



SAWA MEETING MINUTES

December 18th, 2025
 Meeting Location:
 5029 La Mart Drive, Suite E
 Riverside, CA 92507
 9:00 A.M.

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Mills called the meeting to order at 9:10 A.M.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Brian Brady – SAWA; Tesa Madsen-Hepp – SAWA; Jennette El Morsy – SAWA; Allyson Beckman – SAWA; Kimberly Kuznicki – SAWA; James Law – SAWA; Teri Biancardi – TEAMRCD; José Mora – IERCD; 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 October 23, 2025
- b. Approve Financial Statement for October 2025
- c. Approve Financial Statement for November 2025

Director Biancardi moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Director Alternate Mora seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 3-0

Alternate Mora	Aye	Russell	<i>Absent</i>	Parsons	<i>Absent</i>
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. ILF Project – Brian Brady

Mr. Brady reported that the Corps approved SAWA’s plan. The Corps are drafting a letter itemizing the main aspects of the transfer of credits.

Director Russell joined the meeting at this time.

- b. Treasurer’s Report – Mandy Parkes

Absent. Director Mills reported that nothing looked out of line. Mr. Mills added that SJBRCD owes SAWA an invoice and that SJBRCD will be cutting checks at their next meeting tonight. There is \$207,263.61 outstanding and the total that came in was \$108,118.04. Ms. El Morsy added that she did a status update with Carlson Strategic because they were over 60 days late. Carlson Strategic said they were waiting to get paid before they paid SAWA. Ms. El Morsy told Ms. Beckman to add a net 30 days the next time WHMS Dept. use Carlson Strategic.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

- a. SAWA Board Resolution Honoring Melody Aimar

Mr. Brady reported that on the occasion of her retirement, the Santa Ana Watershed Association formally acknowledged and expressed its deepest gratitude for Melody Aimar’s outstanding service and lasting impact over more than two decades. At the October 23, 2025 Board Meeting, the resolution was presented to Melody honoring her many contributions to SAWA. To permanently enshrine the resolution within the SAWA corporate records, the Board was asked to ratify the October 23rd action.

Director Biancardi moved to ratify the resolution honoring Melody Aimar dated October 23, 2025. Director Russell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

Alternate Mora	Aye	Russell	Aye	Parsons	<i>Absent</i>
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

b. Discussion and Possible Approval of Proposed Budget for 2026

Mr. Brady reported that the proposed operating budget for 2026 has been prepared for Board review. This proposed budget contains full revenue and expense accounting for the Administrative, HRS, WHMS, MSHCP and Member Agency programs. The proposed budget includes a merit increase in employee salaries based on performance reviews. Additionally, staff recommended a COLA increase to salary range steps based on the review of Department of Labor Bureau of Statistics CPI data. A PowerPoint presentation was presented to the Board. For a copy of that presentation, please contact Jennette Elf Morsy at jennette@sawatershed.org. Mr. Brady recommended that the Board approve the proposed 2026 Budget.

Director Alternate Mora moved to approve the proposed budget for 2026. Director Biancardi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

Alternate Mora	Aye	Russell	Aye	Parsons	<i>Absent</i>
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

c. Discussion and Possible Approval of SAWA Holiday and Board Meeting Calendar for 2026

Mr. Brady reported that the SAWA Employee Handbook requires that the holiday schedule be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors annually. The calendar identifies the dates on which the holidays prescribed in the SAWA Employee Handbook will be observed in 2026. Additionally, the SAWA bi-laws specify monthly general meetings and the meeting at which the Officer election will take place. The calendar presented to the Board also identifies the dates for the SAWA Board general meetings and election of Officers. Mr. Brady requested the Board approval of the presented calendar specifying holiday dates which SAWA will observe and be closed for business and the dates on which the Board will conduct its general meetings and hold office elections for 2026.

Director Russell moved to approve the SAWA Holiday and Board Meeting Calendar for 2026. Director Biancardi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

Alternate Mora	Aye	Russell	Aye	Parsons	<i>Absent</i>
Mills	Aye	Biancardi	Aye		

GENERAL ITEMS

VII. SAWA PROJECT REPORTS

a. Brian Brady, Executive Director – SAWA

Mr. Brady reported that staff have completed the draft 2026 operating budget for Board consideration. Mr. Brady added that the Administrative office move has been completed, saving approximately \$70,000 in annual expenses.

b. Kerwin Russell – RCRC

Mr. Russell reported that RCRC D has been doing watering and hoping for rain. RCRC D does not have anything going on in particular with SAWA. Mr. Russell added that he would let SAWA know if there is a project that comes up in which RCRC D can use SAWA's HRS staff or biological monitoring. RCRC D is applying for grants, and if those go through, RCRC D may need some field work staff for that.

c. Sheryl Parsons – OCWD
Absent.

d. Teri Biancardi – Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD
Ms. Biancardi reported that TEAM RCD was asked to submit a full application to the CDFW cannabis grant which they have been working on with Mr. Law. TEAM RCD are going to do a pilot project and then a planning project. TEAM RCD is doing work with SAWA on the Point of Rocks project in Idyllwild, looking to do public outreach. Mr. Law is going to put out a contract on January 7th and hopefully get someone out there to do work for about a month in February/March. TEAM RCD is finishing up a 4-day trash cleanup in Lake Elsinore.

e. Mandy Parkes – Inland Empire RCD
Absent. Mr. Mora reported that IERCD have been doing Arundo removals and utilizing SAWA's HRS crew. The HRS crew did great work at the Glenn Helen Park with San Bernardino County, and IERCD are going to continue to use the HRS crew with a few other projects. IERCD have also been working on a WCB grant for monarch restoration, which IERCD are trying to close out. IERCD has about one more year and done about 3.5 acres. IERCD are hoping to bring in more funding so that they can increase the acreage.

f. Brett Mills – San Jacinto Basin RCD
Mr. Mills reported that SJBRCD owes SAWA an invoice for the May Ranch work that SAWA did. SJBRCD just finished up their audit. SJBRCD has been working with RCA trying to get one of SJBRCD's Salt Creek projects started. SJBRCD are going to have more project work for SAWA's HRS crew doing SJBRCD's conservation easement in the spring.

g. Jennette El Morsy, Administrative Services Manager – SAWA
Ms. El Morsy reported on AR for October Invoices totaling \$376,830.33 and AR November Invoices totaling \$252,116.54. Ms. El Morsy also reported on the new Admin Office location – still working on files. HRS Department move to SBVMWD property to include office & yard space – February. Insurance/Customer/Vendor Change of Address. Updated CA Secretary of State Change of Address. Employee Health Benefits Open Enrollment – December 1st. Employee Staff Holiday Luncheon – December 3rd. 2026 Financial Budget. End of year financials. Recruiting for new MSHCP Biologist. Employee CA Sexual Harassment Prevention Training. Annual Employee Evaluations (non MSHCP). Annual Sprinkler Inspection for all warehouse units.

h. James Law, Habitat Restoration Services Manager – SAWA
Mr. Law reported on new job proposals/administrative tasks including ILF placement, received an email that ACOE approved SAWA's ILF proposed plan and are waiting on confirmation letter. Warehouse relocation/vehicle acquisition. City of Murrieta Fire \$3,000,000 fuels project. City of Riverside – Ryan Bambino Park project. IECF – Pile of Rocks shaded fuel break \$5,000,000. Riverside Flood Control – Lake Elsinore Clean Up with TEAMRCD. Riverside Flood Control – SARM 9 project. Mr. Law also updated on other work within individual member agencies' jurisdiction:

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: The HRS department conducted treatment at Santa Gertrudis Creek.

- Riverside-Corona RCD: The HRS department conducted treatment at the following: SBVMWD – SAR River Corridor and Hidden Valley Creek, Mockingbird MCB, and SAR Upstream River Road.
- Inland Empire RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at SBVMWD – SAR River Corridor and SAR Upstream River Road.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at Quail Run and May Ranch.
- Orange County Water District: The HRS department conducted treatments at: OCWD – Prado Fall 25 and Env Benefit Project Fund – DBM L.A. Lumber Treating Ltd.

i. Allyson Beckman, Wildlife Habitat Management Services Manager – SAWA

Ms. Beckman reported on LVVI/BHCO proofing of data and report sections ongoing – draft report to be submitted to agencies by 12/31. Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP) edits to report complete and submitted. RLC – Meridian 2026 work order submitted. Ms. Beckman completed 2026 proposed WHMS budget. Ms. Beckman met with City of Murrieta Fire representative and Mr. Law regarding new project. Ms. Beckman also updated on other work within individual member agencies’ jurisdictions including:

- Inland Empire RCD: No work this month. SAWA will collaborate with IERCD on projects in which work orders have been received.
- Orange County Water District: No work this month. SAWA will potentially open Prado dairy traps in early 2026.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: No work this month.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: No work this month.
- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: No work this month.

j. Tesa Madsen-Hepp, MSHCP BMP Administrator – SAWA

Ms. Madsen-Hepp reported on the monthly WRC MSHCP Management and Monitoring Coordination Meeting presentations: 12/11 presentation; “The kiss of death: How venomous animals use their venom” by Bill Hayes, Ph.D., Professor of Biology in the Department of Earth and Biological Sciences at Loma Linda University. Updating protocols for 2025 and 2026. Ms. Madsen-Hepp attended monthly RCA Managers Meeting. Working on streamlining permits and improving adaptive management with RCA. Hiring for new DSF Survey Lead. Preparing FY 2026-27 workplan document and Section 8.0 annual report for 2025. Leads meeting on 12/2 and 12/16. Mr. Campanella training on ArcGIS Pro. Preparing to start Loggerhead Shrike, White-tailed Kite, QCB, and artificial cover surveys. Ms. Madsen-Hepp also updated on other MSHCP work including:

- Rare Plants: 2024 report – submitted to RCA for final review. 2025 Rare Plant surveys complete. 2025 PHST site check. 2025 Engleman Oak surveys – almost done (375 of 430).
- California Gnatcatcher (nesting): 2024 report – submitted to RCA for final review.
- Grasshopper Sparrow: 2024 report – submitted to RCA for final review.
- Northern Harrier: 2025 surveys – completed – no nesting found.
- Lincoln Sparrow: 2025 surveys – completed – none found.
- BUOW: 2024 summary report – done. 2025 Camera trap monitoring – done.
- Mammals: SR 60 undercrossing camera trap – in progress. Anza Knowls Guzzler camera trap – in progress. 2024 Carnivore summary report – submitted to RCA for review. SBKR USFWS regional surveys – trapping complete.
- Clinton Keith Overcrossing: final report – submitted to RCA for review.
- Herps/Fish: 2024 Summary Reports – submitted to RCA for review. 2025 Aquatic invasives removal with Riv. Co. Parks. 2025 Drift Fence Camera surveys – in progress. 2025 Mountain Snake Surveys – in progress.

- Quino Checkerspot Butterfly: 2024 report – submitted to RCA for final review. 2025 surveys – flight season over.
- Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly: 2025 Surveys – completed
- Vernal Pools: 2025 Surveys – completed. 2026 Surveys – initial surveys found fairy shrimp.
- Data/GIS Analysis: 2024 Data QC – distributed to RCA and various stakeholders. 2025 Dataset – 6 certified, 2 being QCed.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board Member comments at this time.

IX. NEXT MEETING – January 22, 2026 will be held at the SAWA Headquarters, 5029 La Mart Drive, Suite E, Riverside, CA 92507 and remotely via Zoom.

X. ADJOURN – The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 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