

**SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 1, 2016
9:00 A.M.

Chairman Corneille called the Operations Committee Meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Corneille, Chairman
Manuel Aranda, Director

STAFF PRESENT:

Daniel Cozad, General Manager
Jeff Beehler, Land Resources Manager
Athena Monge, Administrative Services Specialist
Manuel Colunga, Field Operations Supervisor
Katelyn Scholte, Assistant Engineer

OTHERS PRESENT:

None

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 16, 2015

It was moved by Director Aranda and seconded by Chairman Corneille to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2015 Operations Committee meeting with minor revisions. The motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

**Chairman Corneille: Yes
Director Aranda: Yes**

4. OPERATIONS BRIEFING BY FIELD SUPERVISOR

Mr. Colunga spoke on an issue regarding invasive grasses; specifically clumps of fountain grass. He brought in a sample to show the Committee. Fountain grass is invasive and can block the movement of water in the canals, interfere with recharge in the basins, and limit habitat for sensitive species found on the site. CalFire inmate crews are now removing brush and fountain grass from the main canal and the plant is also in some ponds and the Borrow Pit. Field staff is working in Mill Creek to remove fountain grass and are almost finished. Santa Ana River main canal has an excessive amount of this grass that need to be removed. Mr. Colunga said that once the majority is removed, maintenance may be able to

take care of regrowth. He explained process for removal. Chairman Corneille asked if the District uses herbicide for removal. Mr. Beehler stated that herbicide does not work well to remove this invasive grass. Field Staff is working to remove castor bean and tree tobacco as well.

The new fence placed by the City of Highland along Greenspot Road has been cut near the Santa Ana River, so rock has been placed to help block access as well. Mr. Colunga stated that they have been working on roads to make them easier to grade. Mill Creek roads are almost completely done. This will make it easier on the tractor loader and field personnel. Mr. Colunga spoke highly of the new Field Operations Specialist, Tommy Purvis. He continued his briefing noting the items needed for the field including a newer dump truck. The District's dump truck has very high maintenance requirements. Chairman Corneille asked if there is any capital equipment staff may need for the Wash Plan. Mr. Beehler said that staff will need some means of applying herbicide; possibly an ATV with tank and sprayer. The District may contract these services unless staff needs it for other projects such as Plunge Creek Conservation Project.

The water level behind the Seven Oaks Dam is currently at 2,187 foot level. Bear Valley and North Fork also have interest in using this water. Discussions from these partner agencies have included interest in obtaining water behind dam when there is no other water. Mr. Colunga is working with Orange County Flood Control District to coordinate releases for maintenance typically scheduled for April 15th each year. Usually water is released at 100 CFS.

5. PLUNGE CREEK CONSERVATION PLAN DESIGN REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Beehler stated that staff has a 30% project design from consultants. There are still some additions which have not been included in design memo because the Resource Agency meeting is on April 7th and staff is waiting to incorporate those comments. Final comments will be incorporated after that meeting and staff will bring back update.

Staff walked the site with the consultant. Katelyn Scholte, Assistant Engineer loaded plans on to an app so they could actually walk the design. There have been minor revisions to the design and consultants have included their recommended cost saving measures. Mr. Beehler reviewed the map with the Committee stating that the design will reconnect channels to existing hydrologically isolated channels. Plunge Creek will settle into its current channel configuration unless the project designs something different. The project will be just below Metropolitan Water District pipeline at Pole Line Road. A splitter pile will divert some of the flow through a canal cut through the 10 foot high wall of fine sediment deposited on the south bank of Plunge Creek to get down to the isolated channels and eventually have those channels flow back into the Plunge Creek, upstream of the Orange Street crossing. The project will be near to a mining area where the District may be able to use the miners' sedimentation pond to dispose of surplus soil from the canals. The Plunge Creek project will be a covered habitat restoration activity under the Wash Plan Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The District will have habitat coverage from US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for species impacts that have been covered under the HCP for the Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit. The District will also need a 401 permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the 1602 permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CADFW). Chairman Corneille requested a detailed project schedule and the projected construction costs be developed for the Committee. Mr. Beehler stated that we are at 30% design currently and construction costs have been estimated at \$350,000 so far. Staff will need additional info from both USFWS and CADFW before they can put together a project schedule. In order for the District to obtain a 404 permit the Wash Plan HCP has to be complete. Staff can begin the permitting process with the regional staff and initiation of consultation. The consultant should complete the final design by the end of this fiscal year. Since this is a grant project there are specific State requirements when going out for request for

construction bids. Chairman Corneille said he reviewed the 30% design drawings and noted he was impressed with the drawings at this early design stage.

6. MILL CREEK DIVERSION DEBRIS MANAGEMENT DESIGN 65% REVIEW, COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Cozad summarized the items needed for finalization of the Mill Creek project design. He indicated a need for a hydrologic model to be completed to determine the sufficiency of the design. Chairman Corneille said that even if it is not a design drawing they should at least include a sketch of where the water elevations are at different levels of flow based on stream hydrology. California Watershed Engineering is the consultant. Staff made markups on draft design documents pertaining to the new sluice gate and debris side channel. Chairman Corneille also reviewed the design drawings and provided extensive mark-ups. Once a final set of plans are received staff will review with San Bernardino County Flood Control District (FCD) and USFWS. Final design is scheduled for completion by the end of the current fiscal year.

The longest duration in permitting will be obtaining the US Corp of Engineers (COE) 408 permit because the District is building next to a levee. The 408 permit analyzes whether new structures near or on Corps- built structures negatively impact them. Review is done by the Corps based on a "time available basis" through a contract with the FCD. The District will likely have to pay for the Corps analysis. It will likely take a minimum of six months to complete the 408 permitting process. If the design flow does not significantly impact the total river flow than the District will not have to wait for the Santa Ana River HCP (River HCP) to be completed; if it does it will have to wait for this HCP to be completed. Mr. Beehler stated that this project is included in the River HCP, but that does not mean that the District has to use that HCP if time is of the essence. If staff can show USFWS that this project does not affect endangered species than we should not have to wait for River HCP. Chairman Corneille asked about the grading requirements and if San Bernardino County has any requirements or permitting for this project. Staff indicated that the consultant will need to clearly identify the various approvals needed for implementation of this project

7. TRAILS PLAN STATUS

Mr. Beehler stated that this project is scheduled to be complete by the end of this fiscal year. In the scope of work for the consultants the District asked for the requirements of operating a trails system from the resource agencies including avoidance and minimization measures required and anticipated associated costs. There will be three scheduled meetings with the resource agencies to review constraints and opportunities for public access. Consultants will be also be creating governance models on managing public access. Any HCP's with a recreational component was shared with consultant. Although, it is rare to allow public access within an HCP beyond occasional use, the District is seeking approval for recreational use within the habitat areas of the Wash. Director Aranda asked who will govern trail operations. Mr. Beehler indicated that it depends it could be San Bernardino Parks and Recreation, City of Highland or City of Redlands potentially. Mr. Cozad said that the project spans two cities so it will likely be a Joint Powers Authority of the two cities. Ultimately the city or group that will manage this project has not yet been identified. Mr. Beehler said that trail use will become a covered activity within the HCP.

8. CAPITAL PROJECTS, ADJACENT LAND OWNERS AND WASH PLAN COORDINATION

Mr. Cozad provided handouts to the Committee on these items. There was a table of proposed Capital Projects and Equipment for review. Projects discussed include: 1) Existing Santa Ana main east canal clean out and regrade has been deferred (Project #17); 4000 feet of 6 foot chain link fence on MC

spreading grounds between Sapphire and Garnet is estimated to be completed 2016-2017 for approximately \$40,000 (#21) and,; 3) Clean out the existing basins behind new fence including Basins 3, 4 and 5. Projects 1-4, 7, 9, 16, 18 and 27 have been completed. Mr. Cozad review newly added capital projects estimating a total of \$1,870,000. For Plunge Creek, the District has a grant of \$500,000; total project is \$710,000. These projects will be charged out of the Groundwater and Land Resource Enterprises. The septic tank and restroom for Mentone Shop will likely be done next fiscal year at an estimated cost of \$35,000. There is \$50,000 budgeted for the Trails Plan and Design. Once the Trails Plan design is finalized an entity will have to take ownership of the Plan and move toward implementation. A new dump truck recommended by Mr. Colunga is included the Capital project's budget. Capital Projects discussion ensued. The Committee reviewed thoroughly and concurs with staffs recommended Capital Program.

It was moved by Director Aranda and seconded by Chairman Corneille to approve the Capital Program as outlined by staff. The motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Chairman Corneille: Yes
Director Aranda: Yes

Mr. Cozad reviewed the adjacent land owners' agreement approach and provided a handout to Committee. The newest one identified is 7W which is located on the former Lockheed property. Staff has put together an Adjacent Land Use Agreement with 7W. The property is zoned half industrial and other half open space use. 7W asked to be zoned manufacturing. Mr. Cozad expressed concern over the potential for contamination if zoned manufacturing, because the facility is close to our spreading basins. Mr. Cozad reached out to discuss potential issues with this proposed zoning and out of that came the Draft Adjacent Land Use Agreement which is pending review by legal counsel.

Mr. Cozad reviewed minor potential revisions to the Wash Plan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) because FCD wants to be under the Wash Plan, but needs a separate agreement. He provided a handout of a map. Staff is working on an agreement with FCD to address these changes. Karin Cleary-Rose with USFWS said that they can issue FCD and the District two different Incidental Take Permits. Mr. Cozad said they would have their own Implementing Agreement, Endowment Plan and monitoring plan. He said that by FCD doing things separately from Wash Plan it takes them off the critical path as to not hinder the rest of the participants. Their impacts are approximately 5% of the total species impacts. This will be discussed in detail at the April 15th Task Force meeting. Additionally, there are other lands in an agreement with FCD that they can use the Woolly Star Preserve Area (WSPA) that they have not used and are now in the Wash Plan. There might be some opportunity to use that land.

9. ACCESS PERMIT AND AGGREGATE PROCESSING LICENSE POLICY

Mr. Cozad presented a Draft Access Permit and Aggregate Processing License Policy (Policy) and a handout. This policy has been written out in accordance with what the Board had authorized in April 2013. Staff has a request from Ken Munoz with Munoz Construction requesting a one year Access Permit. Mr. Cozad indicated that Mr. Munoz requested to speak to the Board as staff has already indicated they cannot extend any further. Legal counsel has not had an opportunity to review this policy. The Committee moved to bring the Policy forward to the upcoming Board meeting on April 13th for final Board approval.

It was moved by Director Aranda and seconded by Chairman Corneille to approve the Policy 13-001 District Access Permit Policy and recommend for

final Board approval at the April 13th Board meeting. The motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Chairman Corneille: Yes

Director Aranda: Yes

10. FINAL COMMUNITY GARDEN REPORT

The Final Community Garden Report was prepared by Katelyn Scholte and handed out to Committee. Mr. Cozad said that attachment 1 is the response to comments and a final report was sent to the County as well as IERCD. No comments were received. Mr. Cozad noted that there is a section in the report on next steps. Chairman Corneille indicated that the plan was developed for Mentone Area Community Association (MACA) to move forward with.

It was moved by Chairman Corneille and seconded by Director Aranda to approve the Final Community Garden Report and recommend for final Board approval at the April 13th Board meeting. The motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Chairman Corneille: Yes

Director Aranda: Yes

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/ISSUES

There were none discussed.

12. ADJOURN

It was moved by Chairman Corneille and seconded by Director Aranda that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried with all directors present voting in the affirmative.

Chairman Corneille: Yes

Director Aranda: Yes

There was no further business, and the meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.