



**SAWA MEETING MINUTES**

December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
 Meeting Location:  
 1835 Chicago Avenue, Suite C  
 Riverside, CA 92507  
 9:00 A.M.

**BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairperson Mills called the meeting to order at 9:02 A.M.

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Brett Mills – SJBRCD; Mandy Parkes – IERCD; Dick Zembal – OCWD; Kimberly Kuznicki – SAWA; Kerwin Russell – RCRC; Allyson Beckman – SAWA; Jennette El Morsy – SAWA; James Law – SAWA; Brian Brady – SAWA; Melody Aimar – SAWA; Maria Arellano – SAWA;

**III. PUBLIC INPUT** – Oral communication from the public audience on any subject matter within SAWA’s subject matter jurisdiction. There was no public input at this time.

**IV. CONSENT CALENDAR**

- a. Approve Minutes for September 22, 2022
- b. Approve Financial Statement for September 2022
- c. Approve Financial Statement for October 2022
- d. Approve Financial Statement for November 2022

Director Russell moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Director Parkes seconded and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

|            |               |         |     |        |     |
|------------|---------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Neugebauer | <i>Absent</i> | Russell | Aye | Parkes | Aye |
| Zembal     | Aye           | Mills   | Aye |        |     |

**V. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a. ILF Project – Brian Brady

Mr. Brady redirected the reporting to Mr. Law, who reported setting up two meetings, one with Tri Pointe Homes and the other with the City of Lake Elsinore for two new prospective projects.

- b. Treasurer’s Report – Mandy Parkes

Ms. Parkes reported there was nothing significant outstanding.

**VI. ACTION ITEMS**

- a. Discussion and Possible Approval of New Job Classification: Biologist III

Mr. Brady redirected the reporting to Ms. Aimar, who reported that this position requires at least a Biologist II level with a few years’ experience. This job classification would be in charge of managing the new database and doing GIS work. Mr. Zembal stated that having a competitive salary in order to keep good employees would be a good thing. Mr. Russell and Mr. Mills agreed.

Director Zembal moved to approve the new job classification for Biologist III. Director Russell seconded and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

|            |               |         |     |        |     |
|------------|---------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Neugebauer | <i>Absent</i> | Russell | Aye | Parkes | Aye |
| Zembal     | Aye           | Mills   | Aye |        |     |

b. Accept, Receive and File Auditor’s Report for the 2021 Financial Statements

Ms. Parkes reported that SAWA’s Audit & Finance Committee meeting was brief and without any surprises. One thing discussed at the meeting was the future of SAWA and thinking about the availability of cushion funding and going forward seeing some of it drawn down and a big portion of it used for the ILF program. For many years, the funding cushion was misrepresented as being a large amount, when much of it was restricted and has now been spent down because of work SAWA is doing. SAWA is now shifting away from relying on existing funding and more towards annual and biannual contracting. SAWA has made itself very available to and important to cities that are doing jurisdictional work and looking for a shorter-term relationship where funding is coming in for work done in the immediate term and not looking back on that existing amount of funding in SAWA’s account. Looking at SAWA’s current very successful business model, Ms. Parkes stated being comfortable with how the outlook is and felt good about the audit in general. Mr. Mills agreed.

Director Parkes moved to accept, receive and file the auditor’s report for the 2021 Financial Statements. Director Zembal seconded and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

|            |               |         |     |        |     |
|------------|---------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Neugebauer | <i>Absent</i> | Russell | Aye | Parkes | Aye |
| Zembal     | Aye           | Mills   | Aye |        |     |

c. Discussion and Possible Approval of Proposed Budget for 2023

For a copy of Mr. Brady’s Presentation, “SAWA Financial Discussion 2021 Financial Audit”, please contact Administrative Services Manager, Jennette El Morsy, at [jennette@sawatershed.org](mailto:jennette@sawatershed.org) or 951-780-1012 ext. 101.

Mr. Zembal stated that Mr. Brady did a great job bringing realism to SAWA’s finances and that things look as good as they can for such an organization. Mr. Zembal is hopeful the Course Restoration Ecosystem Project will be funded and for SAWA to be a part of that project. There are a number of individuals looking to negotiate with regulatory agencies on how to credit maintenance. As part of that, Mr. Zembal would like the restricted funds being dedicated to keeping arundo out of the watershed rather than thrown at a property under the new rules. Mr. Zembal believes there are a number of projects coming along in 2023 that will provide a better financial situation for SAWA in the years to come.

Director Parkes moved to approve the Proposed Budget for 2023. Director Russell seconded and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

|            |               |         |     |        |     |
|------------|---------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Neugebauer | <i>Absent</i> | Russell | Aye | Parkes | Aye |
| Zembal     | Aye           | Mills   | Aye |        |     |

d. Discussion and Possible Approval of SAWA Holiday and Board Meeting Calendar for 2023 Report:

Mr. Brady reported that the calendar presented is the annual list of Holidays observed by SAWA and closed for business, as well as the dates on which the Board will conduct its general meetings and hold officer elections for 2023.

Director Zembal moved to approve the SAWA Holiday and Board Meeting Calendar for 2023. Director Parkes seconded and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

|            |               |         |     |        |     |
|------------|---------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Neugebauer | <i>Absent</i> | Russell | Aye | Parkes | Aye |
| Zembal     | Aye           | Mills   | Aye |        |     |

## **GENERAL ITEMS**

### **VII. SAWA PROJECT REPORTS**

a. Brian Brady, Executive Director – SAWA

Mr. Brady reported on the Halliday & Company finalized SAWA's draft 2021 annual financial audit during the action item. Mr. Brady thanked the Board for approving the 2023-operating budget. Work continues on a revamping of SAWA's website with the assistance of CV Strategies. Mr. Brady is planning to have Mr. Meinhold of Merrill Lynch give an update to the Board in January.

b. Kerwin Russell – RCRC

Mr. Russell reported getting rain at RCRC restoration sites.

c. Dick Zembal – OCWD

Mr. Zembal reported lamenting the loss of Bonnie Johnson, as she has moved, and that David McMichael will be taking over Bonnie's position. Natalia Doshi left as well and there are job openings for both David and Natalia's positions.

d. Rick Neugebauer – Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD

Absent

e. Mandy Parkes – Inland Empire RCD

Ms. Parkes apologized that she could not attend the Board meeting in person because she had conflicting Committee and Board meetings.

f. Brett Mills – San Jacinto Basin RCD

Mr. Mills reported that normal work continues. Mr. Mills will be meeting with Mr. Law to set up future projects.

g. Jennette El Morsy, Administrative Services Manager – SAWA

Ms. El Morsy reported A/R November invoice total \$214,202.98. Finished 2021 financial audit. Draft 2023 financial budget. Finalizing end of year financials. Preparing for year-end: W2's & 1099's. SAM Government Registration Renewal. Company holiday cards/gifts. Researching a new IT server for SAWA. Working with IT to transition staff to Microsoft 360 that we received free as a Non-Profit. Staff evaluations: Admin, HRS & WHMS. Employee health benefits for open enrollment - December 1st. Staff completed California mandatory online sexual harassment prevention training. Restocking COVID supplies as needed. Working on emergency kits.

h. James Law, Habitat Restoration Services Manager – SAWA

Mr. Law reported on new job proposals and administrative tasks for Prop 84 site management, TEAM RCD/Riv. Flood assessments project updates, Riv. Flood new Riverside project, ILF admin, Arundo Harvester Pilot Project and budget. Mr. Law also updated on other work within individual member agencies jurisdictions:

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: The HRS Dept. conducted treatments to: Riv. Flood – Lake Elsinore, TEAM RCD – Fall 22 and homeless monitoring.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: The HRS Dept. conducted treatments at the following: Prop 84, SAWPA Van Buren Bridge, Temescal Canyon 3M – 2.86, Mockingbird MCB and Quail Run – Phase II.
- Inland Empire RCD: The HRS Dept. conducted treatment at: Prop 84, Sunnyslope and SCE – Alessandro Arroyo.

- San Jacinto Basin RCD: The HRS Dept. conducted treatments at: SCE – 1.2, Wolfskill 1.47 and RLC – Alessandro Arroyo.
- Orange County Water District: The HRS Dept. conducted treatments at; Prop 84, CDFW – Upstream River Rd., Irvine Park and Santiago Phase II.

i. Melody Aimar, Biological Programs Manager – SAWA

Ms. Aimar reported on MSHCP Dept. monthly WRC MSHCP Management and Monitoring Coordination Meetings. Presentation: 12/8 “*Collapsing range edges influence rangewide genetic structure of the California red-legged frog *Rana draytonii**” by Jonathan Richmond, PhD (USGS). RCA working to upload presentations to their website for public viewing. Biologists passed QCB exam (1st try). Preparing posters/presentations for TWS Conference and SAR Symposium. Abstracts accepted to TWS. Staff working from home, staggering in office, using personal vehicles and SAWA trucks. Mr. Campanella managing remote workflow. Mr. Campanella updating Operations Manual. Ms. Aimar, Leads and GIS Analyst preparing research permit for Cleveland National Forest – done. Monthly Leads meeting via Zoom for project updates. Quarterly all-hands meeting for staff updates. Ms. Aimar attended monthly RCA Managers Meetings and monthly SDMMMP meetings. Data archive and server file clean up on hold during busy season. Leads assessing habitat loss from Fairview Fire and Ms. Aimar reported to RCA. Ms. Aimar also updated on other MSHCP work including:

- Rare plants: Rare Plant surveys – ongoing (black walnut). Engelmann Oak Surveys – complete. Preparing for Brand’s Phacelia poster for SAR Symposium.
- Riparian Birds: Preparing for 2023 surveys.
- White-tailed Kite: Preparing for 2023 surveys.
- Cactus Wren: Preparing for 2023 surveys.
- Mammals: LAPM surveys – preparing poster for TWS and SAR Symposium. SR 60 undercrossing – camera traps installed.
- Herps/Fish: Western Pond Turtle trapping – done. Artificial Cover Surveys – installation in progress.
- Clinton Keith Overcrossing: Camera traps at overcrossing/undercrossing – preparing poster for TWS.
- Quino Checkerspot Butterfly: Report – in progress. Installing 2 HOBO stations.
- Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly: Report – in progress.
- Vernal Pools: Surveys in progress.
- Data/GIS Analysis: Transition to electronic data collection – in progress.

Ms. Aimar reported on WHMS Dept. 2022 Draft Report submitted to agencies. IEUA – Winter/Breeding Bird Surveys. 2021-22 surveys complete; report in progress. 2022-23 surveys in progress. BHCO – Winter dairy traps in Prado, Lake Elsinore and San Jacinto open. BHCO contracts reporting – in progress. Database updated for CNDDDB/45-day report submission. Regulatory reporting – in progress. Biologist completed Access training class. Biologist completed ArcGIS training class. New biologist continues avian training. Ms. Aimar attends prop 84 monthly meeting. Ms. Aimar coordinating with SBVMWD and Riv. Co Parks Rangers on homeless camp safety. District 2 Homeless Solutions and Veg/Habitat Management Working Group meetings. Ms. Aimar attends multiple weekly virtual meetings. Ms. Aimar coordinating with RCHCA on SKR trapping – Biologists trapping 2 weeks/month. November trapping canceled due to weather conditions. Ms. Aimar also updated on other work within individual member agencies jurisdictions:

- Inland Empire RCD: Goose Creek LbVI monitoring – draft report submitted to agencies.
- Orange County Water District: Prop 84 Arundo biomonitoring – in progress as needed. Tricolored Blackbird surveys – complete – none found, report in progress. Sunnyslope SAS restoration and substrate surveys – ongoing. California Least Tern monitoring – data submitted to CDFW; report in progress. Ms. Aimar and biologist attends weekly NR meeting.

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: No work this month.
- Riverside Corona RCD: No work this month.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: No work this month.

**VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Zembal reported that SAWA needs better advertising for BHCO work and perhaps revamping that discussion as part of the Vireo report.

Mr. Russell thanked SAWA staff for all their work and wished everyone Happy Holidays.  
Mr. Mills also wished everyone Happy Holidays.

**IX. NEXT MEETING** – January 26, 2023 will be held at the SAWA Headquarters, 1835 Chicago Avenue, Suite C, Riverside, CA 92507 and remotely via Zoom.

**X. ADJOURN** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 A.M.

**Notice: All open session agenda materials will be available for inspection by members of the public at the SAWA office located at 1835 Chicago Avenue, Suite C, Riverside, CA 92507. Please contact Maria Arellano at (951) 780-1012 x106 for this information (Government Code Section 54957.5). In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Government Code Section 54954.2, if special assistance is needed to participate in a Board meeting, please contact the Administrative Services Manager at (951) 780-1012 x101. Notification of at least 48 hours prior to meeting time will assist staff in assuring that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility at the meeting.**

Please post 72 hours before meeting