



June 26th 2008
QUARTERLY AGENCY MEETING

Meeting Location:
4500 Glenwood Drive #F
Riverside, CA 92501
10:00 A.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Zembal at 10:06 A.M.

II. INTRODUCTION

Introductions were made and a sign in sheet was passed around.

Attendees: Jim Earsom – NRCD; James Law – IERCD; Samantha Dempster – SAWA; Dolly Aguirre – SAWA; Dick Zembal – OCWD; Vicki Long – EMARCD; Tim Romo – SAWA; Sue Hoffman – SAWA; David Mc Michael – SAWA; Bonnie Nash – OCWD; Matt Talluto – MSHCP; Diana Ruiz – RCRC; Jennifer Ares – IERCD; Anna Milloy – CDFG; Michael Flores – CDFG; Rory Paster – OCPW; Talula Barbee – OCWD; Jeff Brandt – CDFG; Henry Armijo – SAWA; Adam Fischer – SARWQCB; Neftali Mendoza – SAWA; Hayley Lovan – USACE; and Jennette Corbitt – SAWA

Absent: Kerwin Russell – RCRC, Gayle Holyoak & Bruce Scott - SJBRCD

III. REVIEW, AMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Director Long motioned to approve the May 22nd 2008 general minutes with the following corrections on page 3:

V. Project Reports

c. Vicki Long – Elsinore-Murrieta-Anza RCD

EMARCD needs to think about doing some removal in the San Jacinto Creek area.

Director Ruiz seconded and the motion was passed with no objections.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

Director Long attended the South Coast Wild Lands meeting in Fallbrook. It was a kick-off meeting to start the program in conserving the land, which was a spin-off from the River of Life Conference.

Chairperson Zembal renewed permits for the prepared specimens and is currently working on verifying that each specimen is tagged appropriately.

V. PARTNERING AGENCY REPORTS

a. Jeff Brandt – CDFG

Jeff introduced Anna Milloy & Michael Flores as the two newest employees working in the streambed and water programs. Anna requested that Chairperson Zembal explain the Riparian Habitat Restoration for people that call regarding mitigations. Chairperson Zembal proceeded to explain the three types of work performed by SAWA consisting of ongoing restoration, active removal of invasive species and habitat creation.

Anna Milloy works in the 1600 program and water program projects that involve water quality issues and water rights issues. She comes from the Department of health and has experience in regulatory drinking water, as well as Fish and Game experience as a technician conducting fish surveys.

Michael Flores works in the 1600 program and has little involvement with the water program projects. He works with the Streambed agreements and coordinates with resource agencies working with applicants that have violations, as well as working closely with the Game warden. Michael comes from Cal Trans as an Environmental planner and has experience conducting rare plant surveys, desert tortoise surveys and Mojave ground squirrel surveys.

b. Jim Earsom – USDA/NRCS

Jim reported on the Tree Morality Program, which is an emergency program that changed into the watershed recovery program. He reported that it was winding down and that they have been asked to do an inventory on what projects might be left on private forest land for fuel modification in the San Bernardino County. They have identified 50 additional projects that range from Oak Glen, Big Bear, Lytle Creek, and the watershed. In addition to Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties, they have included Orange County, Ventura, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Counties. Jim reported that they are not sure there is funding, but acknowledges the success from the program. Last fall when they might have lost a couple hundred houses or so, it could have easily had been thousands without the modifications made by the program.

c. Rory Paster – OCPW

Rory works in the regulatory permit section and helps road/flood/park managers get appropriate permits for projects, working closely with the Corps. He reported that a large project with San Diego a few years back involving emergency sediment project, cowbird trappings and mitigation requirements were put upon them by the Fish and Wildlife Services and the Corps asked them to do the trappings.

Currently, they are working on long-term agreements with the Corps for sediment removal in Costa Mesa, Fairview Park and the lower regions are

prime for some restoration activity. Rory reported that he was excited about the in-lieu fee program from SAWA and felt it makes it easier and a better fit for the county and gives better restoration results.

The mitigation plans for the lower region for the Santa Ana River have been delayed. The Department of Fish and Game have 2.55 acre penalty on the county to do additional restoration, but they are still discussing the penalty and might engage in the in-lieu fee program with SAWA. Rory reported that he will be coming to SAWA more frequently for arundo removal projects.

d. Adam Fischer – SARWQCB

Adam reported that state and regional boards are pushing for CA Rapid Assessment Mitigation (CRAM) on sites. CRAM is essentially a tool to measure the performance of mitigation sites. Adam would like to start conditioning some of the dischargers to submit funding to SAWA that would require them to fund CRAM assessments. This information would inform them of whether or not the impact matches the mitigation. Currently he has a couple projects that are in draft and already has conditionally written in CRAM and would prefer to include funding to SAWA for assessment of sites, which SAWA would work out the fees. In addition, the in-lieu fee for payment must also include funding to conduct an assessment of the mitigation site for at least two assessments; one at the time of work or prior to and the other assessment would be done sometime after the work has been completed. Sawa would decide the timeframe for the assessments.

The other alternative if SAWA does not conduct the assessment would be to force them to hire an outside consultant to do the assessment and they would fund and conduct the assessment on their own. Adam reported that he would prefer to have SAWA do the assessment because he believes it would keep things consistent and honest.

Chairperson Zembal reported that he had helped develop CRAM through the science advisory panel and the idea was to do an assessment of the impact site and an additional assessment of the impact site after restoration to see the progression. The scale with CRAM to see the changes would actually take years, possibly up to 10 years for development.

Adam suggested he add additional funds for inflation to conduct the assessment and SAWA could include CRAM on the annual reports. Results of CRAM will not put any need for additional mitigation on the dischargers, rather it will be used as a sense of measuring the value and success of the arundo ratification efforts that will further mitigation projects and allow for adjustments.

Director Lovan asked if anyone was aware of the Corps moving in the CRAM direction. Chairperson Zembal informed her that he believes the Corps is in fact moving in that direction because the regional general permit for the sucker permit had put CRAM in it. Additionally, Fish and Game reported they had seen CRAM used at UC Davis as well.

Chairperson Zembal informed Adam that SAWA has no problem with him implementing CRAM. He would need a little time to decide on time and efforts involved before SAWA could come up with the surcharge, but he believes SAWA can come to an agreement and get back to him shortly after they come up with costs.

VI. PROJECT REPORTS

a. Hayley Lovan – USACE

Director Lovan began her report by first apologizing that she has missed the last few meetings and was happy that her schedule allowed her to be in attendance. She reported that the Corps is currently about done with construction at Prado Dam, raising the embankment and building the new outlet works. They are ready to divert the water from the old tower to the new tower and look for native fish that might be stranded in the old channel, but it is highly unlikely they will find any. There will not be any interruption of water flowing from the river during the conversion. The Corps has begun upwards for hydro seeding and the temporary areas impacted sewage treatment and housing track on Auburn Dale. They have a new environmental project scheduled for later this year within the SAWA mitigation funding and working on a supplemental Environmental Assessment, as well as finalizing an EIS for relocation down stream of Prado. Currently the Corps is working with SAWA to develop perennial restoration ideas that will benefit the Santa Ana Suckers and would appreciate any ideas.

b. Diana Ruiz – Riverside-Corona RCD

In terms of education, Director Ruiz reported that RCRCD has three part-time employees that go to schools and adult groups that do public education. It is a small component of the RCRCD program. RCRCD is conducting business as usual and the outreach consists of storm water, clean water protection for youth and adult education. Last year RCRCD reached about 8000 students and adults, which included presentations for groups. One of RCRCD's duties is to coordinate the Santa Ana Watershed cleanup in the local area.

c. Vicki Long – Elsinore-Murrieta-Anza RCD
Director Long reported that EMARCD is still working on contracts with the City of Murrieta to be able to work on existing easements and will be taking over some of the city easements. Additionally, EMARCD is working on a contract with Trout Unlimited in the San Mateo Creek area where they are trying to restore steelhead. They are trying to do things in the district to stop people from stocking non-natives in their ponds and releasing them when the storms come and they get into the creeks. In an effort to help with this problem, EMARCD is doing educational outreach and notifying pond owners. EMARCD is also looking for grants and they desperately need a manager for the district.

d. Jennifer Ares – IERCD
Director Ares reported that she is starting to back off of some of the administrative duties for SAWA because Jennette Corbitt is taking over and doing a good job. She reported that IERCD has spent time helping coordinate tours with Fish and Wildlife Services. There are five sites that consist of part 1 of 10, which probably need to go longer for a day and either start earlier or stay later, but they will have to see how it goes in the near future. Director Ares reported that she is still assisting with the Executive Director search for SAWA and that mitigation calls have picked up. IERCD contracts are finishing up, Natures Imaging has stopped and SAWA is taking over. Santa Ana Main Stem contract ran from Waterman Avenue to Hwy 30.

Jeff Brandt requested a graphic of current projects where people are working that can be updated as needed. Director Ares informed Jeff that she and Tim will pass that information on to him after James puts it together.

James is actively involved with getting land owner permission for removal for when the nesting season is over, so they can get all the permits in order and start with some removal in the San Timoteo area.

Chairperson Zembal would like to include a brief, five minute biologist presentation on a monthly basis where they can show a few slides and give updates on current projects.

Director Lovan would like information on where the Willow Star projects exist / habitat restoration / water conservation / water studies.

e. Bruce Scott – San Jacinto RCD
Absent

f. Bonnie Nash – OCWD

Bonnie reported that Tim Romo's crew sprayed off Hwy 30 and they have a lot of youth sprouts as a result of recently planting 3200 mule fat. The wash burn contract ended after two years. Beginning the week of July 7th, OCWD is hoping to start planting 5500 mule fat at Spatters S, which is a new site with few water issues to work out but believes it should be resolved this week. Talula and Bonnie are helping with the Huntington Beach Least Tern Colony and it appears to be doing well. The vireo numbers are a little over last year. They spotted 1 adult Willow Fly Catcher in the whole basin; Jim thought he saw the adult taking food to the nest, so hopefully soon they'll see kids and can verify it. Additionally, Bonnie reported that she is the chair for the SAWA audit committee, along with Hayley Lovan and Vicki Long and will be meeting next week.

OCWD has a facility in Anaheim which includes a small island that has historically had Least Terns nesting there in the past. There are public birders that have gotten involved and have kept a close eye on them because there is a problem with nests on the edge. They informed OCWD of the water level and this year OCWD has been physically managing the nests. Bonnie reported the following: 58 forester terms; active least tern nests; 9 active killdeer nests; 2 black skimmers; a couple of black-necked stilts; spotted sandpiper; and 3 active mallard nests. Currently, they are dealing with ant problems over the island which is making it difficult treating ants with the chicks around. Chairperson Zembal reported that the island habitat will be taken away before the nesting season. They'll be doing the construction and there will only be one small spot that will keep perennial water down by the pump stations, which OCWD will then float some islands out there to try to keep the terns going. The big island habitat consists of 1.2 acre available to manage coastal strand vegetation, replanting edge of pond for riparian habitat.

g. Tim Romo – SAWA

- OCWD

- Contributed more than \$7000 in herbicides and spray equipment. Two electric sprayers were purchased, a new herbicide cabinet and enough herbicides and surfactant to last the remainder of this year.
- SAWA greatly appreciates the contribution.

- Highway 71 project

- The SAWA crew sprayed about 75 to 80 sprouting eucalyptus trees.
- Spraying was so effective the trees were wilting and discoloration took place on the third day after spraying.

- Bonnie will coordinate with Tim for future treatments to control this area.
 - Santiago Creek
 - In May while spraying arundo, the crew sprayed over 100 small palm trees in the creek. In June Tim visited the site and all the palms that were sprayed have perished. Other palms have sprouted up, so the palms will be on the crews' lists to spray at this site as well as arundo.
 - PAR Project
 - RPW continued treatments at Hidden Valley for 11 days in June; SAWA monitored all 11 days.
 - Required progress reporting was updated and turned into Nancy of SAWPA
- h. Ken Kietzer – DPR**
Absent
- i. Dolly Aguirre – SAWA Education Program**
Dolly reported that they completed the last field trips for the 2008 school year and outreached to over 450 student participants since the beginning of the program back in April.

The Education Program is working on a Water Discovery Summer Program, targeting after school programs including boys & girls clubs, WMCA and the Scouts. There will be two activity stations. Currently, they are printing Water Discovery brochures along with Summer Program inserts that will be circulated.

The Education staff is on board with the Lytle is Vital project. SAWA is responsible for coordinating a series of watershed forums aimed at public education to gain appreciation and a better knowledge of Lytle Creek. They are also assisting IERCD in the Lytle is Vital kick-off event.

Dolly and Jennette ran an information booth at 3M for the Environmental Health and Safety Day. The Education staff and arundo removal team attended a first-aid training and CPR session. Next month the Education program will be attending a non-profit and grant writing workshop.

The Grant application group and SAWA Environmental Education committee met on June 10th and applied for the Toyota Environmental Activities Grant – recipients will be announced in October. The Seek Team will continue to develop the Nodes on the River program, which is the watershed wide public outreach collaboration project and conducts meetings every second Tuesday of the month; all are welcome to attend.

Dolly requested Director Long's contact information to add her to the invites.

Plans to construct a yurt next to the Chino office are being considered. If approved, it will house the SAWA Interpretive Center. Dolly spoke with Lucia from IEUA and received approval for the yurt site; however, SAWA might run into problems with power and would need to pull power from the office as well as need its' own tank if SAWA chooses to have a bathroom installed. Dolly will forward the yurt estimates to Chairperson Zembal and upon approval, she plans to set up consultations.

The Education staff will meet this upcoming Monday to brainstorm ideas and is welcome to anyone who would like to join. The Children's Library Book Drive to jump start the Interpretive Center began. There are over 100 books available for sponsorship and dedications are recognized with personalized book plates inside the books, as well as having receipts available. The Education program will be circulating the book list and appreciate any sponsors. Director Ruiz informed Dolly that the Children's bookstore in Riverside, called Imagine That, located in the Canyon Crest shopping center was closing and she is willing to pick up any relevant books.

VII. BIOLOGIST REPORT

a. Matt Talluto – MSCHP Biologist

Matt reported that MSCHP's bird work is winding down and the nest monitoring has been quite successful, with preliminary results showing higher numbers than last year. Currently, they are moving up the San Jacinto Mountains looking for some stuff that historically have indicated activity. They are about done with the Turkey Vulture monitoring and reported no nests as yet, but are difficult to find. The Herps have moved the turtle trapping effort to the San Jacinto Wildlife area. No Western Pond Turtles confirmed yet, however, there is one that is suspected but will have to wait for confirmation from the pictures. As for the mammals, they turned everything over to the SKR trapping that will be ongoing. They have finished up in the south eastern area and got some interesting results, some SKR in places they never would have before. The camera stations are still operational and continue to get some good shots. The plant work has proven to be a good year with lots of annuals that have not been seen in the last few years. Things are pretty well dried up and moving up into the mountains, focusing on higher elevation not perennial. They are starting surveys tomorrow for the Delhi Sands Fly and went out this week to set things up, which looks like it should be a good fly year.

b. Sue Hoffman – SAWA Lead Biologist

1. Vireo monitoring is going well. Numbers are up in most areas, especially Temescal, San Timoteo, and Norco Burn. Many of

the pairs are nesting a second time after successfully fledging a first clutch. The second week of assessment surveys in peripheral habitat in the watershed took place the week of May 21. Our last week of surveys will take place the week of July 7. The numbers from these surveys seem to do down.

2. Most of the cowbird traps will be closed around July 31. We are losing one of our assistants this week so we are trying to rework some schedules and routes. The Riverside County Parks and Open Space District has asked us to relocate a cowbird trap from Younglove; we are not sure why but we think it is because it is across from a new housing development. We are planning on shutting it down for the year and trying to come up with an accessible location for next year. We are also losing a good access point to Younglove at that trap location because the railroad crossing is going to be removed due to complaints from the residents of the new housing development.
3. We are discussing winter projects and the possibility of keeping on some of our better seasonal field assistants who would like to continue working. Projects include helping with surveys for focal species such as the Cactus Wren and Golden Eagles, raptor surveys, planting at the Wetlands Park and Prado, and herp trapping.
4. We stepped up our surveys for the southwestern willow flycatchers and are following up on sightings in Cajon, San Timoteo, March SKR Reserve, Norco, and Big Bear (a sighting found on line). No willow flycatchers were detected in a survey of Featherly Park upstream of Gypsum Canyon and Hidden Valley. So far, a breeding pair has not been detected. We have also surveyed for the burrowing owl in Lake Perris and Moreno Valley and the cactus wren in Chino Hills State Park, Arlington Mountain (none found), Horsethief Canyon in Temescal (none found). Nicole Peltier (almost Nicole Housel, after her wedding on Saturday), discovered a patch of Woolly Star in the middle of the Anzo Narrow *Arundo* removal project. Measurement of the corolla confirms it as the endangered subspecies, *Eriastrim densifolium ssp. sanctorum*.
5. We continue our breeding bird surveys in Norco, San Timoteo, Mockingbird Canyon, Featherly Park, and Temescal.
6. Herps arrays in Lake Perris were opened last week. The first check gave us a banded gecko, a night lizard, and many orange-throated whiptails, among other more common lizards. The rest of the week was rather uneventful. We spent some time at our last Lamppost biologist meeting discussing how to handle a rattlesnake capture. MSHCP biologists are participating in the array checks and we appreciate their help!

Megan Costello-Evans, from DWP is also participating. We will open traps again the week of July 21.

7. We have 451 nests at the Huntington Beach Least Tern Colony and we are just beginning to see fledglings. We also helped to monitor Burris Pit which has nesting by Forester's Terns, Least Terns, Black Skimmers, Killdeer, American Avocets, and Black Neck Stilts.
8. We are all very happy Jennette has come to SAWA!!!

VIII. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Zembal reiterated that he would like to add a brief 5 minute presentation by the biologists when appropriate to share anything interesting or current discoveries, including slides.

Jeff Brandt from Fish and Game would like to work on outreach for better communication with clients and people who need their services. Currently, he is preparing presentations and would appreciate the opportunity to come out and do a quick thumbnail sketch teaching about general regulatory requirements. He would like to connect with people in the community who don't know there is a streambed issue. Jeff is scheduled to do a presentation in November at the CA Association of RCD Conference. Chairperson Zembal would like to make an annual event where agencies like the Corps and Fish and Game could speak to cities/counties and various agencies about regulatory requirements. He suggested SAWA host an event and publicize to different agencies and departments to get a good attendance. A tentative date of October 7th was set for the event and Chairperson Zembal recommended Jennette Corbitt as the Chair. Research will be conducted as to the location and time for the event to take place; perhaps ask IEUA if we give them enough notice to use their auditorium. Chairperson Zembal would like to begin the coordination and get ideas to Jennette. The event would focus as a meeting for regulatory agencies to give presentations on their program and discuss changes in the regulations and how they are implemented, targeting the public, cities, counties and other agencies.

IX. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on July 24th 2008.

X. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 A.M.