

MINUTES (Approved)

Chairperson: Andy Pease
Vice Chairperson: Ray Dienzo
Secretary: Brendan Clark

The following action minutes are listed as they were acted upon by the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) as listed on the Regular Meeting agenda for **April 5, 2023** together with staff reports and related documents attached thereto and incorporated therein by reference.

The video recording of the meeting and materials submitted to the WRAC are available online: [https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Committees-Programs/Water-Resources-Advisory-Committee-\(WRAC\).aspx](https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Committees-Programs/Water-Resources-Advisory-Committee-(WRAC).aspx)

Call to order at 1:30 PM

1) Determination of a Quorum and Introductions

The number of voting Members present is 20; quorum met.

2) Approval of February 1, 2023 WRAC Meeting Minutes

Item start time ~ [00:04:35](#)

A. Pease introduces the item and asks for questions or comments from the Committee.

E. Greening comments on the minutes being the right balance of not too much but just enough.

T. Walters appreciates the addition of the recording links and timestamps to the meeting minutes.

E. Greening moves to approve the February 1, 2023 meeting minutes and C. Mulholland seconds the motion. Motion carries 20-0-0.

3) Approval of Submitting 2022 Annual Report to the District Board of Supervisors

Item start time ~ [00:06:05](#)

A. Pease introduces the item and asks for questions or comments from the Committee.

S. Sinton comments on a typo and correction to the name of the current Board Chair. B. Clark responds.

D. Chipping comments on vacant District seats and asks if the County Board of Supervisors will be filling these seats and sending representatives to the WRAC meetings. B. Clark responds.

E. Greening comments on the Environment At-Large Alternate vacancy that needs to be filled, now that Tom Burhenn is representing District 4.

A. Pease comments on the four Agriculture At-Large vacancies that need to be filled and asks the Committee to encourage potential candidates to apply.

C. Mulholland moves to approve the 2022 Annual Report to the District Board of Supervisors and E. Greening seconds the motion. Motion carries 20-0-0.

4) Elections for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Item start time ~ [00:08:40](#)

A. Pease introduces the item and asks for Chair and Vice-Chair nominations from the Committee.

C. Mulholland moves to nominate A. Pease for Committee Chairperson and E. Greening seconds the motion. Motion carries 20-0-0.

T. Burhenn volunteers for the Vice-Chairperson position.

C. Mulholland moves to nominate T. Burhenn for Committee Vice-Chairperson and L. Chipping seconds the motion. Motion carries 20-0-0.

5) Consider forming Ad Hoc committee to Review the Committee Bylaws

Item start time ~ [00:12:10](#)

A. Pease introduces the item and asks for questions or comments from the Committee.

E. Greening asks if the scope of possible action of the WRAC can be included as a topic of the bylaw review. A. Pease and B. Clark respond.

D. Chipping asks if the bylaws can (or do) cover voting powers of members participating virtually, or if this is covered by state law. B. Clark, S. Inman, and A. Pease respond.

T. Burhenn comments on the Paso Basin Planting Ordinance and the previous direction provided to the WRAC about which items the Committee can and cannot take action on (as a body) and asks if there is something in the bylaws that prevents the Committee from providing input on certain items to the Board of Supervisors. B. Clark responds.

C. Mulholland comments in favor of forming an Ad Hoc review committee and suggests adding language to the bylaws to address hybrid meeting attendance, voting requirements, and communication between Members and their Alternates.

A. Pease, L. Chipping, C. Mulholland, C. Weirick, T. Burhenn, and D. Logan volunteer for the Ad Hoc review committee.

C. Mulholland comments that the committee could coordinate via email and asks staff to distribute the current bylaws to members of the Ad Hoc committee. A. Pease responds.

C. Weirick comments on the framework of the District that the WRAC advises and suggests adding specific codes/statutes to the bylaws that clarify the District's authority.

E. Greening volunteers to be part of Ad Hoc committee if correspondence will be done predominately through email and hopes to clarify whether or not the WRAC can submit comments on planning items to the District Board.

D. Chipping comments that there is no technical advisory committee on water to the Planning Department, that the WRAC represents the technical expertise on water in the county and should therefore be able to comment on Planning items, and requests that the Ad Hoc committee review ways to present input to the Board of Supervisors on a breadth of topics.

C. Mulholland moves to nominate members A. Pease, L. Chipping, C. Mulholland, C. Weirick, T. Burhenn, D. Logan and E. Greening for the Ad Hoc review committee and T. Burhenn seconds the motion. Motion carries 20-0-0.

6) Update from County Staff on the Arroyo Grande Creek Levee and repairs

Item start time ~ [00:23:54](#)

A. Pease introduces item and B. Clark presents updates to the Arroyo Grande Creek Levee.

L. Chipping asks if dunes were removed near Manual Breach Site #2 to allow water to flow out of the creek. B. Clark responds.

E. Greening asks if Union Pacific has expressed interest in their part of solving the issues at the Arroyo Grande Creek Levee. B. Clark responds.

T. Burhenn comments on the declining spill rates at Lopez Dam, peaking at 500 CFS and then dropping to 200 CFS, and asks if these rates will continue to decline. B. Clark responds.

D. Chipping asks how the flap gate at the Arroyo Grande Lagoon performed while the creek was flooding. B. Clark and L. Chipping respond.

L. Chipping asks if the channel met its designed objective/goals per the WMP, and if not, why didn't it and what are the lessons learned. A. Pease responds.

A. Villa asks that the creek be placed as a priority project to ensure future flooding issues are addressed; comments that Oceano residents are concerned, and some are even considering selling their properties and moving due to the recent storm events; asks if there is an area near Lopez Lake to divert water to before it causes flooding issues downstream.

T. Walter comments that most of the flooding issues in several areas of the county were related to debris accumulation, noting the importance of creek maintenance and the clearing of flood paths.

S. Wald comments (audio becomes unclear). A. Pease responds.

7) County Staff Presentation on the DESAL Plan

Item start time ~ [00:32:12](#)

A. Pease introduces the item and Angela Ford presents on the DESAL Plan.

D. Chipping asks what types of water will be desalinated: ocean water, recycled water, or a mix of ocean water and recycled water. A. Ford responds.

C. Mulholland asks if Environmental Impact Reports will be included in phase 2 of the DESAL Plan, if the County is already committed to doing a desal project, or if this process is for investigating the best options for a potential project. A. Ford responds.

T. Burhenn asks if staff is only considering terrestrial options or if smaller scale projects, such as desalination buoys, are being considered. A. Ford responds.

S. Inman asks about the state's citing guide public draft and if it will include locations of recommended desalination sites. A. Ford responds.

A. Pease asks if there is specific feedback or direction being requested from the WRAC. A. Ford responds.

C. Weirick asks if the citing guidance is being produced by a single agency or multiple agencies. A. Ford responds.

D. Chipping asks if denitrification may be considered as part of a desalinization project. A. Ford responds.

J. Guthrie asks if partner agencies will be expected to help pay funding match for the grant if awarded to the District. A. Ford responds.

T. Simpson asks if using the Diablo Canyon desalination facility is still being considered as a potential option and asks what happens to the salt that is removed during the desalination process. A. Ford and T. Burhenn respond.

C. Bourbeau comments on the geographic distribution of participating agencies throughout the county and asks if the general premise is to deliver desalinated water via pipelines to those agencies. A. Ford responds.

E. Greening comments on the draft environmental impact report on Diablo Canyon decommissioning which will be released for public comment in the coming months.

T. Walters encourages hiring local consultants for the project due to their inherent local knowledge and expertise of the area's water resources.

A. Pease asks if local experience would be considered as part of the selection criteria for the RFP. A. Ford responds.

A. Pease comments on the City of San Luis Obispo's decision to participate in the next phases of the DESAL planning process.

C. Mulholland comments on the need to question and consider setting limits on water demand, similar to how limits have been considered for resources, etc.

D. Logan comments on Templeton CSD's approach to balancing water supply and demand.

E. Greening comments on the connotation of the word *demand* and asks if there is a reason the word *need* is not used instead. A. Pease, D. Logan, and T. Walters respond.

A. Pease asks if a motion or recommendation is being requested from the WRAC for this item. A. Ford responds.

D. Logan comments on the consultant selection process for the RFP and suggests including local knowledge as part of the consultant selection criteria to be considered.

A. Pease comments that the Committee is generally supportive of the action being brought to the Board of Supervisors for the DESAL Plan RFP and the suggestion to include local knowledge as part of the consultant selection criteria to be considered.

8) **Ongoing Updates**

Item start time ~ [00:59:58](#)

a) Rain & Reservoir Report

None

b) California Drought Monitor Summary

B. Clark comments that drought related Board of Supervisors item has been scheduled for late April, adding that future updates from the Board or the standing drought committee will be provided in this section of the report.

E. Greening asks if the purpose of the Board item is for the Board to determine if they will cease making emergency drought declarations every 60 days. B. Clark responds.

N. Teague comments that the Governor has rescinded several drought emergency provisions, such as the voluntary conservation and the requirement that local water agencies implement level 2 of their drought contingency plans, adding that the drought declaration is still in effect for agencies to continue conservation efforts.

E. Greening comments on the collapse of the cattle industry in the 1860s which was caused by catastrophic drought after a severe winter, highlighting how quickly conditions can change.

c) Groundwater Basin Management Efforts

S. Sinton comments on two upcoming Board of Supervisors items, one being an item to establish the Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District as a Groundwater Sustainability Agency and the other to review the letter of opposition for the Shandon-San Juan Water District's request for water allocation from the Nacimiento and Salinas Reservoirs.

T. Burhenn asks for clarification on the Cuyama Basin update regarding the status of GSP approval from the state and status of an adjudication. B. Clark responds.

d) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM)

B. Clark comments that the grant submittal took place February 1st and we are now waiting for a response from DWR.

D. Chipping comments on the lack of reaction from the county regarding the state's demand for more housing and asked if that effort was part of the IRWM. B. Clark responds.

E. Greening comments that the deadline for comments on the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy must be submitted to the SLOCOG website by April 6th.

A. Pease comments that water demand for regional housing is also being tied to the efforts of the Master Water Report.

e) Master Water Report (MWR) Update

B. Clark comments that a focused Master Water Report agenda item will be provided at a future Committee meeting, that the data information audit phase of the project has been completed, that methods for organizing and updating the data are currently being evaluated along with the proof of concept, and how these efforts will provide input to Planning for the housing needs assessment.

C. Mulholland comments on the need for additional opportunities for the WRAC to provide specific input on the development of the Master Water Report. B. Clark responds.

J. Guthrie asks if there is a pre-existing plan with all the older data that is already available for review and when the new plan is expected to be completed. B. Clark responds.

A. Pease comments on how much the MWR will be a beneficial tool once completed.

S. Wald asks if there will be a call for specific data sets. B. Clark responds.

f) State Water Project (SWP)

No comment

g) Desalination Executable Solution and Logistics Plan (DESAL Plan)

No comment

h) Various County Water Programs, Policies, and Ordinances

No comment

i) Open Reporting on Water Conservation Opportunities & Information

No comment

9) Future Agenda Items

Item start time ~ [01:13:25](#)

B. Clark comments that the draft of the County's Low Impact Development (LID) Manual was released on April 4th and will be distributed to the Committee via email for review.

L. Chipping asks if there is a deadline for comments on the County's LID Manual and suggests consideration a subcommittee to review the content. B. Clark responds.

S. Sinton comments on the Governor's suspension of Mutual Waters Rights and Procedures and pending future updates (audio becomes unclear on discussion).

A. Pease comments on the different types of state legislation that WRAC would like to advocate for to the County and encourages advocacy from WRAC members.

A. Pease comments on the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget and water conservation program updates that will be provided at May's meeting.

T. Burhenn suggests a future agenda item to discuss the potential for groundwater contamination caused by the runoff of agriculture operations and sewage during flood events.

E. Greening, D. Chipping, T. Burhenn and A. Pease discuss the use, application, limits, processing, and water quality impacts of application of activated sludge.

E. Eby comments that the ASCE recently presented on the Doheny Desalination Project which included design, funding, and other elements that would be of interest to the WRAC.

10) Public Comment for Items not on Agenda

Item start time ~ [01:25:10](#)

E. Greening comments on the Turlock Irrigation District's installation of solar panels over their canals to increase water quality and produce power and suggests the project may be similarly adaptable for water areas in San Luis Obispo County.

D. Chipping comments on energy storage development projects that were recently included in the New Times (audio becomes unclear).

C. Mulholland comments on efforts to place solar panels on canals in the San Joaquin Valley and ongoing water quality concerns with flooding throughout the state.