

UPPER SANTA ANA RIVER WASH LAND MANAGEMENT AND HABITAT
CONSERVATION PLAN TASK FORCE

MINUTES
DECEMBER 08, 2020 (Via Zoom/Teleconference)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jesse Chavez, Chairman
Daniel Cozad
Betsy Miller
David Cosgrove
Victoria Hernandez
James Gannon
Kim Freeburn
Brandy Wood
Christine Jones
Larry Mainez
Matt Bennett
Carlos Zamano
Brian Foote
Cecilia Griego
Donald Young
Tim Sullivan
Kevin Watson
Christine Goeyvarts
Scott Ward
Brendan Biggs
David Doublet
Michael Fam
Theresa Sims
Harold Zamora
Behta Davis
Ryan Isom
Heather Dyer
Joanna Gibson
David Raley

REPRESENTING

City of Highland
SBV Water Conservation District
SBV Water Conservation District
SBV Water Conservation District
BLM
BLM
CDFW
CDFW
CEMEX
City of Highland
City of Highland
City of Highland
City of Redlands
City of Redlands
City of Redlands
City of Redlands
Redlands MUED
Robertson's Ready Mix
Field Rep for Supervisor Dawn Rowe
SB County Flood Control District
SB County Flood Control District
SB County Flood Control District
SB County Flood Control District
SB County Flood Control District
SB County Parks
SB County Parks
SBV Municipal Water District
SBV Municipal Water District
SBVWCD and SBVCT

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Michelle Fehrenson
Paula Jacks
Dr. Erik Larsen
Dan Silver
Tom McGill

AECOM
AECOM
AECOM
EHL
ELMT Consulting

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Upper Santa Ana River Wash Land Management and Habitat Conservation Plan Task Force meeting was called to order by Chairman Jesse Chavez at 1:05 p.m. via Zoom/teleconference, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

Scott Ward introduced himself as a field representative for San Bernardino County Supervisor Dawn Rowe.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Chavez asked if there were any items that anyone wished to address that were not on the agenda. There being none, the meeting continued with the posted agenda items.

4. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES (04/28/2020)

It was moved by David Raley and seconded by Chairman Jesse Chavez to adopt the meeting minutes of April 28, 2020. The motion carried unanimously, with all present voting in the affirmative.

5. PROGRESS REPORT ON WASH REMAINING PERMITS

Betsy Miller re-introduced herself as the current Conservation District's Land Resources/Assistant General Manager. She reminded members that the Wash Plan is a Federal HCP, which was approved and received its Incidental Take Permit in July 2020. She stated, about a year ago, there was a discussion about jointly pursuing permits for impacts to California endangered species and regulated waters. In April, direction was provided from the Task Force to move forward in obtaining these permits for all Wash Plan Covered Activities. District staff interviewed consultant teams, and the selected team from AECOM will discuss the progress that has been made. AECOM was asked to lead us through the most expeditious, cost-effective approach. Ms. Miller stated the AECOM team has the expertise and experience needed to guide us through this process. The AECOM team introduced themselves: Michelle Fehrenson, Project Manager, Paula Jacks, and Dr. Erik Larsen, Senior Regulatory Specialists, and provided a brief background of their individual experience. Ms. Fehrenson commended the Task Force for choosing to pursue programmatic permits. She provided a slide presentation in which she reviewed the benefits to this approach: streamlined applicant efforts, certainty for submittal and mitigation requirements, allowance for a longer permit period, multiple projects that can be included within a single permit and mitigation plan, and consistent permit conditions for avoidance and monitoring means a reduced burden for environmental compliance implementation.

She reviewed their scope of work and the next steps. AECOM categorized and is verifying which projects will need 1602, 401, and 404 permits and will complete these applications. They will support the 2081 permit process and negotiate final permits. Maintenance projects will have a Maintenance Agreement. Dr. Larsen provided a spreadsheet showing how the projects are grouped by permit type(s) needed, a map showing the jurisdictional delineation methodology used, and a draft map of collected data that pointed out access channels, diversion canals, and higher flood plains. They are working to determine which areas may be exempt from waters permits. A Master Streambed Alteration Agreement may be obtained to cover all longer-term projects. Ms. Jacks stated preliminary informal meetings had occurred with the Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Water Quality Control Board. The resource agencies provided initial feedback and concurrence on AECOM's strategy.

Ms. Jacks discussed the differences between an Individual permit/Letter of Permission (IP/LOP), which accommodates minimal impacts, a Regional General Permit, and Nationwide Permits for immediate needs. They are still identifying impacts to determine the optimal approach. She explained the approach to receive a 404 permit and advised once the 404 permit is issued, a companion 401 permit will be needed. There is potential to authorize individual permits via General Order issued to the Conservation District. She discussed the 1602 SAA, and Section 2081 ITP approach and CDFW's input noting concurrent pursuit of these permits facilitates the review of nested mitigation credits. She stated a formal pre-application joint agency meeting would take place, which starts the clock for the 401 processes. Preparation of the 1602, 401, and 404 applications would then take place. AECOM will support the 2081 permit process and negotiate and develop final permits. Ms. Fehrenson concluded with a general timeline for the permit process. She requested Task Force members review and confirm their current Covered Activity descriptions, which will be provided and sent out within the next week by AECOM, by early January. From February-March, the delineation report will be finalized, and permit applications will be completed. Permit processing will occur between March-November, with permit issuance estimated to be received in December 2021. Christine Jones from CEMEX asked for clarification on who is taking the lead on the 2081 permit and the timeframe. Ms. Miller confirmed she is working to get the application out hopefully within the next month. It will likely be submitted just ahead of the waters permit but no later than the waters permit. This item was received and filed.

6. PLUNGE CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT-PROGRESS VIDEO

Ms. Miller proudly presented a video of the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District's completed Plunge Creek Restoration Project, which is a Covered Activity under the Wash Plan. A separate state and waters permit was obtained for this project due to time constraints of grant funding.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.