

MINUTES
Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA)
held on

Thursday, June 26, 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 1:48 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

Joe Kalmick, Councilmember/City of Seal Beach

Ali Saleh, Mayor/City of Bell

Voting Members Absent

Roberto Uranga, Councilmember/City of Long Beach

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

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

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
 Rochelle Cole, Accountant

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Approval of Minutes

One set of minutes from the May 15, 2025, meeting was approved.

**Board member Saleh moved to approve. Board member Kalmick 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 three main items were occurring in Sacramento. The (California) Cap-and-Trade program will be continuing the same path with no significant amendments to it. CEQA, Stanley stated will have changes, mainly in streamlining the process in relation to housing. And lastly, the budget, where it is being voted on Friday, June 27th. Due to the late vote in June, the budget is behind and may delay available funding.

Stanley provided a brief highlight of the Community Connection to Wildlands program services stating WCA is entering its second year. Nunez & Nunzez and the Catalina Island Conservancy provide overnight trips to youths of Southeast Los Angeles. These overnight experiences in the wildlands, mostly in the forest, provide educational outdoor experiences. Nunez & Nunez has provided five camping trips including some to Crystal Lake and the San Gabriel Mountains. Catalina Island Conservancy has provided three camping trips so far to the Island.

Stanley stated capital improvements are nearly completed the campgrounds in Catalina Island and Camp Eaton has completed its improvements. Stanley toured Catalina Island in early June and has a site tour set for Camp Eaton in early July.

Stanley then mentioned the River Ranger Program stating Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB) participants have done maintenance and operations along the LA River through their cohort program. The program included six weeks where the participants learned about environmental works and all aspects of it along the River. This pilot program is nearing the end of its second year. Staff will be making a recommendation back to the legislature on the value of the program in working along the entire 51-mile Los Angeles River.

Stanley stated the San Gabriel River Center (River Park House) and Gardens' construction on Phase One is almost complete. Further details and action items of Phase One and Two will be presented under the regular calendar.

Stanley highlighted the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open space project stating over the last several months maintenance improvements, including demolition and cleanup of property has been completed. 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 stating project is moving to the construction phase. Cummings Group, the construction manager, will assist with putting together a bid package for construction which is anticipated to be before the end of the year. The project will be split into four phases. Phase One will be all the utility work and realignment of the road.

Stanley highlighted the Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning project. Stanley stated staff is working closely with Forest Service with the campsite final proposal for the Coldbrook Campground site. With the assistance of Forest Services, seventy bear proof food lockers have been installed throughout the Forest so people can store their food and minimize bear attraction.

Chair Chang asked how students are selected for the camps. Stanley stated, the local school districts select between twelve to twenty-four students and provide a chaperone to go with them on camping trips. One challenge that is being encountered right now and has slowed down the program activity are the immigration sweeps.

7. Expenditure Report

Rochelle Coe stated expenditure report includes Exhibit A, which represents the Watershed Conservation Authority's (WCA), is the FY 2024/25 including fund balances as of May 31, 2025.

Coe stated under revenues, the JPA Contributions line item is currently below year-to-date budget projections, as the Authority anticipates receiving payment from the LA County Flood Control District in June 2025. for the quarter ending March 31, 2025.

The increase in lease revenue is primarily attributed to the inclusion of lease income from 455 Rall Ave and El Encanto Unit 96, which had not been originally projected in the budget due to unforeseen circumstances. Tenants have contributed \$26,664 and \$17,000 year-to-date, respectively, accounting for most of the \$58,370 increase over the budgeted amount.

The increase in indirect revenue collected from eligible grants is primarily due to higher-than-anticipated indirect costs generated by multiple active RMC projects. The San Gabriel River Center Development Project and Community Connections to Wildlands contributed significantly, accounting for a substantial portion of the total indirect revenue collected year-to-date.

Coe stated under expenses, the Fiscal Services Auditor-Controller line item is currently below the year-to-date budget projection due to a pending final invoice, period of April to June 2025, from the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller.

Coe mentioned the Legal Services line item is currently below the year-to-date budget projection due to a pending invoice from the Department of Justice (DOJ). The remaining balance is expected to be utilized as additional activity occurs throughout the year.

8. Fund Balance Report

Rochelle Coe stated Exhibit A is the FY 24/25 Fund Balance Report with balances as of May 31, 2025. Key changes are summarized in the Fund Balance Report.

River Park Operations increased due to deposits received from leaseholders. However, this was partially offset by operational expenses.

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

Various Projects increased due to reimbursement requests received from various projects, including the Mount Baldy Wilderness Preserve Fuel Modification Project and the Lower Los Angeles River Ranger Pilot Program Implementation. However, this increase was partially offset by payroll and administrative expenses.

Consent Calendar

- 9. Consideration of a resolution to approve a second contract extension with Faby Sarwono for professional financial consulting services (WCA24555).**
- 10. Consideration of a resolution to approve a third contract extension with Nicole Law for professional financial consulting services (WCA24553).**
- 11. Consideration of a resolution for a contract amendment with the Conservation Corps of Long Beach for an extension of the River Ranger Pilot Program service (WCA20513).**
- 12. Consideration of a resolution for a contract amendment with Ersoylu Consulting for an extension of the River Ranger Pilot Program evaluation services (WCA22515).**

Board member Kalmick moved to approve Items 9,10,11,12. Board member Saleh seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 4; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.

Regular Calendar

- 13. Consideration of a resolution to approve the Fiscal Year 2025/26 Budget.**

Stanley stated in May a preliminary budget was presented to give the public the opportunity to view the budget. In June, the Budget for FY 2025/26 is presented including the narrative and all the financial changes that take place in the budget. 2024/2025 fiscal activities and accomplishments are summarized in the budget.

Stanley stated details of significant funds awarded are provided in the report. \$330,000 was awarded for the vegetation at the San Gabriel River Park. \$9.3 million for the Florence Place Revitalization project, a brownfield, which will be converted into a park. \$16 million for the Wrigley Heights River Park acquisition and the additional \$3.3 million grant for the planning project. And \$1.5 million for the East Fork San Gabriel River with additional funding expected in the next fiscal year.

Stanley stated some of the major projects that are currently being worked on include the San Gabriel River Park, the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens, the River Rangers program, the Community Connection to Wildlands, and Azusa Wilderness Park. Work is also being done in the San Gabriel Mountains which includes the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills Open Space planning efforts.

Stanley stated WCA's organization chart includes the Governing Board, Legal Council, Fiscal, Wilderness Park caretaker, facilities administrator and project managers. Those with asterisk refer to items in the agenda to authorize bringing in supplemental staff to support current staff.

Stanley highlighted the fiscal process which is how the budget is put together and presented. The major funding sources where funds are received from such as state funds, from water boards directly from Sacramento, local funding through WCA JPA partner, are numerous.

Stanley stated WCA's net assets were \$34 million, with \$4 million in cash flow down from \$4.8 million from the previous year. Revenues are going to be over \$7.1 million with expenditures at \$7 million. Staff anticipate additional revenue from agencies such as the California Coastal Conservancy and from West Coyote Hills. Revenue is received from WCA properties that is rental revenue and commercial revenue.

Stanley stated in terms of expenditures, most is spent on projects, some administrative expenses and the biggest, personnel expenses. \$875,000 is budgeted on personnel with no anticipated major changes. Personnel expenses includes what is paid for employee benefits. The biggest portion of administrative costs is the auditor controller costs followed by information technology. In general operation expenses, insurance is the biggest part of that expense followed by utilities.

Stanley stated the budget will be \$7.1 million, which includes capital projects. Expenditures are going to be just under \$7 million with a gap of \$74,000 for any unforeseen expenses.

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

14. Consideration of a resolution to authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into agreements for Project Management contracted services.

Mark Stanley stated it is staff's recommendation that Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into agreements for Project Management contracted services.

Stanley stated Skanska USA negotiation process for projected management services did not align with WCA. Staff then issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for project management services to supplement staff activities. Proposals are due tomorrow with the expectation that WCA will receive a number of different organizations' responses.

Stanley stated project management services will provide assistance with the development of WCA projects. The contractor will provide services such as project management, identify deliverables, manage risk, provide effective communication with our allies and state project partners, planning and scheduling, resource allocation, budgeting and cost control, monitoring and controls and quality management. Project management services have proven to be an effective management approach.

Stanley stated the fiscal impact of contracting these services is over 95 percent will be grant funded and the remaining 5 percent will be administratively funded.

Stanley stated the recommendation is that the Board authorized the executive officer to negotiate and enter into agreements because there's likely to be multiple organizations that we work with for project management contracts. The Board will be providing the EO the authorization to choose the organizations. If there is a significant issue, then it would be brought forth to the Board.

Vice Chair Paul asked who would pick the company. Stanley stated, the Executive Officer.

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

15. Consideration of a resolution to authorize Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a contract for Sign Fabrication for Phase 1 of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.

Mark Stanley stated it is staff's recommendation that Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a contract for Sign fabrication for Phase 1 of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project for an amount not to exceed \$150,000.

Stanley stated the sign fabrication is part of Phase 1 of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for a Sign Fabricator. The sign fabricator will take the design of the signs that WCA has, and they will fabricate them. They will provide WCA with a sign prototype to approve, complete sign fabrication and sign installation in the park.

Stanley stated this will conclude Phase 1 of the project. It is the last component of Phase 1, and it satisfies the requirement for the Supplemental Environmental Project Fund grant that WCA received.

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

16. Consideration of a resolution to authorize Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into an agreement with Page & Turnbull for architectural services for Phase II of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.

Mark Stanley stated it is staff's recommendation that Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into an amendment seven (7) with Page & Turnbull for architectural services for Phase 2 of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project for an amount not to exceed \$50,000..

Stanley stated the conditions for Phase 2 have changed which necessitates reengagement with the architect. The Parkhouse being in disrepair needs to be removed. The building will be demolished and installing modular units in its place. WCA needs the architect to update their plans for that demolition and for the modulars to be put in place.

Stanley stated WCA will be working with LA County Parks and Recreation, operators of the Center, in terms of what the modular units will look like. In order to keep the project moving forward, updated architectural plans are needed. The architect will be provide the plans in July. Stanley does not anticipate this cost to be more than \$50,000.

Stanley stated significant things will be done including demolition of the building, new utility work, new plumbing and a have a rainwater system hook up to the existing tanks that have been put in place. The architect will stay engaged throughout the construction budget process which is anticipated to be through April 2026.

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

17. Consideration of a resolution to authorize Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a contract for Phase II construction for San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.

Stanley stated it is staff's recommendation that Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a contract for Phase II construction for San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.

Stanley stated WCA needs to issue a bid package to hire a general contractor for the engagement of Phase 2, the demolition of the Parkhouse. Abatement is required prior to the demolition of the building and installation of the modular units. Demolition is anticipated to be completed by November if a general contractor is hired, which would allow the Gardens to be opened in November. The Gardens would be closed again to put the modulars in place and it is anticipated a reopening in April 2026.

Stanley stated to move the project forward, the timing of hiring the general contractor to begin this process of abatement and demolition by November is essential.

Board Member Kalmick ask if you would be able to document the existing building prior to it being demolished. Stanley stated yes and further mentioned that Staff have historical photos of the Parkhouse building.

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

- 18. 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.

Closed session commenced at 3:00 pm, ending at 3:08 pm.

- 19. Announcement of next meeting date –** Thursday, July 24, 2025 @ 1:30 pm

20. Adjournment

Chair Chang adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:08 pm