



SAWA MEETING MINUTES

April 23rd, 2026
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 9:01 A.M.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Jennette El Morsy – SAWA; Brian Brady – SAWA; Tesa Madsen-Hepp – SAWA; Allyson Backman – SAWA; James Law – SAWA; Mandy Parkes – IERCD; Kerwin Russell – RCRCD; 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 March 26, 2026

b. Approve Financial Statements for March 2026

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

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

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. ILF Project – Brian Brady

Mr. Brady reported that staff are working with the Corps and Riverside County on agreements. Mr. Law added that County Parks originally were going to pull credits that were going to be purchased by Riverside County Parks from their original mitigation bank expansion Riverside County Parks and Open Spaces District used to have a different name when the first bank was established. This caused a problem with the agreement so staff are redoing the matrix where all the units will be coming out of their mitigation bank expansion when Parks had the same name they have today. The matrix is being updated to show the credits all coming from the expansion bank, not the original. Mr. Dustin is working on the agreement with the County Council to formalize the purchase of the credits and a document that will show the funds will only be spent on mitigation purposes for the mitigation bank. Mr. Law asked Dudek to reach out to the Army Corps. SAWA received a draft letter stating that the Corps are okay with everything, but SAWA would like a finalized letter.

b. Treasurer's Report – Mandy Parkes

Ms. Parkes updated that there was not anything significant to report this month.

GENERAL ITEMS

VI. SAWA PROJECT REPORTS

a. Brian Brady, Executive Director – SAWA

Mr. Brady reported that with the departure of Sheryl Parsons from OCWD, SAWA's Board Chair and Executive Director met with OCWD's general manager John Kennedy and Executive Director of Planning and Natural Resources Lisa Haney to discuss OCWD's continuing role in support of SAWA operations. After a useful discussion regarding SAWA history and contributions in the watershed, Mr. Kennedy indicated that OCWD staff would continue their internal review. SAWA staff has begun department budget reviews in anticipation of the mid-year budgeting process. RCA has adjusted SAWA's 2025-2026 budget upward by 2.9% (\$64,000) to recognize the full-time contribution of the new MSHCP administrator.

b. Kerwin Russell – RCRC

Mr. Russell reported on fire clearance issues that have been coming up on many of RCRC's properties. Director Russell informed that there is a state code 51184 that exempts conservation open spaces from fire clearance requirements that can allow some flexibility in whether it is going to have to be cleared or not.

c. David McMichael – OCWD

Absent

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

Absent

e. Mandy Parkes – Inland Empire RCD

Ms. Parkes reported that IERCD hired three seasonal field technicians to help with the intensity of the removal season this spring. IERCD continue working on arundo removal funded through SAWPA and Mr. Law's crew has been supporting that. Some of the work is physical removal and other work is identifying where things are and mapping to get a clear picture of where priority removal areas are. IERCD has a tree-planting event with the City of San Bernardino as a related Earth Day Event.

f. Brett Mills – San Jacinto Basin RCD

Mr. Mills reported on SJBRCD moving forward with a few conservation parcels and working with some HOAs that have some code problems along with CDFW and SJBRCD have been engaging with OCWD.

g. Jennette El Morsy, Administrative Services Manager – SAWA

Ms. El Morsy reported on A/R March Invoice Total \$286,235.35. HRS Department move to SBVMWD property to include office & yard space – June. RCA MSHCP FY 26-27 Budget submitted. Working with Allyson on ACOE/USFWS for annual contract funding. Liability Insurance renewal - June 1. Workers' Comp Insurance renewal - June 1. RCA MSHCP Amendment for FY25-26 accepted. Researching new iPhones/cell service. Lisa Schauer out on workers' comp. Recruitment for HRS Restoration Technicians. MSHCP biologists Fairy Shrimp Training. MSHCP - Wilderness & CPR/First Aid Training. New employees Defensive Driver Training & Sexual Harassment Prevention Training.

h. James Law, Habitat Restoration Services Manager – SAWA

Mr. Law reported on new job proposals and administrative tasks including ILF placement → Credits sold will be just from the Mitigation Bank Expansion. Will elaborate at the board meeting. City of Murrieta Fire – Cal Fire Grant. IECF – Pile of Rocks shaded fuel break.

Riverside Flood Control – SARM 9 Project. Mr. Law also updated on other work within individual member agencies' jurisdictions:

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at TEAM RCD – Riverside Flood Projects and completed the Lake Elsinore Clean Up.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at the follow: Waterman Alluvial, Lower Cactus Basin, Waterman Riparian and Hidden Valley Creek.
- Inland Empire RCD: SAWA's HRS department conducted treatments at: No treatments conducted since last report.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at: No treatments conducted since last report.
- Orange County Water District: The HRS department conducted treatments at: Env Benefit Project Fund – D B M L.A. Morgan Truck Body, OCWD – Prado Fall 25 and D B M Fontana Wood Treating.

i. Allyson Beckman, Wildlife Habitat Management Services Manager – SAWA
Ms. Beckman reported on LBVI/BHCO projects. Seasonal Biologist: conducting LBVI assessment surveys. BHCO assistants' trained/all traps open. Ms. Beckman and biologist conducting LBVI surveys and nest monitoring. Ms. Beckman also updated that there was no other work within individual member agencies' jurisdictions.

j. Tesa Madsen-Hepp, MSHCP Biological Monitoring Program Administrator – SAWA
Ms. Madsen-Hepp reported on monthly WRC MSHCP Management and Monitoring Coordination Meeting. Presentation(s): 4/10 Presentation: "*Products of their Environment: Environmental Influence on Behavior in Southern California Rattlesnakes*" by Chelsea Martin, PhD Candidate at Loma Linda University, Department of Biology. Updating protocols for 2026. Ms. Madsen-Hepp attended monthly RCA Managers Meeting. Working on streamlining permits and improving adaptive management with RCA. Two new Field Biologists started this month. Ms. Madsen-Hepp preparing RCA Section 8.0 annual report for 2025. Ms. Madsen-Hepp and Mr. Campanella are editing 2025 Summary and Survey Reports from Taxa Leads. Ms. Madsen-Hepp and Mr. Campanella are working on developing new fire and heat safety protocols. Ms. Madsen-Hepp met with RCA Director Aaron Gabbe, Deputy Director Harry Sandoval, and new Reserve Management/Monitoring Manager Cody Bear Sutton on 13 April to discuss goals for the monitoring program and strategic direction. All BMP biologists attended Wilderness First Aid training on 7 and 8 April. Currently conducting Loggerhead Shrike, White-tailed Kite, Riparian Birds, QCB, SBKR Habitat, and artificial cover surveys. Ms. Madsen-Hepp and Ms. Drennen are planning and training for database migration to Microsoft Azure SQL after RCA reports. Ms. Madsen-Hepp also updated on other MSHCP work including:

- Rare plants: 2025 Rare Plant Report – in progress. 2025 Engleman Oak Report – in progress. 2026 Rare Plant surveys – in progress.
- Birds: 2025 Lincoln's Sparrow Report – finalized. 2025 Northern Harrier Report – finalized. 2026 White-tailed Kite surveys – in progress. 2026 Loggerhead Shrike surveys – in progress. 2026 Riparian Birds surveys – in progress.
- Mammals: 2025-26 SR 60 Undercrossing camera trap – in progress. 2025-26 Anza Knowls Guzzler camera trap – in progress. 2025 Carnivore summary report – finalized. 2025 SBKR Report – draft submitted to RCA.
- Clinton Keith Overcrossing: 2024 Final Report – finalized.
- Herps/Fish: 2025 Arroyo Toad Report – finalized. 2025 Western Spadefoot Report – in progress. 2025 Artificial Cover Report – finalized. 2025 Drift Fence Camera Trap Report – finalized. 2026 Drift Fence Camera surveys – in progress. 2026 Artificial Cover surveys – in progress. 2026 Spadefoot surveys – in progress.

- Quino Checkerspot Butterfly: 2025 QCB Report – draft submitted to RCA. 2026 QCB surveys – in progress.
- Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly: 2025 DSF Report – in progress.
- Vernal Pools: 2025 VP Report – finalized. 2026 VP Surveys – in progress.
- Data/GIS Analysis: 2025 Datasets – 15 certified, 1 pending.

VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board Member comments at this time.

VIII. NEXT MEETING – May 28, 2026 will be held at the SAWA Headquarters, 5029 La Mart Drive, Suite E, Riverside, CA 92507 and remotely via Zoom.

IX. ADJOURN – The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 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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