

# WATER CONSERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE

## MEETING MINUTES

Date: July 12, 2010  
Time: 10 a.m. – noon  
Location: San Diego County Water Authority  
Board Room  
4677 Overland Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92123  
Directions: [http://www.sdcwa.org/contact/km\\_directions.phtml](http://www.sdcwa.org/contact/km_directions.phtml)  
Contact: Kelly Mooney, 858.522.6766, [KMooney@sdcwa.org](mailto:KMooney@sdcwa.org)

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ACTIONS

1. Call to Order
  - Luis Generoso welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Welcome and Introductions
  - All attendees introduced themselves.
3. Review May 10, 2010, Meeting Notes and Update on Action Items
  - Members approved meeting notes as written. Luis announced that the Conservation Action Committee Steering Committee had a planning meeting on June 4. The Steering Committee will oversee the sub-committees.
4. Water Supply, FY 2011 Allocation, and MWD Lawsuit Update
  - Jason Foster and Bill Rose from the San Diego County Water Authority gave the update. Jason explained that State Water Project Allocations are now up to 50 percent for 2010, and precipitation, snowpack, and runoff in the Northern Sierra are all up in 2010 from 2009. Supply in both San Luis and Oroville reservoirs is higher this year. He also announced that the new Bay-Delta pumping restrictions were found to be inadequate still for smelt and salmon, and more than 800,000 acre feet of water have already been lost because of the pumping restrictions. Conditions for the Colorado River have been dry for 9 of the last 11 years. Lake Powell only has 64 percent of the average supply and Lake Mead only has 41 percent of the average supply, both sources being quite low. Jason and Bill explained that Metropolitan Water District will remain at drought Level 2 under its Water Supply Allocation Plan in fiscal year 2011. The regional allocation remains in effect, and the target is still 8 percent below the pre-cutback levels through June 30, 2011. The Drought Management Plan is now called the Water Shortage and Drought Response Plan.
  - Bill explained that the San Diego County Water Authority adopted the 2011 rates following the public hearing in June. The rate for treated water is up 11.3 percent and the rate for untreated water is up 14.7 percent. As a result of these increases, the Water Authority has cut more than 12 positions and reduced the operating budget by \$2.4 million. The Water Authority is challenging the 2011-2012 MWD rates because they improperly overcharge for transporting water through its facilities. Costs for system access and system power should go down and cost for supply should go up. The Water Authority should be paying \$26 million less, and as the number of years increases, they will be increasingly overcharged. The challenge has many impacts on conservation. MWD discourages local supply development, which acts as a disincentive to pursuing conservation. Also, MWD could cancel all agreements, including WaterSmart residential, smart landscape and smart controller programs, as a result of the lawsuit. Language in the current contracts states a 90-day limit so action on the lawsuit must be “triggered” in that timeframe.

- Sue Mosburg, from the Sweetwater Authority, asked what the savings numbers are for urban and agriculture. Linda Flournoy, from Planning and Engineering for Sustainability, requested elaboration on the use of “normal” and “average.” Jason noted that conditions change year to year, and it is difficult to use “normal.” “Average” is used for the time of year and average reservoir levels take the reservoir service life into consideration as well. Furthermore, a rolling 30-year range is used for averaging the annual data. Regarding numbers for 2012, it is too early to tell whether there will be additional cutbacks. Sue reminded the group that not all member agencies are currently observing a Level 2 Drought Alert. Luis asked if MWD has decided if they will move forward with replenishing Diamond Valley Lake, a resource for Southern California in times of drought. Jason explained that the quantity is still unclear, but MWD is working to replenish it. Kurt Carlson from KTU+A asked for an explanation for the dramatic leap in numbers from 2019 to 2021 projections in the overcharges to the Water Authority in the lawsuit presentation. Bill explained that it is showing a worst-case scenario. It is primarily due to infrastructure improvements that will be paid for during that time. Jason explained that the MWD rate increase is bad water policy, not just an overcharge. Bill explained that some small retailers near MWD rely solely on MWD, however, the level of conservation and number of conservation projects ranges between agencies. Luis asked what the timeline is looking like for the lawsuit. Bill explained that no dates are on the calendar yet, however it is likely that the first round will take place in the next year. Jason explained that due to the high stakes involved, the Water Authority will likely appeal the decision. The lawsuit could go as far as the California Supreme Court.

5. Status Report on MWD’s Efforts Toward a Long-Term Conservation Strategy

- Bill Rose from the San Diego County Water Authority explained that MWD spent \$20 million on conservation and had an operating budget of \$54 million in 2009. Due to the amount of money being spent, they closed many programs. In 2010, they reopened the programs and restructured the residential and commercial programs. MWD created a member agency program where the Water Authority will receive \$803,000. Just over half of that funding will be used for member agencies, and the rest will be used for the WaterSmart program, including water budgets, Water Conservation Garden classes, residential indoor programs, and outdoor audits. MWD has a \$195 savings per acre foot requirement in order for the funding to be used. Bill explained that long-term change does not happen through device-based incentives. If MWD chooses to continue with devices, people will expect to get paid to conserve. Sue noted that the programs must show a voluminous savings of \$195 per acre foot, and this may end up limiting the types of eligible programs because some education programs are more long-term. Marty Eberhardt from the Water Conservation Garden noted that she thinks it is great that the CAC meetings can be a forum for conservation discussions. Bill explained that the Urban Water Management Plan helps define conservation programs. The attitude regarding the ultimate measurement, gallons per capita per day, needs to be shifted and this will help in legislation. Pat Richter, from Patricia Richter Designs, asked which conservation methods are the most effective. Bill explained that it’s not the way we communicate, it is how we communicate. Social marketing has proven to be quite effective for recycling, “Click it or ticket,” and anti-smoking campaigns. Talking about the drought will not change behavior related to conservation.

6. Chaparral Institute – Chaparral Watershed Presentation

- Rick Halsey from the Chaparral Institute gave a presentation on fire safety and chaparral. He explained that chaparral is California’s most extensive, characteristic ecosystem. Land abuse and fire are the biggest threats to chaparral, and estimated that as much as half of the shrublands in California have been destroyed or seriously damaged in the last 5,000 years. Fires occurring less than 15 to 20 years apart can convert chaparral to nonnative grassland, and in California large infrequent fires are natural and inevitable. Location, building design and fuel management are the key factors related to fire safety. He explained that the term “clearing” should be replaced with “vegetation management” or “thinning.” He shared five truths associated with chaparral:
  - Coastal Southern California enjoys a Mediterranean-type climate.
  - Chaparral is a diverse, rich ecosystem.
  - Chaparral can be destroyed by too many fires.

- Being dense, impenetrable and prone to huge, intense fires is the natural condition of chaparral.
- Old growth chaparral is a beautiful, rare natural resource.

## 7. Work Group Reports

- **Landscape Industry** – Rob McGann, co-chair, explained that the group is revisiting the plant material index for use with the landscape ordinance and conservation. They are currently working with John Rader on compiling plant material for the document. Rob also announced the Environmental Protection Agency’s WaterSense certification program for irrigation professionals. Kurt Carlson, co-chair, said that ASLA and the Sweetwater Authority are collaborating to determine how plant material will be selected for the index. Brian Maynard, co-chair, announced that the CLCA Beautification Awards were a success and truly showed that drought-friendly, water-conserving gardens can be beautiful.
- **Residential** – Pat Richter, co-chair, announced that the group is developing a mission statement, but they have not yet met. She asked if the mission statement will go before the CAC and Glen Schmidt explained that the Steering Committee can review the mission statement.
- **Outreach and Education** – Marty Eberhardt, co-chair, announced that Sue Mosburg will replace Kate Breece as co-chair. The group will be split into sub-committees for nonprofit, for-profit and government. They plan to only meet when there are projects to discuss, and they will only work on CAC-related education. The group will most likely meet in August.
- **Regulation** – Lawrence O’Leary, co-chair, announced that the group will now be called “Legislative/Regulatory.” They developed a purpose for the group and will be providing non-advocating legislative updates to the CAC. They will meet quarterly with the first meeting scheduled for Aug. 24 from 9 to 10 a.m. Members interested in joining may contact Lawrence at lawole@msn.com.
- **Agriculture** – Glen Schmidt, CAC co-chair, provided the update because John Rader was absent. They are in the process of developing a research group for reviewing plant material. The first meeting will be held on Aug. 25 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Metropolitan Operations Center located at 9192 Topaz Way, Room 2E.

## 8. Legislative Update

- Alexi Schnell from the San Diego County Water Authority provided an update on the following legislative items:
  - The Water Authority board of directors did not adopt any new positions on legislation at the June 24 board meeting.
  - In the State Legislature, the last day for policy committees to hear and report on bills was July 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Bills that passed out of their house of origin (Senate or Assembly) needed to have passed out of policy committees in the second house in order to advance.
  - The legislative Summer Recess unofficially commenced on July 2 with no state budget in place; recess was scheduled to begin on adjournment July 2, provided a budget bill had been passed.
  - A stipulation was made that legislators must be able to return to the Capitol within 24 hours if requested.
  - The budget deficit was estimated at \$19.1 billion.
  - The State Controller has said that without a budget in place, the state will run out of cash to pay its bills by the end of August.
  - The high profile controversy over the Governor’s call to cut 200,000 state workers pay to minimum wage until a budget is in place – with the state controller refusing to do so – was set to be heard by a judge on July 16 (*the judge declined to force the state controller to comply; state workers will continue to receive full wages in July and August; the judge stated he will allow the lawsuit to proceed to the courts; a full hearing may be set for late August*).
  - The water bond, “The Safe, Clean, and Reliable Water Supply Act of 2010”, was recently assigned as “Proposition 18” for the November 2010 ballot.
  - Soon after, the Governor announced his support to remove the \$11.14 billion water bond measure from the November 2010 ballot, to delay it until the November 2012 ballot.

- Pulling a ballot measure from the ballot and putting it on a future ballot, in hopes that it will have a better chance of passing, has happened before – the High Speed Rail Bond was postponed twice.
- The Legislature is expected to take up this issue after they reconvene August 2.
- Pulling Proposition 18 from the ballot will require a 2/3 vote.
- The Water Authority sponsored two bills this year.
  - AB 1774 (Saldaña) Recycled Water: state agency landscape irrigation
    - The bill had passed out of the Assembly without opposition but ran into opposition in the Senate.
    - The author withdrew the bill from its committee hearing; the bill missed the policy committee deadline.
  - AB 1793 (Saldaña) Common Interest Developments: artificial turf
    - This bill would prohibit homeowners' associations from barring the use of artificial turf, but would allow Home Owners Associations to set and enforce design standards for its use.
    - The bill has advanced to the Senate floor (to third reading – as of July 1)

9. Member Announcements/Other Business

- Julian Duval from the San Diego Botanic Garden announced that class information can be found in the Garden's publication called Quail Tracks.
- Lawrence O'Leary from Toro announced that he is interested in scheduling an Emergency Drought Management Plan meeting with City of San Diego Councilmember Donna Frye. Linda Flournoy and Glen Schmidt announced that they had also contacted Councilmember Frye about a potential meeting.
- Linda Flournoy from Planning and Engineering for Sustainability announced that the Ocean Family Garden Group was taken back by Surfrider. They will now handle their own trainings. Her group is looking for a new name and may be called the Sustainable Landscape Initiative.

**HANDOUTS**

- MWD Water Rate Challenge Fact Sheet
- MWD Water Rate Challenge Frequently Asked Questions
- California Chaparral Institute membership form

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Sept. 13, 2010, 10 a.m. – noon; San Diego County Water Authority  
4677 Overland Ave., San Diego, CA 92123

**ATTENDEES**

1. Luis Generoso (Co-Chair), City of San Diego
2. Glen Schmidt (Co-Chair), Schmidt Design Group
3. Jeff Barnes, Helix Water District
4. Chuck Bragdon, WaterSaver Solutions, Inc.
5. Kurt Carlson, KTU+A
6. Kathy Coogan, California Landscape Technology
7. Danielle Dorsey, WSA Marketing
8. Julian Duval, San Diego Botanic Garden
9. Marty Eberhardt, Water Conservation Garden
10. Megan Ely, Rain Bird
11. Linda Flournoy, Planning & Engineering for Sustainability
12. Jason Foster, San Diego County Water Authority
13. Sandra Grow, Mark Schroeder & Co., Inc.
14. Rick Halsey, Chaparral Institute
15. Frank Hilliker, San Diego County Water Authority
16. Catherine Hollinger, WaterSmart Consulting

17. John Holt, Recon Native Plants, Inc.
18. Steve Hubert, San Diego County Water Authority
19. Fran Lambert, Mariposa Landscape & Tree Service, Inc.
20. Marian Marum, Marum Partnership
21. Brian Maynard, BRICKMAN; California Landscape Contractors Association
22. Hank McCarrick, SECOSYS
23. Rob McGann, HydroPlant Hydroseeding, Inc.
24. Rachele Melious, Mr. G Trees
25. Carlos Michelin, San Diego County Water Authority
26. Sue Mosburg, Sweetwater Authority
27. Lawrence O'Leary, OGC Resources
28. Rhianna Pensa, Otay Water District
29. Alan Pentico, San Diego County Apartment Association
30. Pat Richter, Tierrasanta HOA Landscape Coalition
31. Doug Roberts, Sweetwater Authority
32. Bill Rose, San Diego County Water Authority
33. Sarah Rossetto, Katz & Associates
34. Martin Schmidt, E N V I R O N S
35. Alexi Schnell, San Diego County Water Authority
36. Steve Sherman, CLT
37. Michele Shumate, San Diego County Water Authority
38. Carey Worthy, Labahn's Landscaping
39. Shawna Zinglewicz, Water2Save