

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 6, 2024
9:00 A.M.

Chairman Corneille called the Operations Committee meeting to order at 9:06 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
John Lambie, Consulting Chief Engineer and Hydrogeologist
Laura Torres, Assistant Engineer
Angie Quiroga, Senior Administrative Analyst
Athena Laroche, Administrative Specialist
Milan Mitrovich, Land Resources Manager
Anna Frey, Assistant Biologist

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 OCTOBER 10, 2023

It was moved by Vice President Stewart and seconded by Director Corneille to approve the meeting minutes from October 10, 2023 as presented. The motion carried 2-0, with all directors present voting in the affirmative.

Vice President Stewart: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes

4. MENTONE SHOP IMPROVEMENTS VERBAL UPDATE

Ms. Scholte introduced this item for discussion. The County has approved all submitted materials and staff is awaiting the permit. The building is delayed due to a supply chain shortage. The contractor will pour foundation and erect the building once it is received. Vice President Stewart asked for an estimated arrival date of the building. Ms. Scholte indicated that it is expected within the next two months.

5. DRAFT PERC POLICY COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT NO. 17

Ms. Scholte reviewed the Draft PERC Policy Committee Status Report No. 17, as shown on package pages 7 to 10.

- Waterman Basins: The parent hydraulics document is pending. San Bernardino County Flood Control District (FCD) supports this approach.
- Lynwood/29th Street: Valley Municipal is preparing the spreading agreement that we will use as a template for native water. FCD will approve their agreement after they are assured there is no impact.
- Plunge Creek: Sediment transport and hydrology is underway. FCD approved the existing condition models. The grab samples were done in the fall. BLM currently owns this land, and an access permit would be needed to perform additional geotechnical work at this time. Staff expect these tasks to be under budget. There has been approximately \$336,000 expended from the \$786,880 contract to date.
- Cook and Bledsoe Creek: The concept was refined to include diversion from Bledsoe only. Staff believe that these are not viable sites. Q3 has expended twenty to thirty percent of their budget. A notice to proceed have only been given for specific tasks.
- Mill Creek: Additional modeling of structure was completed using funds from Cook Creek. Q3 has reviewed infiltration results and field staff input. Staff is going to perform a comparison of the current system status to clean facilities. Ms. Scholte stated that the geotechnical work was delayed due to water in the basins through the summer.

Ms. Scholte reviewed the Preliminary Estimated Costs, which does not include operations and maintenance. The cost tracking and budget worksheet and Preliminary Estimated Costs worksheet will be presented to the next Operations Committee prior to PERC Policy Committee review. Director Corneille requested that Mr. Lambie review the program schedule and identify if a project can be expedited.

6. DRAFT ENGINEERING INVESTIGATION REPORT FOR 2024 VERBAL UPDATE

Ms. Torres presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Draft 2024 Engineering Investigation (EI). She said that the majority of data needed to prepare the report has been collected. She completed most of calculations, and Ms. Scholte performed project management and review of the report and data.

The annual change in storage for the Bunker Hill Basin increased by 226,806 acre feet (AF) from last year. The accumulated change in storage in the Bunker Hill Basin was a decrease of 424,456

AF below 1993 levels when the basin was considered to be full. The comparison of groundwater elevations from 2022 and 2023 was discussed. The estimated groundwater production for the previous water year (2022-2023) is 139,296 AF, and the estimated annual change in storage for the current water year (2023-2024) is an increase of 108,401 AF based on precipitation of 34.55 inches. The estimated average annual change in storage for the upcoming water year (2023-2024) is a decrease of 3,007 AF. The estimated production for the upcoming water year (2024-2025) is 197,179 AF. The average change in storage over the last ten years is a decrease of 1,238 AF. The estimated surface diversion for the basin is 73,935 AF and within the District's boundary is 52,127 AF. The estimated replenishment required for constant storage for the ensuing water year is 126,251 AF for the basin and 102,129 AF for the District's boundary. The replenishment needed to bring the basin back to full, based on 1993 data, is 442,307 AF. Ms. Torres stated that the District did very well last year considering some of its basins were out because of nearby construction. The Committee thanked Ms. Scholte and Ms. Torres for their presentation and work to develop the report.

7. ENHANCED RECHARGE VERBAL UPDATE

Ms. Scholte provided a verbal update on the Enhanced Recharge Project. Staff remains in close coordination with SBVMWD staff, with a focus is clearing and grubbing the A Basins before nesting bird season. SBVMWD is still working on drop structures two and four in the main canal and the outflow to basins CC and DD. CC was still being used as a storage area. She discussed methods to keep District operations online throughout the wet season. Ms. Scholte said that Project completion is currently expected in June 2025, noting that the project is ahead of schedule.

8. FIELD OPERATIONS UPDATE PRESENTATION

Mr. Colunga reviewed Field Operations activities via PowerPoint presentation. He stated that field staff is conducting basin cleaning, with sediment removed from the current cleaning used to repair the side slope of Mill Creek Basin 22. Mr. Colunga reviewed operations of the new Mill Creek Diversion structure. Staff played a video of the diversion in operation for the Committee. Mr. Colunga said that the new diversion allows sand and debris to be removed from the intake before water enters our recharge basins. Vice President Stewart asked if the District continues to see debris from previous fires. Mr. Colunga stated that we have not noticed such debris in recent storms. He reviewed the maintenance work performed by Cal-Fire and staff on the Mill Creek Canal. Mr. Colunga noted that the channel clearings are typically done every five years. He also reviewed the Cal-Fire Cuttle Weir maintenance and issues when maintenance is deferred. Cacti are being used to block access to the roads in the field. The sediment removal project with SBVMWD and the San Diego Zoo was reviewed. Ms. Miller discussed a future research project with the Zoo. The Operations Committee requested a field tour at its next meeting. The facilities maintenance plan was discussed in brief. Ms. Torres and Mr. Colunga are taking the lead on this item, which will inform budgeting for FY25.

9. ZANJA RESTORATION CONCEPTUAL PLAN PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Ms. Miller introduced this item for discussion. The District received an invitation to participate in a group discussion on returning water flows to the full nine-mile length of the Zanja. Ms. Miller provided a handout of the map of the Zanja. Vice President Stewart noted that flows have recently been observed along several sections of the Zanja. Ms. Miller discussed the Zanja with George Hanson of Bear Valley Mutual Water Company. There may be benefits for recreation, culture, history, flood control, and groundwater recharge. The next step in the process is to engage with the City of Redlands, the Redlands Conservancy, the University of Redlands, and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians to understand their support or concerns related to the proposed project. If all parties are in support, the next step would be to complete a feasibility study. There may be an opportunity to obtain private funding or grant funding for the study. Ms. Miller indicated that the feasibility study would identify and evaluate specific property owners and associated rights. Vice President Stewart spoke in support of bringing this item forward to the Board, noting that the District should pursue opportunities for additional recharge. He does believe may be private property issues. Director Corneille spoke in support of the study, noting that the channel could serve flood control purposes and spoke of a potential partnership with ESRI as it runs along their property. Ms. Miller discussed a potential RFP for the feasibility study if needed.

10. DISTRICT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CIP) PRIORITY LIST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

Ms. Miller reviewed the draft Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget for FY25. Ms. Quiroga provided updates based on actual costs.

A review of the Capital Projects and needs continued as follows:

- Item 1: Mill Creek Diversion Improvement design/permitting, and construction have been completed. Ms. Quiroga noted that the \$173,087 shown under Mitigation/Monitoring is the construction management portion that will be capitalized with the project.
- Item 23: Aggressive Recharge Planning/Permitting-Mill has been completed. This item has been renamed as Mill Creek/SAR Facility Maintenance Upgrades to address sediment removal requirements following implementation of aggressive recharge.
- Item 25: Community (Distributed) Recharge Planning-Ms. Miller said that this item was moved up from potential future projects, specifically moved up because of discussions related to the possible Zanja project.
- Item 8: Capital Equipment-Ms. Miller said that the Board and District management are in agreement about leasing equipment as-needed at this time. However, this line item is included in case opportunities arise to purchase equipment via grants or other funding mechanisms.
- Item 28: Post Mine Planning has been updated from its previous name Mining Multiuse Planning.
- Item 11: Mill Creek North Canal Flume SB-88 Compliance-Vice President Stewart asked why there is a cost to comply. Ms. Miller said that the District purchased a measurement device to be installed but has not had the capacity to install it.
- Item 3C, 14 and 15: Canyon House Demolition-Replacement-Vice President Stewart said that it is a low priority. Director Corneille requested a change in title to Canyon House Demolition and Santa Ana River O&M Facilities.

- Item 12: Planning for Mendoza-Vice President Stewart about the vision for the Mendoza Property. Ms. Miller said that we will likely have a consultant look at the Lockheed facilities in the future. Both pollution and historical analyses may be needed prior to structure removal.

Ms. Quiroga said that most of the costs are costs to date, or costs through January 31. She noted that the costs remained the same for Items 11, 9 and 7. Director Corneille asked for details on the removal of construction management from Item 1: Mitigation/Monitoring/Construction Management. Ms. Miller said that this was removed following construction. Vice President Stewart said that having operating costs on the CIP list muddles the prioritization; if it is an ongoing cost, we have no choice but to fund it. Director Corneille said that ongoing permitting is not capital. Ms. Miller said that the mitigation and monitoring are requirements from permits to construct the facility, and therefore are part of the capital construction costs. She said that operating costs are included in the annual budget. Vice President Stewart said that the Board may have more input into the CIP list prioritization at their Budget Workshop. Ms. Miller said that the prioritization shown in the draft is based on the Board Priorities adopted in January 2024. All feedback will be incorporated and brought forward to the Budget Workshop in April.

11. NEXT QUARTERLY MEETINGS

The next quarterly meetings are May 21, August 6 and November 5.

12. ADJOURN MEETING

There was no further business, and the meeting adjourned at 11:36 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**