

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 28, 2023
9:00 A.M.

Chairman Corneille called the Operations Committee meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting with in-person and Zoom/teleconference attendance.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Corneille, Chairman
Robert Stewart, Vice President

STAFF PRESENT:

Betsy Miller, General Manager
Manuel Colunga, Field Supervisor
Katelyn Scholte, Principal Engineer
Erwin Fogerson, ARTP Engineer
Athena Laroche, Administrative Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT:

None

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public present.

2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 24, 2023

It was moved by Vice President Stewart and seconded by Director Corneille to approve the meeting minutes from January 24, 2023 as presented. The motion carried 2-0, with all directors present voting in the affirmative.

Vice President Stewart: Yes

Director Corneille: Yes

4. FIELD SUPERVISOR UPDATE PRESENTATION

Mr. Colunga gave a PowerPoint presentation on field operations activities. He said that there is currently 60 CFS in Mill Creek and discussed water quality in the Santa Ana River (SAR). He said that debris from recent basin cleaning efforts has caught in basin culverts and will be removed tomorrow, which will require field staff to temporarily cut off 30 CFS of Mill Creek

water in order to drain Basin 1. Once this task is complete, we will take SWP water again. He said that CalFire did a great job clearing vegetation from Basin 1, 2 and 3. This work was completed in mid-January and completed by the beginning of February. Ms. Miller said that this work was done following negative surveys for least Bell's vireo. Mr. Colunga reviewed the Mill Creek Diversion gate delivery. He noted that Upland Rock helped to unload the gate. Staff looks forward to improved operations after this project is completed. Director Stewart asked about soft plugs. Mr. Fogerson explained the purpose of soft plugs. Mr. Colunga reviewed recharge that was done in CEMEX as well as water in the Borrow Pit. He reviewed the function of the canal. Director Stewart asked how water in this location is gauged. Mr. Colunga said that water is estimated, and there is no gauge there. Ms. Miller stated her appreciation of CEMEX's partnership during this high-precipitation year and noted that they cannot mine within 20 feet of groundwater. Recharge in that area ceased in February. Discussion ensued about the use of CEMEX facilities. Mr. Colunga stated that the Enhanced Recharge Phase 1A sedimentation basin lining project is nearly complete. Ms. Scholte said that we will be able to move water from Santa Ana to Mill Creek more easily when this project is finished, giving our operations team more flexibility in their work. SAR Basin 17 is reaching capacity with 3 CFS currently flowing out and percolating before it reaches D dike.

Plunge Creek's high flow was estimated at 300 AF at the gauge. The District will need to adaptively manage the project area to expand the inundation footprint. Ms. Scholte recommended the use of check dams. There are 75 CFS in Plunge currently. Discussion ensued regarding the average annual flow. Mr. Colunga reviewed the replacement of soft plugs, which Jacinto helped put back in to improve the canal flow. He said that Basin 12 is full and 1 is close to full. He said that they are working on sand disposal. Ms. Miller said that field staff has been working hard to keep the District functioning. Sandbags were filled to direct flows in Mill Creek; sometimes overflows go onto the roads. He discussed the intake in Mill Creek. Field staff utilized a rented loader to clean out Mill Creek. Director Stewart asked how much water is behind Seven Oaks Dam. Mr. Colunga confirmed there is 85 feet behind the dam. The SAR flow out is 328 CFS. Mr. Colunga noted that Lockheed has a lot of silt, and SAR is still brown. Mr. Fogerson said that we want to take the sand and move it not just stockpile it. Ms. Miller said that there are significant costs in maintenance for FY24. Ms. Scholte said that field staff is moving stockpiles to the Pit to make room for new sand piles.

5. AGGRESSIVE RECHARGE VERBAL UPDATE

Ms. Scholte reviewed the results of aggressive recharge, indicating it applies primarily to Mill Creek. She said we have taken 500 AF more than in previous years. She noted that three soft plugs have been replaced; this occurred in the middle of the night and on weekends. The aggressive recharge concept is us taking recharge faster than we usually did in prior years. Historically we would wait for the water to clear up, approximately two to three days, and then take it. Mill Creek Ponds 1-8 and 12-14 will need cleaning assuming the current sand removal rate. The SWP is up 75%, and most of the recharge will be on Mill Creek and Waterman Basins. Field personnel is working closely with Valley. SWP water has been put in lower basins. Mill Creek will be wet all year long. Ms. Miller said that this is where reserves are significant; some of the maintenance will not just fall in FY24 but could fall into FY25 as well.

Ms. Scholte reviewed the previous aggressive recharge. Field staff are preparing and moving sand around in anticipation of major cleaning. The water year recharge is SAR at 21000 AF, Mill

Creek at 3200 AF, and SWP at 500 AF. Ms. Miller said that we have written concurrence from BLM that they will follow the process laid out in the congressional action, allowing us to move forward with Enhance Recharge Projects without issue. Director Corneille asked if there is any need for temporary help. Mr. Fogerson said that the District rents equipment, and an operator is provided, so that is what we are doing in the field. Mr. Colunga said that field staff will be behind on treating invasive species due to sand removal. Director Stewart asked if the homeless encampments and dumping is under control. Mr. Colunga said that they are under control and noted that there has been no breach where field staff has placed boulder barriers.

6. MENTONE SHOP IMPROVEMENT VERBAL UPDATE

Ms. Scholte reviewed this item, stating that the architect has submitted all permits to the County. The fire flow testing has been completed. San Bernardino County Fire came back and requested that we put a fire hydrant in, and the architect is working with them to identify why. They did indicate that we do not need fire sprinklers. Staff is working on quotes to install a new septic system and move the fence. Director Stewart said that if we have to put in a hydrant, it creates a perpetual cost for the District, with it having to install a water meter. Mr. Fogerson said we could use it to fill up our water truck and other miscellaneous uses. Mr. Fogerson noted that once we order the new building, it will take three months to fabricate it. Construction is estimated to begin this fall. Ms. Miller pointed out that Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) has been utilizing the Mentone Shop, but they will have to be out during construction. Staff is coordinating with them. Director Corneille expressed his appreciation of the collaborative efforts with IERCD.

7. PERC (ARTP) POLICY COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

This item is included on package pages 8 to 11. Mr. Fogerson reviewed the Progress Overview slide via PowerPoint. Currently, staff is still within the feasibility study phase.

The current progress includes:

- Waterman, Twin and Lynwood – San Bernardino County Flood Control District (SBCFCD) approved the one-hundred-year storm hydrology, but we need for them to approve the smaller storms. They have to accept what the potential impacts are for recharge, which occurs under not just one-hundred-year storms, but average and small storms as well. Of the sites only Twin Creek remains in question.
- Plunge and Oak Creek – The hydrology study has been received, which is 958 pages. Staff is in the process of reviewing study.
- Waterman Basins – Staff is progressing on the hydraulics, analyzing the existing conditions so that we have a baseline condition to analyze. Staff will submit this to SBCFCD and wait for their acceptance of the existing condition. The existing condition will be what will be used to identify proposed conditions.
- Lynwood/29th Street Basins – Staff indicated that two of the basins for Lynwood per well. He discussed the potential of moving the project forward under a water spreading agreement with SBCFCD. Staff would make minor improvements to the basins so that the District could begin recharging at this site.

- Mill Creek – The one-hundred-year storm has been analyzed, and the consultant is currently analyzing average annual storms. The consultants are analyzing the hydraulics and have already modeled for existing conditions. It was modeled based on how it has functioned to date. The proposed conditions analysis is being done. Discussion ensued on improvements. The biggest hurdle with this site is all the rock. Director Stewart said that Mill Creek is historic for debris flows. He observed burnt logs within Mill Creek and noted that the area is likely to continue to see the impacts of the fires for years to come. Ms. Miller said that the United States Army Corp of Engineers (COE) has approved the jurisdictional delineation for this area. The delineation specifies that it is not COE jurisdictional because it is on the other side of the levee. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) has been waiting for this before moving forward. It is anticipated that they will not take jurisdiction based on the decision they made in Santa Ana. Staff is moving forward with consultants on the Safe Harbor Agreement, and it is anticipated a draft will be received by April. The strategy for the Safe Harbor Agreement will be rolled into a 2081 permit. Mr. Fogerson said that staff is working on permits for the testing we will do for soil work.

Director Stewart expressed concern in looking at the schedule, that in a wet year facilities would go out and requested staff look at this when looking into the cost-benefit ratio. He asked if there is a way to keep some facilities in operation rather than take them all out simultaneously. Mr. Fogerson said that staff will look at stormwater when looking at the cost-benefit analysis, and opportunities we may have for SWP water. Ms. Miller anticipates a significant amount of recharge at Waterman this year. Ms. Scholte said that the majority of SWP water will go into Waterman. Mr. Fogerson noted that we could take water and put it into Lynwood Basin because there is a gate at the last basin near Twin that, if it overflows into Twin, you will get some percolation. Valley has a water spreading agreement for SWP water for Waterman. Part of the Borrow Pit (Pit) will remain functional during the construction of Enhanced Recharge Phase 1B. Ms. Scholte said the field staff is drying down part of the Pit to build a cofferdam.

Director Corneille asked if we will be using the 7W property for recharge. Ms. Scholte indicated that the new canal would go straight through it. Director Stewart suggested looking at additional property and considering placing the purchase of new lands in the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Miller stated that the District has entered into a limited-term agreement with Water Systems Consulting (WSC), to support evaluating our project against potential grant funding. One grant program has been identified, and staff has begun taking on part of the process internally. It can be used to refund costs for the feasibility study. This grant would be from the Bureau of Reclamation. The state has funds coming out soon, but the federal government will not allow you to apply for both. Ms. Miller noted the expenses for the WSC agreement would come from GL-5120: Miscellaneous Professional Services.

Mr. Fogerson reviewed the Program Schedule shown on package page 12. Director Stewart asked if there is a way to move the Waterman Basin project forward earlier because it does not seem tied to a final design. Mr. Fogerson said there is a legal process where you first have to

prove you have no impact. He said the agreement for Lynwood Basins could begin sooner because the District will start maintaining these facilities, and basins are preexisting. The agreement with Waterman will be separate because ours will be for stormwater, whereas Valley's is for SWP water. There are different obligations to maintain that. Mr. Fogerson discussed liquefaction, noting there is a known layer in Waterman, and if you are going to put more groundwater, there are potential impacts to liquefaction. There will have to be an analysis completed to identify that additional recharge will not impact existing liquefaction. Ms. Scholte said that this is where GeoScience's model will be useful. Discussion ensued. She said that staff is taking the feasibility studies to the point where modeling will not be needed again.

8. MILL CREEK DIVERSION PROJECT VERBAL UPDATE

The District has received all three gates. The COE legal has been completed and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been sent out for signature. The specs have been completed, and staff is developing the scope of services to send out for the inspection and testing that we will need for the project. Director Stewart asked if there are any other inspections. Mr. Fogerson stated that an SBCFCD inspector will be on site. The 404 is being revived, and will be finalized with the 408 permit and we will also obtain the permit from SBFCD at the same time. Mr. Fogerson said that we will also need a surveyor for the prework. The project start date schedule was presented to the Committee and reviewed briefly. Staff will bring this item back at the next Committee meeting if needed. Construction is estimated to begin in July. The project was designed to be a sedimentation system to decrease maintenance and increase efficiency.

9. EXCHANGE PLAN VERBAL UPDATE

Ms. Miller stated that the District has been working with Bear Valley Mutual Water Company (Mutual) to obtain comments. If there is no response in the next few months, the Exchange Plan Committee will likely be dissolved, or it can be left as is. The Daily Flow Report (DFR) was not called out in the original agreement. The District currently receives \$30,000 annually for the preparation of the DFR, but they requested the cost be shared equitably.

10. WASH PLAN TRAILS IMPLEMENTATION NEXT STEPS

Director Corneille requested this item for discussion. Staff provided maps to the Committee for their review and discussion. Ms. Miller had hoped to open a trails segment that was within the City of Highland (Highland) and on District land because we have an approved MOU with Highland. She said there was an in-and-out trail identified, but the loop goes through the City of Redlands (Redlands), so we cannot move forward. Redlands has assigned a staff person to review the MOU, CEMEX is reviewing the five-party agreement and Robertson's still needs to provide feedback. The five-party agreement locks in funding. If we move forward without it, the District would be obligated to fund it. The City of Highland has been very supportive. Director Stewart said that the Santa Ana Basins will be going in, and will take approximately three years. There may be other alignments with Redlands that we can open in the short term once they sign the MOU.

11. NEXT QUARTERLY MEETINGS

The next meetings are scheduled for July 25, 2023; and October 10, 2023, at 9 A.M.

12. ADJOURN MEETING

There was no further business, and the meeting adjourned at 10:51 A.M.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Stewart to adjourn. The motion carried 2-0, with all directors present voting in the affirmative.

Vice President Stewart: Yes

Director Corneille: Yes