational signage and working on creating a WCA uniform look.

Vice Chair Paul, asked if the last gentlemen who had shown samples, was he coming back. Stanley responded, the architect would likely return in early 2026 when the project was in that phase. Stanley stated, the project consisted of four phases: utility, grading of the overlook, architectural or pavilion and feasibility.

## 7. Expenditure Report

Rochelle Coe stated This report presents the Watershed Conservation Authority's (WCA) fiscal status for FY 2024/25 as of April 30, 2025, including budget performance, revenues, expenses, and detailed receipts and disbursements for the quarter ending March 31, 2025. JPA Contributions are below budget due to pending payment from LA County Flood Control District expected in May 2025. Coe stated Lease revenue increased by \$29,420, mainly from an unbudgeted tenant at 455 Rall Ave contributing \$22,220 year -to-date.

Coe mentioned Indirect revenues from grants exceeded expectations, driven by active RMC projects like San Gabriel River Center Development and Community Connections to Wildlands. Grant revenues are lower than anticipated as reimbursements are pending approval.

Coe stated Fiscal Services Auditor-Controller expenses are below budget due to a pending invoice for Q1 2025. Financial Audit Services have no current spending due to delayed work orders, possibly shifting to next fiscal year. Personnel services exceeded budget due to additional payroll services for 2024 tax filings, partially offset by 'Other' funds. Postage and delivery costs rose due to increased registered mail use for check security. Personnel expenses are under budget due to vacancies, especially project manager roles, with active recruitment underway.

## 8. Fund Balance Report

Rochelle Coe stated Exhibit A is the FY 24/25 Fund Balance Report with balances as of April 30, 2025. Key changes are summarized in the Fund Balance Report.

General Fund increased primarily due to contributions from JPA and Property Management received from RMC.

Personnel increased is due to a replenishment of the newly established Citizens business account with an initial deposit of \$12,500. The deposit is intended to maintain the account's starting balance, which is used to cover two pay periods of employee payroll expenses and ensure timely, uninterrupted wage payments.

River Park Operations increased due to deposits received from leaseholders. This increase was partially offset by operational expenses.

El Encanto Operations increased due to deposits received from tenants and leaseholders. However, this increase was partially offset by operational expenses.

River Park Remediation increased due to the replenishment of temporarily transferred funds from the River Park River Center Development Project.

Various Projects increased due to receipt of reimbursement requests from various projects, including the River Park River Center Development Project and the River Park House Prop 1 Project. This increase was partially offset by payroll and administrative expenses.

River Park Trail/Phase 1 increased due to the replenishment of temporarily transferred funds from the River Park River Center Development Project.

Riparian & Interpretive River Park increased due to the replenishment of temporarily transferred funds from the River Park River Center Development Project.

San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network Strategic Implementation Plan decreased due to consultant expenditures paid to Active San Gabriel Valley. This decrease was partially offset by interest earned during April 2025.

RMC Subvention increased due to the replenishment of temporarily transferred funds from the River Park River Center Development Project and the River Park House Prop 1 Project. However, this increase was partially offset by project management-related expenditures from various projects, including the Azusa River Wilderness Park, the Lower Los Angeles River Ranger Pilot Program Implementation, and the River Park House Prop 1 Project.

### **Regular Calendar**

#### **9. Consideration of a resolution to approve the preliminary Fiscal Year 2025/26 Budget.**

Rochelle Coe stated the budget covers four main expenditure categories: administrative, personnel, operations, and grants and special projects.

Cole stated in the administrative component, general administrative and operating revenue for FY2025/26 is projected at \$720,736 an increase mainly due to higher lease revenue and indirect grant revenue. Administrative expenditures totaled \$214,982, a 24 percent increase, which included LA County Auditor-Controller services, financial audits, and IT.

Cole stated in the personnel component, personnel expenses for FY2025/26 are budgeted at \$599,667, a 15 percent increase driven by consultant hiring. Of the total personnel budget, \$335,135 was allocated for consultants and \$264,532 for in-house staff salaries and benefits.

Vice Chair Paul asked, on the expenses, under legal, why was there such a big increase, \$37,000 or 24 percent. Stanley stated, due to the increased number of projects, increasing legal oversight is necessary for those activities. Stanley continued with the note that these numbers are forecasted and may not be needed.

Stanley further stated, the RMC grant revenue is significantly higher, from \$7 million to \$38 million, primarily due to the acquisition of one project, West Coyote Hills.

**Board member Uranga moved to approve. Board member Paul seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

#### **10. Consideration of a resolution for the ratification of an agreement with Cumming Group to provide construction management service for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project (WCA25511).**

Stanley stated item 10 is a resolution for ratification of an agreement between the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) and Cumming Group to provide construction management services for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project. The River Center is adjacent to the San Gabriel River. Stanley stated project is currently under construction which began in December 2024 with construction manager, Skanska.

The Skanska contract began in October 2024. The agreement was amended for cost increases three times. Stanley stated Skanska requested another cost increase in March. This increase would have more than tripled the last increase and which was seven times as much as the original bid. Staff and Skanska could not come to agreement and both parties agreed that it was better to terminate their contract. This lead to staff contacting Cumming Group

Cumming Group, experienced with WCA projects, will provide construction management services. An agreement was signed with Cumming Group for service starting May 1, 2025. Services include coordination with WCA staff, managing contractors and architects, and ensuring project progress. Stanley stated Cumming Group have made significant progress with managing the architectural firm, Page & Turnbull as well as its general contractor LA Engineering.

Stanley stated the agreement would be through September 30, 2025, for a maximum of \$152,850. There is sufficient funding as the project will be funded by grants totaling \$7.5 million from Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County.

Stanley stated it is the recommendation that the Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board ratify an agreement with Cumming Group to provide construction management service in the amount not to exceed \$152,850 for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project.

**Board member Paul moved to approve. Board member Chang seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**11. Consideration of a resolution to authorize the Executive Officer to augment the budget for Phase One scope changes for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project.**

Alison MacCarley stated it is staff's recommendation that Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize the Executive Officer to augment the budget for Phase One scope changes for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project.

MacCarley stated in November 21, 2024, the WCA Board authorized a not to exceed agreement with LA Engineering as general contractor for Phase 1 of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project. The project was divided into three Phases due to available funding at the time.

Phase 1 included grading, irrigation, garden and landscaping, signage, lighting, cisterns, septic and electrical hookups. Phase 2 focused on the completion of all electrical, deck, roofing, restrooms, and exterior. Phase 3 is future scope which will be done in conjunction with LA county Parks and Recreation for operations and maintenance of the site.

The project's vision was centered around the Park House, a 1929 Spanish colonial revival style farmhouse. The vision is to create a garden and make use of the building as a water-wise educational resource and visitor center offering local art, water resource information, interactive features, multilingual signage, and park programming.

Upon inspection of the Park House by the project team, the construction management team (Skanska), the contractor (LA Engineering), proposed operator (LA County Parks & Recreation), it became clear the building had deteriorated significantly beyond the point of recovery. The Parkhouse is severely deteriorated, foundation cracks, wood rot, fire damage, stolen wiring, and ADA non-compliance.

MacCarley stated the project team recommends demolishing the Parkhouse and replacing it with a modern structure on the same footprint custom designed to the parks benefit. In the interim, put a modular unit in its place with restrooms and an interior work or gallery space. This will provide electrical connections and preparation for restrooms facilities to complete the current phase of active construction, including all garden activity.

Phase 1 change orders include Parkhouse demolition, temporary modular facilities, and completion of electrical and garden elements to meet SEP deadlines. Phase 2 and 3 involve building stabilization, exterior improvements, restrooms, and future interior buildout, pending additional funding.

The funding for this project has been provided by grants from the RMC and Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County.

Vice Chair Paul asked if initially the thought was to rehab Park House. Stanley stated, that was correct, and the idea surfaced back in 2018. Further, he indicated the foundation was already an issue back then. Due to the significant damage, it does not make sense to rehab the structure and would be too costly.

**Board member Paul moved to approve. Board member Kalmick seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**12. Consideration of a resolution to extend the agreement with Catalina Island Conservancy for the Community Connections to Wildlands Program Service (WCA24551).**

Mark Stanley stated it is staff's recommendation that Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board extend the agreement with Catalina Island Conservancy for the Community Connections to Wildlands Program Service.

Stanley stated the program provides Southeast Los Angeles County youth with free overnight nature trips to Catalina Island, promoting environmental education, cultural awareness, and stewardship.

Catalina Island Conservancy would like to continue the Community Connections to Wildlands Program (CCWP) through February 28, 2026 extending the agreement based on the proposal

submitted December 31, 2024, for 2025 services. The 2025 budget for Catalina Island Conservancy services totals \$206,804, covering transportation, equipment, food, and participant needs. The agreement extension supports continued outreach, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure program success and youth engagement.

Stanley stated WCA has \$3.2 million remaining from a \$7 million RMC grant (RMC22027) for program services.

Vice Chair Paul asked how many participants per field trip. Stanley responded anywhere between 12 to 24 participants. Season has begun and ends in October 2025. The program includes the provision of tents, lanterns, and other camping gear. Personal items are supplied by the participants.

**Board member Uranga moved to approve. Board member Chang seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**13. Consideration of a resolution for a budget augmentation and timeline extension for with Catalina Island Conservancy for the capital improvement projects at Laura Stein Campgrounds (WCA24561).**

Stanley stated it is staff's recommendation that Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board approve a budget augmentation and timeline extension for the Catalina Island Conservancy's capital improvement projects at Laura Stein Campgrounds.

Stanley stated capital improvements at the Stein Camp would fund campsite erosion and upgrade tents. A timeline extension is requested from June 30th by about 1.5 months to complete work. Potential additional cost of \$140,000 for more steel-frame tents pending request.

**Board member Uranga moved to approve. Board member Kalmick seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

**14. Closed session: Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1) and (4); Name of Case: River Park Phase 1A, Step 2.**

**15. Announcement of next meeting date – Thursday, June 19, 2025 @ 1:30 pm**

**16. Adjournment**

Chair Chang adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:52 p.m.