



SAWA MEETING MINUTES

July 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 9:03 A.M.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Brian Brady – SAWA; Jennette El Morsy – SAWA; Kimberly Kuznicki – SAWA; David McMichael – OCWD; Arturo Garcia – TEAMRCD; Kerwin Russell – RCRCD; Mandy Parkes – IERCD; 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 9:04 A.M. Chairperson Mills reported the end of closed session, and back into the open session portion of the meeting at 9:52 A.M. Chairperson Mills reported that there was no reportable action from the Board at this time.

Allyson Beckman – SAWA; Tesa Madsen-Hepp – SAWA; Max Barrett – SAWA; joined the meeting via Zoom at this time.

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a. Approve Minutes for May 28, 2026
- b. Approve Minutes for June 25, 2026
- c. Approve Financial Statements for June 2026

Director Garcia moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Director Alternate McMichael seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Garcia	Aye		

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. ILF Project – Brian Brady

Mr. Brady reported he had a conversation with Dustin McClain, and they (County of Riverside Parks) are going to the supervisors' offices to get their buy off on the idea that SAWA is going to be giving the County 2.8 million that SAWA has restricted for ILF work and that they will accept that. Mr. Brady checked with Dudek and the Army Corps of Engineers that are still going through their process of approving the arrangement that SAWA has with ACOE. Lastly,

Greg Powers, SAWA's attorney, will be developing a SAWA funds transfer agreement between SAWA and the County of Riverside and funneled to Riverside County Parks.

b. Treasurer's Report – Mandy Parkes

Ms. Parkes reported that there isn't anything significant to report; there isn't anything outstanding over 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

Chairperson Mills asked for clarification on this being a two-month extension. Mr. Brady reported that SAWA's legal counsel did a six-day extension, without changing any terms and an expiring date of September 21st. This allows the Board to do deliberations as needed. Then if the Board wants to do another extension, that would be the fifth extension. Chairperson Mills brought attention to September 21st and it being four days before the September Board Meeting and asked if that would cause a problem. Mr. Brady reported that if the Board chooses to take action, the Board can revise the approval of the item by saying the expiration date would be the 24th or 25th of September.

Director Parkes moved to approve the extension with the updated date of September 25th.

Director Russell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	Aye	Russell	Aye	Alternate McMichael	Aye
Mills	Aye	Garcia	Aye		

b. Discussion and Possible Approval of Proposed Mid-Year Budget Revisions for 2026

Mr. Brady reported on the proposed mid-year budget adjustment for 2026 that has been prepared for Board review. These are proposed changes to income and expense items in the budget as adopted in December 2025. Mr. Brady recommended the Board to approve the revised Mid-Year budget for 2026, which includes the increase of total Revenues by \$178,308 and the increase of total Expenses by \$49,825. The net income for 2026 is projected to be \$390,197. For a copy of Mr. Brady's presentation, please contact the Administrative Services Manager, Jennette El Morsy, at jennette@sawatershed.org or (951) 780-1012 ext. 101.

Director Parkes moved to approve the Proposed Mid-Year Budget Revisions for 2026. Director Alternate McMichael seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0

Parkes	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 that the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District (RivCoParks) has issued an RFP for Ecological Restoration Services within Hidden Valley and adjacent open space along the main stem of the Santa Ana River. The \$975,000, five-year contract encompasses Arundo eradication (with biological monitoring), hydrological modeling and restoration of native habitat. SAWA is partnering with GEI Consultants (as SAWA's sub-contractor) for the engineering-related tasks. TEAM RCD has successfully submitted the IERC Reclamation Training Initiative Application, along with SAWA as a subcontractor. From the Application *"TEAM RCD sees this training as the operational foundation for a lasting reclamation capacity in southwestern Riverside County, a region with an increasing presence of illicit cannabis cultivation and few organizations positioned to respond. we see long-term value in SAWA serving as a trained field operator that other agencies and organizations across*

the region can contract for cannabis site cleanup." Recruitment search interviews for Habitat Restoration Services Manager candidates have concluded and reference checks are in progress. ACOE contract funding for cowbird management and vireo monitoring covering the remainder of 2026 is proceeding through final administrative approvals. The audit of SAWA's 2025 financials is nearing completion.

b. Kerwin Russell – RCRC

Mr. Russell reported that RCRC staff are mostly working on reporting. Mr. Russell asked Mr. Brady when the new Habitat Restoration Services Manager starts, if they would be operating the green climber or if other staff would be doing that. Mr. Barrett responded that the HRS department's skilled technician is primarily the one that operates the green climber. The manager and the field supervisor operate the rental equipment that would be outside the ability of the skilled technician. Director Russell stated that RCRC have some projects coming up and wanted to see what the HRS department's ability is for operating that type of equipment.

c. David McMichael – OCWD

Mr. McMichael reported that OCWD is winding down with Least Bell's Vireo work. OCWD are sitting at 727 territories, their second highest year. OCWD are starting drone flights to map Arundo. OCWD's Board of Directors asked staff to halt the use of glyphosate for the time being. The staff are looking to do mechanical removal during that time going into the winter months. OCWD has a new Director of Natural Resources, Matthew Bearden, he will be starting on August 10th and will be attending the next Board Meeting. Mr. Bearden will assume the position on the Board and Mr. McMichael will continue being the alternate.

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

Mr. Garcia reported that TEAM RCD is close to moving forward with a contractor for their Flagship Project, which is the wildlife crossing along the I-15 freeway. The selected contractor will take them to 65% design, and they are getting funding from WCB for that. The project reflects what's possible when conservation, public safety, and smart infrastructure come together.

e. Mandy Parkes – Inland Empire RCD

Ms. Parkes reported that IERCD has been working on garlic mustard and Spanish broom removal contracts with some different partners and working with Valley District. IERCD have a lot of commitments related to the HCP mitigation implementation. Aaron and Jose are interested in having a meeting with SAWA's HRS manager about looking at annual staffing needs and the ability to do some subbing and possibly doing some training together.

f. Brett Mills – San Jacinto Basin RCD

Mr. Mills reported that SJBRCD are wrapping up projects and getting ready for some conservation easement. SJBRCD have been working with SAWA to make sure they get all the contracts in and helping Mr. Barrett get a couple of projects going in SJBRCD's district and hopefully TEAM RCD's as well.

Director Parkes left the meeting at this time.

g. Jennette El Morsy, Administrative Services Manager – SAWA

Ms. El Morsy reported on A/R for June Invoice Total of \$344,171.77. Need to purchase a truck for MSHCP. HRS Department move to SBVMWD property to include office & yard space pending. Submitted US Census. ACOE/USFWS funding approved, waiting for funds to transfer to SAWA. Completed Financial fieldwork for July 6-10. Workers' Comp audit submitted. Submitted IRS Form 5500. Biologist, Lisa Schauer still out on workers' comp. Termed seasonal

biologist & field assistants. MSHCP employee evaluations 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. Safety & Risk Assessment meeting State Comp. 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 SBVMWD – Lower Cactus Basin: \$40k for another year of treatment. Creekside HOA: phase 1 submitted, potential start in September. SCE: 1 acre mitigation. Oakmont II HOA: Site walk on 7/13, working on proposal. RivCoParks RFP: \$975k for 5 years. OCWD Prado Fall 26: \$160k, \$60k increase from previous. Riverside Flood Control – On Call Services/SARM 9: NTE \$600k, SAR mow polygons, waiting for responses to both. TEAM RCD Greer Ranch: \$64k, potentially start in September. TEAM RCD – IERC Training: application draft. Mr. Barrett also updated on other work within individual member agencies' jurisdictions:

- Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta RCD: The HRS department conducted no treatments.
- Riverside-Corona RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at the following: Anza Creek, Old Ranch Creek, Lower Hole Creek, Hidden Valley Creek, Waterman Riparia, Waterman Alluvial.
- Inland Empire RCD: The HRS department conducted treatment at: Enhanced Recharge Phase 1B.
- San Jacinto Basin RCD: The HRS department conducted treatments at: SCE Wolfskill 1.2.
- Orange County Water District: The HRS department conducted treatments at: OCWD – Fall 25, Env. Benefit Fund Projects, SAR Upstream River Rd Phase I CDFW.

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

Ms. Beckman reported on LBVI/BHCO projects, including continued correspondence with USACE/USFWS regarding acquisition of funding – which staff is hoping to receive soon. Ms. Beckman and Ms. Falatek are conducting LBVI surveys and nest monitoring. Last monitoring nest fledge weekend on July 11th. BHCO trapping – all traps shut down by July 10th. HRS Projects including conducting/completed bioassessments. 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): 7/10 Presentation: *“Trials and Tribulation: Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Post-Fire Habitat Treatments”* by Jonathan Reinig, MSHCP Natural Resource Manager, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District. 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. All 2025 RCA Survey Reports have been finalized. Ms. Madsen-Hepp attended the California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition Annual Meeting in San Diego on 23 June. Ms. Madsen-Hepp is working with RCA to begin surveying for Crotch's Bumblebee. Ms. Madsen-Hepp completed a pilot vegetation map for the RCA using a reproducible remote sensing pipeline. 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, Aguanga Kangaroo Rat, Arroyo Toad, Rare Plants, artificial cover, Delhi Sands flower-loving fly, and SW Pond Turtle surveys. Ms. Madsen-Hepp and Ms. Drennen are training for database migration to Microsoft Azure SQL and piloting table migration. Ms. Madsen-Hepp also updated on other MSHCP work including:

- Rare plants: 2025 Rare Plant Report – finalized. 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 – finalized. 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. 2026 Southwestern Pond Turtle surveys.
- Quino Checkerspot Butterfly: 2025 QCB Report – finalized. 2026 QCB surveys – completed.
- Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly: 2025 DSF surveys – in progress.
- Vernal Pools: 2025 VP Report – finalized. 2026 VP Surveys – completed.
- Data/GIS Analysis: 2025 Datasets – 16 certified.

IX. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board Member comments at this time.

X. NEXT MEETING – August 27, 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 10:47 A.M.

Notice: All open session agenda materials will be available for inspection by members of the public at the SAWA office located at 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