

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

**Thursday, January 15, 2026**  
**at 1:30 p.m.**

at  
Garvey Community Center  
9108 Garvey Ave  
Rosemead, CA 91770

**TELECONFERENCE MEETING VIA ZOOM ADDRESS:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82394214374?pwd=gETzBzJ4kWiWBw4ff37QM6oxLL6Xuy.1>  
**Meeting ID:** 823 9421 4374 | **Password:** 971713 | **And by phone at:** 1-669-444-9171

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Chang called the meeting to order at approximately 1:32 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

Daritzza Gonzalez, Fourth District/Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles (Arrived:  
1:40pm)

**Voting Members Absent**

Roberto Uranga, Councilmember/City of Long Beach

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

**Non-Voting Member Present**

Ernesto Rivera, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

**Staff Present**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General

Rochelle Cole, Accountant

Arianne Garcia, Project Manager

### 3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

### 4. Approval of Minutes

One set of minutes from the September 25, 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 Officer's Report

### 6. Liaison and Activities Report

Mark Stanley provided a highlight of the legislative update indicating that the Governor proposed a budget for 2026-2027. For the fiscal year, the deficit amount dropped and is only \$3 million as opposed to the \$18 million that everyone was anticipating. Staff will continue to monitor funding and will bring to Board any items that are relevant to RMC programs, funding allocations and administrative requirements. Stanley stated staff will report in the Spring of revisions and report around May if budget is signed for the fiscal year in June.

Stanley stated Proposition 4 has had delays in its rollout. Primary due to their not being exempted for the APA (Administration Procedure Act). As it is typically part of the legislative approval, the APA exemption was not included in the vote this year. This delayed the rollout which meant the organizations must develop their own regulations. If there is no approval for each agencies' regulations before July 1st and if the budget gets past in time, it is not part of the budget.

Stanley stated in terms of funding, our major funding partner RMC, has over \$120 million in Prop 4 and another \$35 million that will come into our project areas. \$25 million for West Coyote Hills and \$10 million for parks and outdoor access programs which WCA will be able to take advantage of.

Stanley stated in terms of the legislation, the legislative body just reconvened at the beginning of January. This is the second half of the two-year session and will conclude in August of this year. Not much activity in terms of impacts for WCA as body just reconvened. Board will be updated of any legislation that moves forward that may impact the WCA.

Stanley stated in terms of Federal legislation, Congress is in debate over 2026 spending package relating to energy, the interior/environment, commerce/justice/science as part of efforts to fund the government through January 30th. The package does include reductions for these programs.

Stanley highlighted the Community Connection to Wildlands project. The program concluded in November and had a total of 26 trips that were provided by Nunez & Nunez and Catalina Island Conservancy. Staff anticipate they will continue to provide these services through 2026.

Greater definition will be provided moving forward to include marketing the program to the Southeast Los Angeles community.

Stanley highlighted the River Ranger pilot program stating the pilot program will conclude in the first quarter of 2026. Staff anticipate providing a report on the activities that took place and will report on their findings. The Program was a reach zone along the Lower Los Angeles River primarily focused around the Rio Hondo confluence. Over the two-year period, staff was able to test several ways of implementing Rangers of the LA River.

Stanley stated the San Gabriel River Park Vegetation project was complete. The project involved planting new vegetative elements within the San Gabriel River Park. The Conservation Corps of Long Beach are monitoring the plant onsite until they are fully established.

Stanley stated WCA staff is partnering with various agencies in the acquisition of several hundred acres of open space. Staff in partnership with Coastal Conservancy, the funder, the California Wildlife Conservation Board and working with Chevron to acquire West Coyote Hills. That acquisition is nearly 500 acres of open space. Stanley stated Florence Place, in the City of Bell Gardens, is the other acquisition staff is working on. Staff is working with DTSC in terms of acquiring the open space as it requires cleanup and were just informed that they will be allowed to move forward with the purchase.

Board Member Paul asked what city the Chevron acquisition was at. Stanley stated, in the City of Fullerton.

## **7. Expenditure Report**

Rochelle Coe stated expenditure report includes Exhibit A, the fiscal year 2025/26 Budget with balances as of December 31, 2025.

Coe stated under revenues, the Authority received from the Rives and Mountains Conservancy: JPA Contributions in December and anticipates receiving the remaining portion from the LA County Flood Control District before fiscal year-end; property management contribution in December, completing the projected revenues for this line item; and several reimbursement payments. These included the Community Connection to Wildland, the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens, the Mount Baldy Wilderness Preserve-Fuel Modification, the Vasquez Overlook Acquisition, and the Azusa Wilderness Park Entry projects. As a result, grant revenue and indirect cost increased accordingly during the period. Staff also received reimbursement from the U.S. Forest Service for the Crystal Lake and Coldbrook Campground Improvements and Recreation Improvement Projects Phase II.

Coe stated under expenses, the Fiscal Services Auditor-Controller line item is currently below the year-to-date budget projection. This is due to the Authority receiving the first-quarter invoice and anticipating receipt of the second-quarter invoice in the near term, which is expected to maintain alignment with the budgeted allocation for this line item.

Coe mentioned information technologies line item is also lower than the year-to-date budget projection due to current staffing levels during the period. As a result, the reduced number of employees has led to lower software licensing and account subscription costs.

Coe stated, the equipment and software line item is higher than the year-to-date budget projection due to the payment of five months of service fees to Chevron & Rockers for financial software implementation. The budget will be updated to ensure continuity of these services.

Coe stated, the deferred maintenance contingency line is higher due to the one-time fumigation cost for drywood termite control, conducted at the main office of El Encanto.

## **Consent Calendar**

### **8. Fund Balance Report**

### **9. Consideration of a resolution to approve an update to the WCA Employee Handbook**

### **10. Consideration of a resolution to update the Billable Rates for Fiscal Year 2025/26**

**Board member Saleh moved to approve Items 8,9,10. Board member Kalmick seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: Ayes = 5; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0.**

## **Regular Calendar**

### **11. Consideration of a resolution to approve an update to the Fiscal Year 2025/26 Budget.**

Stanley stated there have been some changes since the budget was adopted in June 2025. In the general administrative and operating revenue, there was an increase of 9%, about \$70,000. Mainly due to additional indirect funding that WCA received from grants. Also Prop 4 coming up will allow up to 15% of WCA collecting indirect revenue.

Stanley stated in the grants and special projects there was minimal adjustment with 15% in grant revenue and 7% in grant expenses.

Stanley stated in general administrative expenses there was a 14% decrease which was related to moving legal services out of general administrative expenses into general operations expenses. Staff had originally budgeted for an increased amount of money for legal services, but most of services were paid under the grants.

Stanley stated in personnel the costs have substantially decreased. WCA went through a different direction as an organization using contractors for project management that has lowered personnel costs significantly by 78%. The costs associated with personnel therefore decreased. Project management costs are consumed in grant funds as opposed to general administrative expenses.

Stanley stated general operation expenses reflected an increase, 52%, due to the reclassified legal services, the water system replacement and deferred maintenance contingency.

Stanley stated the proposed amended FY 2025/26 budget outlines several adjustments. The updated projection change in net position is \$160,876, reflecting a significant 41% increase which is about \$84,000. Stanley stated in Exhibit A, the changes were reflected in red. Changes in red in the revenue section are a decrease and any changes in red in the expense section is basically an increase.

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

### **12. Consideration of a resolution to approve budget augmentation and timeline extension with Lynne Dwyer, RLA CA 3607, for landscape design services for the East Fork Oaks River Access Project.**

Robert Segarra, stated the East Fork Oaks project is complete in terms of construction documentation and are in the bidding and construction phase. Construction is expected to start in March 2026. Lynne Dwyer has been the landscape architect on record for the past few years and has completed the design project.

Segarra stated they are ready to move into the construction phase of the project and construction administrative services are required. Construction administration services includes RFI's reviews, submitted reviews, attending to meetings, making sure the project is in compliance with the regulatory agencies, as well as close-out help.

Lynne Dwyer's first contract was in November 2023 for \$15,000 with an amendment in March 2025 of \$7,500 to a current total contract of \$22,500. Dwyer's presented a proposal for the scope of work just mentioned, totaling \$169,934. This would bring her total contract to \$192,000 which includes a 10% contingency.

Segarra stated it is the recommendation that the Governing Board approve a second scope of work and budget augmentation in an amount not to exceed \$169,934, increasing the total contract amount from \$22,500 to \$192,434, for Agreement WCA23535 with Lynne Dwyer, RLA CA 3607, to provide construction administration services for the East Fork Oaks Access Project.

Board Member Paul asked if virtual or in-person meetings have already occurred. Segarra stated several meetings prior to the bidding phase have occurred to make sure construction documents were completed.

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

### **13. Consideration of a resolution to approve a budget augmentation and timeline extension with Withers and Sandgren contract for design services for Azusa Wilderness Park**

Ariane Garcia stated Withers and Sandgren have served as the project's lead design and engineering consultant since the inception and maintain essential historical knowledge. Their continued involvement is critical to the project's successful completion. Garcia stated their services will support project implementation and ensure compliance with approved design standards, environmental commitments, and agency requirements. Scope and budget detail are provided in Exhibit A.

Garcia stated the Azusa Wilderness Park Entry Improvements Project, Exhibit B, advances the master plan vision to expand public access to the Azusa Canyon along the San Gabriel River. The phase includes two structures, an event pavilion and a public restroom. The existing structure designs are now 10 years old and require updates.

Garcia stated Withers and Sandgreen are working with the viewing architects on the future visitor center presented to the board last summer. Withers and Sandgren continued work with Doug Ewing maintains project continuity and draws on his extensive experience in the public space design. Staff recommends increasing the budget by \$448,913 for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,165,726.

Garcia stated the recommendation is that the Watershed Conservancy Conservation Authority, Governing Board, approve the budget augmentation and timeline extension with Withers and Sandgren for design services for the Azusa Wilderness Park project in an amount

not to exceed \$440,913, increasing the total contract amount from \$716,813 to a total amount to exceed \$1,165,726.

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

**14. Consideration of a resolution to approve budget augmentation and timeline extension with Page & Turnbull to provide additional Architectural and Engineering services for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Phase II Project (WCA21511).**

Ariane Garcia stated Phase 1 of the demonstration garden was completed in August of 2025 and in December 2025, Page & Turnbull (P&T) and its consultant, A&E Team, completed a Phase II implementation study, including programming, concept design, and basis of design documents. These documents provide the foundation for advancing the project. P&T has led the design and engineering consulting since project inception and maintains essential historic knowledge. Their continued involvement is critical to the success of project delivery. Scope and budget details are provided in Exhibit A

Garcia stated the team will deliver full design, documentation, permitting, and construction administration services. Phase 2, completing the demonstration garden and designing a new visitor center building are provided (Exhibit B). WCA has directed P&T to design the visitor center using a modular system to reduce cost and expedite delivery. The project will allow two permitting tracks. Garcia stated demonstration garden permits will cover site and landscape improvements and ancillary structures. The modular building will be permitted separately. WCA will issue the full project for bidding. The general contractor will work with the modular builder to provide a deferred submittal package for permitting. Target substantial completion December 2026, as you can see in Exhibit C.

Garcia stated P&T Architectural Services totaled \$285,515 with supporting A&E services of \$299,370 for a combined design with services total of \$603,385 including travel, printing, and delivery costs of \$18,500. WCA 21511 contract was \$269,679,000. Seven amendments have increased the contract to \$471,729,000, including the most recent \$50,000 phase 2 study. With today's recommended action, the total not to exceed contract value to P&T will be \$1,075,114. Garcia stated construction funding for Phase 2 will be drawn from RMC-22013, RMC-25009, and Supplemental Environmental Project SEP funds.

Garcia stated the recommendation is that the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board approve a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a budget augmentation and timeline extension with Page & Turnbull (P&T) an the amount of \$285,515 in architectural service and \$318,870 in architectural and engineering (A&E) services and additional material cost for a total not to exceed \$603,385 for Phase 2 of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens project.

Stanley stated the demolition of the house at Duck Farm has begun and will be completed this week. The modular building will be the new learning center and will be operated by the LA County Parks and Recreation.

Board Member Paul asked to refresh her memory on the doubling of the project's budget. Stanley stated is was related to the architect work for phase 1 and now in phase 2, the architect is need to stay on board until construction is finished.

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

**15. Consideration of a resolution to to authorize Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a construction contract for the Azusa Wilderness Park.**

Mark Stanley stated this authorization was to bring on a contractor to do construction. This is also WCA headquarters along Highway 39, which is the entrance to the national parks. Stanley stated this is also an active park location today.

Stanley stated the need is to bring in an organization that can do the construction. We are already in the procurement process, are already pre-qualifying firms to do the work in conjunction with Cumming Group who is managing the entire process of construction. Cumming Group has already started pre-qualifications of organizations by putting together the solicitation packet and planning events. The timing of the pre-qualification process started on December 31st, and it's going to run through almost the end of January 2026. Stanley stated a bidding and procurement process will begin around the end of March and anticipate construction will be between June 2026 through June 2027. The elements

Stanley stated the elements of the project include architectural structures, site improvements, park amenities, civic and infrastructure and nature-based features. This includes the construction of an event pavilion, visitor center that will be onsite, a new entry gate, udagraded park signage, a children's playground near the entrance of the Wilderness Park and a bigger overlook. Stanley stated there will be a big amount civil work which includes the realignment of Old San Gabriel Road, asphalt and concrete paving. . ere will be a There's going to be a pavilion area.

Stanley stated funding for the project's design and engineering is provided by RMC 22021, a grant from the Los Angeles County Regional Park & Open Space District and California Natural Resources River Parkways grant. The funding total is about \$90 million.

Stanley stated it is the recommendation that the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board approve a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a construction contract for the Azusa Wilderness Park Entry Improvements Project.

Chair Chang asked if the bike path would be connected to Azusa Wilderness Park. Stanley stated yes, the plan is to make that final connection and create a way over Highway 39.

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

**16. Consideration of a resolution to authorize Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a construction contract for the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Phase II Project.**

Mark Stanley stated this project is for the construction aspect of the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Phase 2 project. Staff will be pre-qualifying construction contractors for this project. This began at the end of December 2025 and will run through the end of this month. The procurement process will be towards the end of February and will run through the first part of April 2026. Staff will be using the same format as previously mentioned in Item 14.

Stanley stated the enhancements here are the demonstration garden, the visitor center building, and the modular procurement. The project's vision is that the project be a demonstration art with the visitor center being a waterwise education center. There will be signage throughout the site that will speak towards how you can use some these features elsewhere. Demonstrating that this garden may be duplicated at your own home.

Stanley stated the project is part of the overall San Gabriel River Park. San Gabriel, the larger portion of River Park opened in 2024 and is about 30 acres of land. There will be an additional third phase as there is additional land just south of this location and will be working with LA County Parks and Recreation on that development.

Board Member Kalmick how the original Park was looking today. Stanley stated it was in excellent condition. Staff indicated they would like to see more foot traffic.

Stanley stated the recommendation that the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board approve a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter into a construction contract for the SanGabriel River Center and Gardens Phase II (2) project.

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

#### **17. Consideration of a resolution updating the policy for online remote participation in the Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board Meetings.**

John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General, stated Item 17 is brought before the Board to give them the opportunity to discuss and vote on the current policy of online remote participation to the WCA Board meetings. This item stemmed from a continuation Conservancy discussion back in December about how remote participation is handled during these board meetings.

Natalizio stated the WCA Board is a JPA which exercises the joint powers of the RMC and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and is governed by the Brown Act. Under the under the Brown Act, there are effectively two options for teleconference meetings: traditional and alternative. Teleconference meetings occur when members participate at different locations and communicate with each other electronically through audio, or audio and video. Under the traditional teleconference rules, the WCA does not need to provide video access to the meetings, nor does it need to provide online remote access through platforms such as Zoom or Teams.

Natalizio stated WCA Staff is asking this board to consider removing voluntary access to Zoom during meetings. For the reasons put in this board report (see Board report), Staff asked this board to consider removing that zoom requirement unless it's required by law.

Natalizio stated it is WCA's staff recommendation to the Board to only provide remote access (Zoom/Teams) when required by law, rather than continuing voluntary remote options. This would effectively end virtual public comment options except for in-person attendance at designated locations.

Natalizio stated staff's reasons for this request are the lower the risk of zoom bombings; lower burdens on staff and costs for providing zoom participation capabilities; and staff desire for a more uniform approach between the public meetings of the three conservancies (San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, Watershed Conservation Authority, Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority).

Natalizio stated, therefore it is WCA's staff desire to return to compliance only with the traditional teleconference rules, which do not require an online remote participation option such as Zoom. Staff requests that the Board approve the updated policy, by adopting the attached resolution, which would only provide for online remote participation when required by law.

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

#### **18. Board Member Comments**

No board member comments.

#### **19. Announcement of next meeting date – Thursday, March 19, 2026 @ 1:30 pm**

#### **20. Adjournment**

Chair Chang adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:28 pm