



## SAWA MEETING MINUTES

September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Meeting Location:  
1835 Chicago Avenue, Suite C  
Riverside, CA 92507  
9:00 A.M.

### **BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Mills called the meeting to order at 9:08 A.M.

#### **II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Brett Mills – SJBRCD; Teri Biancardi – TEAMRCD; Melody Aimar – SAWA; Mandy Parkes – IERCD; David McMichael – OCWD; José Mora – IERCD; Brian Brady – SAWA; James Law – SAWA; Kerwin Russell – RCRCD;

#### **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 July 25, 2024
- b. Approve Financial Statement for July 2024
- c. Approve Financial Statement for August 2024

Director Russell moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Director Parkes seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0-1

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	<i>Abstained</i>		

#### **V. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **a. ILF Project – Brian Brady**

Mr. Brady reported Dudek has drafted a five-page memorandum that is intended to go to the Army Corps of Engineers. It contemplates seven attachments including all the documentations for SAWA's ILF program. The short conclusion is that SAWA purchase credits from Riverside County, but they're SAWPA credits for approximately \$1.5 million to fulfill SAWA's obligation and then to transfer the remaining money to Riverside Parks to presumably have an agreement with them to use those funds for SAWA to do treatments on that mitigation bank. The next meeting is in October and Laurie, SAWA's CPA, is going to firm up numbers in the ILF funds.

##### **b. Treasurer's Report – Mandy Parkes**

Ms. Parkes stated that there is nothing significant to report.

#### **VI. ACTION ITEMS**

##### **a. Receive and File Auditor's Report for the 2023 Financial Statements**

Mr. Brady reported that the State and Federal law require that SAWA, in order to maintain its 501(c)(3) tax exemption status, have its annual financial statements audited. SAWA's auditors,

Halliday & Company, have completed their reviews of the 2023 financials. Staff recommend that the Board accept the 2023 Financial Statements Audit Report. Further, if accepted, the Audit Report be received and filed with SAWA Corporate Records. For a copy of Mr. Brady's presentation, "2023 Audit", please contact Administrative Services manager, Jennette El Morsy, at jennette@sawatershed.org or 951-780-1012 ext. 101.

Director Biancardi moved to receive and file the auditor's report for the 2023 financial statements as presented. Director Parkes seconded and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

b. Discussion and Possible Approval of SAWA Strategic Planning Process

Mr. Brady reported that based upon the staff work and committee review since the July Board meeting, staff have developed the following planning elements for Board consideration: Branding, and Scope Operations. For a copy of Mr. Brady's presentation, "SAWA Branding and Scoping", please contact Administrative Services manager, Jennette El Morsy, at jennette@sawatershed.org or 951-780-1012 ext. 101.

Director Russell moved to continue the strategic planning process. Director Alternate McMichael seconded and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

c. Election of SAWA Corporate Officers

Section 305 of SAWA By-laws calls for the election of SAWA Board Officers at the annual meeting to be held on the fourth Thursday in September. Section 400 identifies the Officers of the Corporation as the Chairperson, the vice Chairperson, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. Chairperson Mills opened the nominations for the office of Chairperson. Director Biancardi moved to nominate Director Mills. Director Russell seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Director Mills moved to close the nominations for Chairperson. The motion for Director Mills for office of Chairperson passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

Chairperson Mills opened the nominations for the office of Vice-Chairperson. Director Parkes moved to nominate Director Russell. Director Biancardi seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Director Parkes moved to close the nominations, and Director Alternate McMichael seconded. The motion for Director Russell for office of Vice-Chairperson passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

Chairperson Mills opened the nominations for the office of Secretary. Director Parkes moved to nominate Director Parsons. Director Biancardi seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Director Russell moved to close the nominations, and Director Biancardi seconded. The motion for Director Parsons for office of Secretary passed, 4-0-1

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	<i>Abstained</i>
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

Chairperson Mills opened the nominations for the office of Treasurer. Director Biancardi moved to nominate Director Parkes. There were no other nominations. Director Biancardi moved to close the nominations, and Director Russell seconded. The motion for Director Parkes for office of Treasurer passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
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Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye
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d. Designation of SAWA Board Committees and Assignment of Committee Members  
Section 600 of SAWA By-laws call for the designation of Board advisory committees by the Board of Directors. The following are the committees approved by the Board: Administration (policies and procedures, human resources, and legal); Audit and Finance (accounting, budget, purchasing, and investment). Section 601 of the By-laws stipulates that the committees shall continue as such until the annual meeting of the Board and until his or her successor is appointed.

Chairperson Mills opened the nominations for the Administration Committee. Director Mills nominated Director Russell, and Director Biancardi seconded. Director Biancardi nominated Director Mills, and Director Alternate McMichael seconded. Director Biancardi moved to close the nominations, and Director Parkes seconded. The motion for Director Russell and Director Mills for the Administration Committee passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

Chairperson Mills opened the nomination for the Audit and Finance Committee. Director Mills nominated Director Parkes, and Director Biancardi seconded. Director Alternate McMichael nominated Director Biancardi, and Director Parkes seconded. Director Parkes moved to close the nominations, and Director Biancardi seconded. The motion for Director Parkes and Director Biancardi for the Audit and Finance Committee passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

Director Parkes left the meeting at this time.

## **GENERAL ITEMS**

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

a. Brian Brady, Executive Director – SAWA

Mr. Brady reported that his items have been discussed in regard to SAWA staff members developing the Branding and Scoping components of the Strategic Plan and presented findings and recommendations to the Administration Committee (September 25th) and Board (September 26th) at the September meeting. OCWD staff informed SAWPA staff it is ending its long-standing process of advancing funds (booked by SAWA as restricted deferred funds) for work involving cowbird trapping, Sunnyslope maintenance and similar tasks. Alternatively, based upon OCWD competitive bidding procedures, OCWD will contract with SAWA services. Additionally, OCWD has requested the return of related unspent funds. This process will take time and analysis: a) the financial analysis will be extensive, and b) the SAWA Board will have to approve the transfer. SAWA staff has scheduled an Audit and Finance Committee meeting on September 23rd to discuss the final Audited Financial Statements for CY 2023 prior to Board ratification on September 26th.

b. Kerwin Russell – RCRC

Director Russell thanked the MSHCP Dept. and other SAWA staff that came out and helped with the river surveys. RCRC have been irrigating restoration. There were some issues with the fires. Two of RCRC's properties were severely burned in 2018 and this fire was close to reaching the old fire scar. Thankfully RCRC did not have any damage to their properties from it.

c. Sheryl Parsons – OCWD

Director Alternate McMichael reported OCWD has an RFQ to do some vegetation management and SAWA is involved with that. OCWD are doing veg management down at Sunnyslope trying to clear the creek. OCWD are going to be having the MSHCP Dept. come out and help do some shocking throughout the whole stretch. OCWD have been working with Mr. Law's crew doing Arundo treatment and flying a drone trying to get an idea of how much acreage of Arundo OCWD have at Prado.

d. Teri Biancardi – Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD

Director Biancardi reported it has been a very busy time. The SAWA Office joined as they have been working on arranging their RCD regional meeting, which is October 30th. TEAMRCD have a panel set up to have a discussion on conservation easements and how effective they have been and maybe discuss how everybody can help each other as RCDs. TEAMRCD were successful in their cooperative agreement with NRCS and will be bringing on a person. TEAMRCD are also starting on their strategic plan. Ms. Biancardi wanted to mention that there is a CWPP that is coming out sometime in November that is issued by the forest service and clearly there is a huge need building wildfire resilience and post fire recovery and she would really love to figure out how to move into that space of having a set best practices protocol for post fire recovery and having projects of working towards helping people who are really struggling.

e. Mandy Parkes – Inland Empire RCD

*Absent*; Director Alternate Mora reported that he and Ms. Parkes met with Ms. Aimar to talk about different projects SAWA could help with. Hopefully in the future they will be collaborating a little bit more.

f. Brett Mills – San Jacinto Basin RCD

Director Mills reported that SJBRCD have a few projects they're hoping to get Mr. Law's crew help on. It has been busy with projects and surveys and SJBRCD are hopeful to close out some projects.

g. Jennette El Morsy, Administrative Services Manager – SAWA

*Absent*

h. James Law, Habitat Restoration Services Manager – SAWA

Mr. Law reported on HRS job proposals and administrative tasks including ILF placement - next meeting is October 17th to draft a presentation on our ILF plan. City of Chino Hills, RCRCD Anza, SBVMWD Anza Palms and City of Riverside. Mr. Law also reported on other work within individual member agencies jurisdictions:

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments to: TEAM RCD – Riv Flood projects and homeless monitoring in June.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at the following: SBVMWD – Old Ranch/Anza/Anza Extension.
- Inland Empire RCD: SAWA's HRS department conducted treatments at: No treatments were conducted since the last board meeting within this district.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at: No treatments were conducted since the last board meeting within this district.
- Orange County Water District: The HRS department conducted treatments at: OCWD – Prado – Fall 24 and IECF – Prado – Fall 24.

i. Melody Aimar, Biological Programs Manager – SAWA

Ms. Aimar reported on MSHCP Dept. Monthly WRC MSHCP Management and Monitoring Coordination Meetings Presentation: 8/8 – “*Science to inform efficacy of road crossing and barrier systems for reptiles and amphibians.*” by Cheryl Brehme, Biologist (USGS, Western Ecological Research Center). 9/12 – “*Disentangling the drivers of plant community structure across a Southern California elevation gradient.*” by Tesa Madsen-Hepp, PhD Candidate (UCR Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology). 2023 Survey Reports – all submitted to RCA for review. 2023 Monitoring Section (8.0) of RCA Annual Report with Survey Summaries – submitted. Quarterly Report – 4th quarter report submitted to RCA. Ms. Aimar revising report guidelines with RCA input. Ms. Aimar asked by RCA to give a presentation to the *National Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition* annual meeting in Palm Springs – Abstract submitted, presentation in progress. Mr. Campanella managing remote workflow. Monthly leads meetings via Zoom for project updates. Quarterly All-Hands meeting (in person). Ms. Aimar attended the monthly RCA Managers Meeting (September meeting canceled). Ms. Aimar and Mr. Campanella submitted monthly reports to RCA. All staff attended the Team Building Event. Survey leads completed *Writing in the Sciences* training course. Staff had 2 warehouse cleaning days. Ms. Aimar also updated on other MSHCP work including:

- Rare Plants: 2024 surveys – in progress (21/36 surveys in July/August).
- California Gnatcatcher (USGS Regional): 2024 surveys – completed.
- California Gnatcatcher (Nesting): 2024 nest monitoring – completed.
- Grasshopper Sparrow: 2024 surveys – completed in June, data analysis – in progress.
- Mammals: SR 60 Undercrossing – Camera trap surveys – in progress. Anza Knowls Guzzler camera trap – in progress (survived fire).
- Clinton Keith Overcrossing: Final report – in progress.
- Herps/Fish: 2024 Artificial Cover surveys – in progress. 2024 Drift Fence camera surveys – in progress. 2024 Spadefoot surveys – completed, data analysis – in progress. 2024 Arroyo Toad surveys – completed, data analysis – in progress. 2024 Pond Turtle Trapping – in progress. SAR Native Fish Surveys with SBVMWD and agencies.
- Quino Checkerspot Butterfly: 2024 surveys – completed, data analysis – in progress.
- Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly: 2024 surveys – in progress.
- Vernal Pools: 2024 surveys – completed, data analysis – in progress.
- Data/GIS Analysis: 2023 Species Occurrence Dataset – complete and submitted. 2024 Data QC – in progress.

Ms. Aimar reported on WHMS Dept. LBVI – Preliminary data shows 1,588 territories and 396 nests documented. Data proofing/analysis in progress. Biologists conducted “last-in” Vireo surveys at managed locations. BHCO – all seasonal traps closed and retrieval complete. Winter traps in San Jacinto, Prado, Lake Elsinore open. IEUA 2023-24 WBS/BBS – complete, report in progress. March-Meridian BHCO – data proofing/analysis in progress. Cielo Vista – data proofing/analysis in progress. Ms. Aimar coordinating with SBVMWD and RivCo Parks Rangers on SAR homeless camp safety. SBVMWD Riparian Bird Surveys in Upper SAR – Data proofing/analysis in progress. Biologists assisted with Annual Mitigation Report. Ms. Aimar coordinating WFA recertification for all staff. Ms. Aimar completed the preliminary 2025 Work Plan. All staff attended the team building event. Biologists assisted SBVMWD/agencies with Native Fish Surveys. Ms. Aimar also updated on other work within individual member agencies’ jurisdictions:

- Inland Empire RCD: Goose Creek LBVI monitoring – Data proofing/analysis in progress. San Timoteo LBVI monitoring and BHCO – Data proofing/analysis in progress (final year). Ms. Aimar in collaboration with IERCD on future projects.
- Orange County Water District: No work this month.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: No work this month.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: No work this month.

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: No work this month.

**VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

There were no other comments at this time.

**IX. NEXT MEETING** – October 24, 2024 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 10:26 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.**

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