



SAWA MEETING MINUTES

June 25th, 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 9:03 A.M.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Kerwin Russell – RCRC; Jennette El Morsy – SAWA; Brian Brady – SAWA; Kimberly Kuznicki – SAWA; Arturo Garcia – TEAMRCD; David McMichael – OCWD; 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. CLOSED SESSION

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (Gov. Code section 54957(b)(1).)

Title: Executive Director

Chairperson Mills called the meeting into closed session at 9:05 A.M. Chairperson Mills reported the end of closed session, and back into open session portion of the meeting at 9:30 A.M. Chairperson Mills reported that there is no reportable action at this time.

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approve Minutes for May 28, 2026

Mr. Brady requested that the Board hold off on approving the Minutes for the May 2026 meeting. The previous TEAMRCD Director Biancardi had some questions, and Mr. Brady would like to revise the minutes to address her concerns. The Minutes for the May 2026 meeting will be brought back to the Board at the July 2026 Board Meeting for approval.

b. Approve Financial Statements for May 2026

Director Russell moved to approve the Financial Statements for May 2026. Director Alternate Mora seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0

Alternate Mora	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Garcia	Aye		

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. ILF Project – Brian Brady

Mr. Brady reported that SAWA is setting up a meeting via Zoom with Dudek, Riverside Parks, and the Corp representative to discuss the status. All involved are still working on their documents, though they have yet to be shared. Mr. Brady added that it is a slow process, but it

is moving along. Mr. Brady will be sending the Board a report of said meeting in the following week.

b. Treasurer's Report – Mandy Parkes

Absent; Mr. Mills reported on behalf of Ms. Parkes that there was not anything out of place, and everything is within 30 days.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

a. Discussion and Possible Approval of the Fourth Amendment to Employment Agreement between Executive Director Brady and the Santa Ana Watershed Association

Director Garcia moved to table Action Item VII (a.), and defer action on the Executive Director's contract renewal, direct the Board to develop a proposed performance framework within 30 days, direct staff completion of a market compensation analysis, and continue up the contract on a month-to-month basis, and bring the item back for Board consideration, including close session evaluation within 30 days. Director Alternate McMichael seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0

Alternate Mora	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Garcia	Aye		

GENERAL ITEMS

VIII. SAWA PROJECT REPORTS

a. Brian Brady, Executive Director – SAWA

Mr. Brady reported at the request of several Board members, a comparison of SAWA billing rates to competing consulting firms was developed. These results were presented to the Board as a slideshow presentation, "2026 Billing Rate Comparison". For a copy of said presentation, please contact Jennette El Morsy at jennette@sawatershed.org or (951) 780-1012 ext. 101. SAWA staff continues department budget reviews in anticipation of the mid-year budgeting process. The results will be presented at the July Board meeting. The recruitment process for the HRS Manager position continues, with additional applications still being received. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, staff working with SAWA's WHMS staff, required funding for cowbird trapping and vireo monitoring for the second half of 2026 is awaiting final internal approvals. Existing funding runs out by July 1st.

b. Kerwin Russell – RCRC

Mr. Russell reported on dealing with fire clearances notices and trying to get that all squared away before the end of the month. Director Russell asked if anyone has had any issues with roundup use or public complaining about using that because of the lawsuit that the Supreme Court just overturned. Mr. Brady reported that the Supreme Court said, if the federal government agency approves glyphosate for use under whatever conditions, then one cannot add an additional requirement on top of it. Director Russell reported that in Orange County there is a movement to get rid of the glyphosate use in certain cities. Mr. Barrett added that SAWA's HRS Department has not run into any issues with glyphosate use recently. However, OC Parks bans glyphosate completely on their land, and a couple of other agencies that don't want glyphosate on site at all.

c. David McMichael – OCWD

Mr. McMichael reported the issue with glyphosate has been a huge concern for OCWD. OCWD has had meetings with the County of Orange to strategize how to handle things. OCWD is in the process of renewing their SAWA Arundo control agreement. OCWD are still in the middle of vireo season. It's been a great year with up to 720 territories, where OCWD monitors, which is

the second highest year so far. Mr. McMichael added that OCWD has Ms. Bonnie Johnson as a contract biologist.

d. Arturo Garcia – Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD

Mr. Garcia reported that there are a lot of new faces at TEAMRCD and is glad to be attending his first meeting as the newly appointed TEAMRCD representative to the SAWA Board. Mr. Garcia is excited to work closely with this group moving forward and sees SAWA as an important driver for conservation and protecting natural resources in the watershed. Mr. Garcia invited Mr. Meek, who is also new on TEAMRCD, to introduce himself. Mr. Meek has been the new District Manager for TEAMRCD since mid-April. Mr. Meek added that a big part of his role has been getting TEAMRCD's new Wildlife Conservation Board grant for the I-15 Wildlife Overcrossing Process Project off the ground. Mr. Meek reported that TEAMRCD are deep in the consultant selection process for that project and are hoping to have a selection made sometime in the coming week. Mr. Meek had previously worked for 16 years with the Environmental Protection Agency, in their office of environmental review, working primarily on environmental review of large transportation projects. Mr. Meek has worked very closely with CDFW, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps, the regional boards, and Caltrans throughout the state. Mr. Meek is working on a proposal with SAWA's HRS department for wildfire prevention cleanup work at Greer Ranch. Mr. Meek briefly discussed the reclamation training. It is a remarkable opportunity that is provided for staff to be paid to be trained in this forum. Mr. Meek reported that it includes getting paid to learn grant funding, reclamation training, site visits in agency coordination, and added that it is comprehensive training. TEAMRCD has been told that there is very little capacity existing in Southern California and are looking for a team in Southern California to take on this work because there are so many illicit cannabis cultivation sites in TEAMRCD's district and in surrounding districts.

e. Mandy Parkes – Inland Empire RCD

Absent; Mr. Mora reported on behalf of Ms. Parkes that there are no major updates. IERCD are doing some Arundo work for SAWPA. Mr. Mora added that Ms. Parkes mentioned that she would like to meet with the new replacement once they are hired as SAWA's HRS Manager, to work on upcoming projects, especially with Arundo.

f. Brett Mills – San Jacinto Basin RCD

Mr. Mills reported closing out projects and reigning in new projects. SJBRCD have CDFW restoration projects that are finally going to go into their long-term management stages. SJBRCD are having a lot of problems with some of the arroyos in their eastern portion. Mr. Mills added that there are a lot of palm fronds that are dead and fallen, causing fire concerns. Once the nesting season is over, Mr. Mills will reach out to Mr. Barrett to have work done over there.

g. Jennette El Morsy, Administrative Services Manager – SAWA

Ms. El Morsy reported on A/R May Invoice Total \$466,597.86. HRS Department move to SBVMWD property to include office & yard space – June? Received RCA MSHCP FY 26-27 contract. ACOE/USFWS funding approved, waiting for funds to transfer to SAWA. Preparing for Financial audit / fieldwork scheduled for July 6-10. Workers' Comp audit due June 17. Purchased new iPhones for MSHCP staff. Biologist Lisa Schauer is still out on workers' comp. Dr. Brian Brady, ED contract amendment due July 23. Preparing for seasonal field assistants' departure. Volunteer/Internship MSHCP Department. MSHCP employee evaluations are due by July 1st. Recruitment for HRS Project Manager, posted second round on Conservation Job Board, Society of Ecological Restoration, SERCAL, Cal-IPC and Texas A&M Job Board. Heat Awareness in the field.

h. Max Barrett, Interim Habitat Restoration Services Manager – SAWA

Mr. Barrett reported on new job proposals and administrative tasks including OCWD - Prado - Fall 26, Riverside Flood Control - On Call Services/ SARM 9, TEAMRCD - Greer Ranch, Canyon Hills HOA – Arundo, and TEAMRCD - IERC Training. Mr. Barrett also updated on other work within individual member agencies' jurisdictions:

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments: RCA - Winchester Rd - Fall 25.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at the following: Anza Creek, SAR Corridor, RLC Alessandro Arroyo 1.52.
- Inland Empire RCD: SAWA's HRS department conducted treatments at: Sunnyslope, SCE Starglow 0.8, SBVMWD Facilities (Emerald, Newport, Weaver Basins), Mentone 1&2, Redlands Airport, Vegetation Management, SAR Corridor.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at: Canyon Hills HOA Arroyo, SCE Wolfskill 1.2.
- Orange County Water District: The HRS department conducted treatments at: SAR Upstream River Rd Phase I CDFW.

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

Ms. Beckman reported on continued correspondence with USACE/USFWS regarding acquisition of funding – hoping to receive within the next couple of weeks. Ms. Beckman and biologist conducting LBVI surveys and nest monitoring; seasonal Biologist conducted LBVI surveys through June 11. BHCO trapping (closed all USFWS-funded traps by June 12). Scheduling/conducting bioassessments on HRS projects. 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): 6/11 Presentation: *"Wildlife Communities and Pathogen Exposure across Wildland-Agricultural Interfaces in Riverside County, CA"* by Meredith Van Acker, Assistant Professor of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology, UCR. Updating protocols for 2026, replacing sensors. Ms. Madsen-Hepp attended monthly RCA Managers Meeting. Working on streamlining permits and improving adaptive management with RCA. Ms. Madsen-Hepp submitted RCA Section 8.0 annual report for 2025. Ms. Madsen-Hepp, Mr. Campanella, and Taxa Leads are editing 2025 RCA Survey Reports. Ms. Madsen-Hepp and Mr. Campanella are working on developing new fire and heat safety protocols. Ms. Madsen-Hepp met with CDFW, USFWS, and RCA on 6/11 to discuss the upcoming major amendment to the MSHCP and Local Assistance Grants. Ms. Madsen-Hepp and RCA Management and Monitoring Manager are collaborating on a CDFW Local Assistance Grant to study vernal pool management. Currently conducting Loggerhead Shrike, White-tailed Kite, Riparian Birds, QCB, AKR Habitat, Arroyo Toad, Rare Plants, and artificial cover surveys. Starting DSF and Pond Turtle surveys this week. Ms. Madsen-Hepp and Database Manager 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 – draft submitted to RCA. 2025 Engleman Oak Report – finalized. 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. 2026 AKR habitat and trapping surveys – in progress.

- Clinton Keith Overcrossing: 2024 Final Report – finalized.
- Herps/Fish: 2025 Arroyo Toad Report – finalized. 2025 Western Spadefoot Report – due 2027. 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 Arroyo Toad 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 surveys – in progress.
- Vernal Pools: 2025 VP Report – finalized. 2026 VP Surveys – in progress.
- Data/GIS Analysis: 2025 Datasets – 16 certified.

IX. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board Member comments at this time.

X. NEXT MEETING – July 23, 2026 will be held at the SAWA Headquarters, 5029 La Mart Drive, Suite E, Riverside, CA 92507 and remotely via Zoom.

XI. ADJOURN – The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 A.M.

Notice: All open session agenda materials will be available for inspection by members of the public at the SAWA office located at 5029 La Mart Drive, Suite E, 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