SAWA MEETING MINUTES

May 22nd, 2025
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 9:01 A.M.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Brian Brady – SAWA; Kimberly Kuznicki – SAWA; Jennette El Morsy – SAWA; Kerwin Russell – RCRCD; Melody Aimar – SAWA; Sheryl Parsons – OCWD; James Law – SAWA; Brett Mills – SJBRCD;

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 April 24, 2025
b. Approve Financial Statement for April 2025

Director Parsons moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Director Russell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 3-0

Alternate Mora	*Absent*	Russell	Aye	Parsons	Aye
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	*Absent*		

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. ILF Project – Brian Brady

Mr. Brady reported that he and Mr. Law will have a Zoom meeting with the Corps. Dudek has been working with SAWA on a proposal that involves Riverside Parks, SAWPA, SAWA, and the Corps to finally do a placement for the 32 plus acres. Mr. Law reported that the other agencies are going to have their legal team review and should have information about any other documents needed or procedures required to move forward.

Director Alternate Mora joined the meeting at this time.

b. Treasurer's Report – Mandy Parkes

Absent; Director Mills reported that everything looked good and within the 1 to 30 day range.

GENERAL ITEMS

VI. SAWA PROJECT REPORTS

a. Brian Brady, Executive Director – SAWA

Mr. Brady reported that staff have been carefully following the actions of the incoming federal administration with implications for SAWA's continued federal funding. SAWA was informed

last month by the ACOE staff that 2025 funding has been allocated but not released for on-going SAWA projects. Staff are developing a strategy for dealing with long-term delays in the federal funding. Staff are developing long-term office and warehouse space requirements and alternatives as several leases come up for renewal. Lee & Associates has provided additional site options or SAWA's review. Staff have started working with SAWA's auditors to develop data for the 2025 calendar year financial statements. The audit results are scheduled for Board review in September or October. Staff are developing the mid-year budget revision data and recommendations. The RCA 2025-2026 contract has been preliminarily finalized at $2,215,715, or about $70,000 above 2024-2025 funding.

b. Kerwin Russell – RCRCD
Mr. Russell reported that watering has begun, and birds started coming in over the last month, so RCRCD have had to do biomonitoring, to do weeding. RCRCD has had a lot of people call about fire clearance. A lot of RCRCD's properties are conservation areas and can't be cleared.

c. Sheryl Parsons – OCWD
Ms. Parsons reported that OCWD has a lot of vireo surveys still happening. There are 573 territories for the year. Everything is coming in late, there are 66 nests right now. OCWD have approval for their Arundo budget for a total of $100k next year. The budget was approved, and OCWD are waiting for the extension to the agreement approved. OCWD will be adding herbicide language, to follow the laws and regulations when applying herbicide.

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

e. Mandy Parkes – Inland Empire RCD
Absent; Mr. Mora reported that that SAWA has been helping at Goose Creek. IERCD are finishing up budgeting for the next fiscal year and looking to increase capacity of field staff. IERCD are looking at a cannabis grant through CDFW. It is a general watershed wide grant; staff are in conversation about whether they will apply for it or not.

f. Brett Mills – San Jacinto Basin RCD
Mr. Mills reported working with Mr. Law's crew and getting maintenance done. SJBRCD have some conservation easements that are coming online and some restoration projects that will need some assistance from SAWA. SJBRCD are trying to work with CDFW on the cannabis grant as well.

g. Jennette El Morsy, Administrative Services Manager – SAWA
Ms. El Morsy reported on A/R April invoice totaling $333,773.31. Workers' Comp Insurance Renewal – effective June 1. Liability Insurance Renewal – effective June 1. Audit preparation – fieldwork scheduled in July. Renewed CA Secretary of State – Statement of Information. USFWS final financial reports. Ongoing IT updates. Warehouse search with realtor, Andrew Peake. Recruitment for Restoration Technicians. Restocking field/first aid supplies as needed. The warehouse inspection is complete with no issues.

h. James Law, Habitat Restoration Services Manager – SAWA
Mr. Law reported that the next ILF placement meeting is scheduled for May 22nd. Mr. Law also updated 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.

- Riverside-Corona RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at the following: SBVMED – Hidden Valley Creek, Anza, Anza Extension, Old Ranch, Waterman Riparian and Waterman Alluvial.
- Inland Empire RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at: SBVMWD Facilities.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at: Canyon Hills HOA and site visits were conducted with Mr. Mills.
- 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 Meeting Presentation: May 8th Presentation: "*Value of alternative fish sampling methods to describe fish community dynamics in the Santa Ana River, California.*" by Brock Huntsman (USGS). Mr. Campanella managing workflow. Section 8.0 of RCA Draft Annual Report and Appendices submitted to RCA. Monthly and 3rd quarterly reports submitted. Monthly Leads meeting via Zoom for project updates. Ms. Aimar attended the monthly RCA Managers Meeting. Leads are working on 2024 reports. Staff working on public outreach supplies in preparation to have a table for Nature Fest at MSR. Avian Lead attended several BUOW coordination meetings with CDFW. Rare Plant Training at UCR Botanic Garden and multiple field sites. Mammal Lead, coordinating with the USFWS/USGS/SBVMWD on SKBR habitat monitoring (in progress) and SBKR trapping 2025-2026. Ms. Aimar also updated on other MSHCP work including:

- Rare Plants: 2024 report – in progress. 2025 Rainbow Manzanita surveys in progress.
- California Gnatcatcher (Nesting): 2024 report in progress.
- Grasshopper Sparrow: 2024 Report in progress.
- Northern Harrier: 2025 Surveys – in progress.
- BUOW: 2024 Summary Report – done. 2025 Camera trap monitoring – in progress.
- Mammals: SR 60 Undercrossing camera trap – in progress. Anza Knowls Guzzler camera trap – in progress. 2024 Carnivore summary report – done. SBKR USFWS regional surveys – Habitat monitoring in progress.
- Clinton Keith Overcrossing: Final report – in progress.
- Herps/Fish: 2024 Summary reports – done. 2025 Artificial Cover surveys – in progress. 2025 Drift Fence Camera Surveys – in progress.
- Quino Checkerspot Butterfly: 2024 Report – in progress. 2025 surveys – in progress (1st Quino larva detected 2/21 and 1st adult detected on 3/25 at MSR) – flight season just about done.
- Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly: 2025 Surveys – prep.
- Vernal Pool: 2025 Surveys – Most pools dried up (no Covered Fairy Shrimp).
- Data/GIS Analysis: 2024 Data QC – done. GIS analyst coordinating with IT about server and email retrieval.

Ms. Aimar reported on WHMS Dept. LBVI arrivals being very late, and the numbers are extremely low so far. 2025: 5/13/25 – 693. 2024: 4/30/24 – 941. Effort has been lower. Site with same effort is 2024 (84), 2025 (67). Biologist Assistant – Vireo training in progress. For BHCO, all habitat traps are open, diary traps remain open. SBVMWD agreed to use 2024 contract surplus for SAR trapping in 2025. Upper SAR (new route) funded through SBV Water Conservation District, shared funds with IERCD and SBVMWD. OCWD – BHCO contract for 3 years in Prado. BHCO in March-Meridian (RLC) & Cielo Vista. Ms. Aimar attended SAWA's Managers' Meeting. Biologists conducting bioassessments of mitigation sites (37). Biologists conduct SAWA HRS monitoring as needed. Ms. Aimar attended an ESA webinar on Environmental Law Changes in the new administrations 1st 100 days. Ms. Aimar sent out proposals to Yucaipa Valley WD and OC Public Works. Ms. Aimar is working on a monitoring

contract with Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (Santiago Creek). Ms. Aimar also updated on other work within individual member agencies' jurisdictions:

- Inland Empire RCD: Ms. Aimar is in collaboration with IERCD on future projects – meeting on 4/23. Biologists monitoring restoration crew at Goose Creek Mitigation.
- Orange County Water District: Prado BHCO trapping.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: No work this month.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: No work this month.
- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: Bioassessments of mitigation areas.

VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board Member comments at this time.

VIII. NEXT MEETING – June 26, 2025 will be held at the SAWA Headquarters, 1835 Chicago Avenue, Suite C, Riverside, CA 92507 and remotely via Zoom.

IX. ADJOURN – The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 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.

Please post 72 hours before meeting