



**Citizens' Advisory Committee
Water Subcommittee**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, April 25, 2023
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room**

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY OBSERVE AND PARTICIPATE VIA ZOOM
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE SOFTWARE**

Meeting URL

<https://sfwater.zoom.us/j/85452057612?pwd=TkpNV3AvTms3bGJjcmF0V0lUYnNyZz09>

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Meeting ID / Passcode

854 5205 7612 / 026806

Mission: The Water Subcommittee reviews water supply system reliability, water conservation, recycling, regional cooperation efforts and other relevant plans and policies. ([Admin Code 5.140-142](#))

Members:

Jennifer Clary (Chair) (D11)	Suki Kott (D2)	Amy Nagengast (D8)
Nicole Sandkulla (M-Reg'l Water Customers)	Eliahu Perszyk (M-Large Water User)	Douglas Jacuzzi (D4)

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayor Appointed, B = Board President appointed

Staff Liaisons: Mayara Ruski Augusto Sa, Lexus Moncrease, and Jotti Aulakh
Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

London N. Breed
Mayor

Newsha Ajami
President

Sophie Maxwell
Vice President

Tim Paulson
Commissioner

Tony Rivera
Commissioner

Kate Stacy
Commissioner

Dennis J. Herrera
General Manager

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 5:31 pm

Members present at roll call: (5) Clary, Perszyk, Kott, Jacuzzi, and Sandkulla

Members Absent: (1) Nagengast

Staff: Tim Ramirez, Nicholas Johnson, Obiajulu Nzewi, and Betsy Rhodes

Members of the Public: Christine Doughty

OUR MISSION: To provide our customers with high-quality, efficient, and reliable water, power and sewer services in a manner that values environmental and community interests and sustains the resources entrusted to our care.



2. Approval of the [January 24, 2023, Minutes](#)

Motion was made (Perszyk) and seconded (Jacuzzi) to approve the January 24, 2023, Minutes.

AYES: (5) Clary, Perszyk, Kott, Jacuzzi, and Sandkulla

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Nagengast

Public Comment: None

3. Report from the Chair

- Chair welcomes committee members, staff, and the public

Public Comment: None

4. Public Comment: Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda

Public Comment: None

5. Presentation and Discussion: Environmental Stewardship Update, Tim Ramirez, Natural Resources & Land Management Manager

Resources: [Environmental Stewardship Report](#)

Presentation

- Water Enterprise Environmental Stewardship Policy
- Overview
- "Watershed" System Map
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Impact Avoidance & Permits
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – WSIP Mitigation
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – WSIP Mitigation – Adobe Gulch
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Bioregional Habitat Restoration Program
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Fisheries Monitoring
- Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Operations and Maintenance Activities
- OSD Instream Flow Management Program – Poopenaut Valley
- Manage Natural Resources – Tuolumne River Watershed
- Tuolumne River Watershed
- Lower Tuolumne River and Dos Rios Ranch - \$2M contribution to purchase
- Lower Tuolumne River and Dos Rios Ranch 1600 acres, 6 miles of river frontage
- Lower Tuolumne River – Dos Rios Ranch and restored floodplain habitat
- Lower Tuolumne River riparian habitat
- Manage Natural Resources – Property Acquisition
- WEIP Acquisitions Alameda Watershed

- Manage Natural Resources – Minimize Wildfire Risk
- SCU Lightning Complex SFPUC Alameda Watershed
- SCU Lightning Complex
- SCU Lightning Complex – Arroyo Hondo post-fire
- Peninsula Watershed-Lightning Fires
- Manage Natural Resources – Non-native Invasive Species Management
- Education Opportunities – Alameda Creek Watershed Center, Sunol Native Plant Nursery, and Sunol AgPark
- Education Opportunities – Alameda Creek watershed Center
- Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension
- Education Opportunities – Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension
- Manage and operate Water Enterprise assets consistent with the Environmental Stewardship Policy

Discussion

- **Member Kott** asked how many sites there were for the slide titled “Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Bioregional Habitat Restoration Program.”

Staff Ramirez responded that there were between 16 and 20 sites, which was about 2,000 acres. He noted that each site will have its own easement recorded and will require an easement holder and a fund source. Staff Ramirez commented that some of the mitigation specifics had not been worked out yet, which is why the SFPUC does not know exactly how many sites there are. Staff Ramirez noted that this was 2,000 of their 60,000 acres, so even though it was not all the watershed, they were still big sites.

- **Chair Clary** asked if the creek pictured in the slide titled “Meet Environmental Legal Requirements – Fisheries Monitoring” was in San Mateo.

Staff Ramirez responded that it was Pilarcitos Creek.

- **Chair Clary** asked if Stone Dam is silted in.

Staff Ramirez responded that Stone Dam is not a storage reservoir and is more of a diversion dam that is full of sediment and is not silted in. He added that it was a little pond with the diversion point behind the dam and noted that it was not built to store water.

- **Member Kott** asked if the green border shown on the slide titled “Tuolumne River Watershed” was the park plan.

Staff Ramirez responded affirmatively and noted that the green border was for the national park while the orange border was for the national forest. He added that that both are federal but had different purposes and the SFPUC has a great relationship with both.

- **Member Sandkulla** asked about a ranch in Alameda.

Staff Ramirez responded that the N3 ranch was purchased by a private person for private use.

- **Chair Clary** asked if the ranch was in the SFPUC’s watershed.

Staff Ramirez responded that it was partially in the SFPUC's watershed, and the SFPUC was still in touch with the person who bought it because he is advertised as being conservation oriented.

- **Chair Clary** asked about the slide titled "WEIP Acquisitions Alameda Watershed" and how far south the watershed went.

Staff Ramirez responded that it went down to Mount Hamilton and noted that while the SFPUC was not interested in owning more land, it is interested in land conservation. He added that it is convenient for the SFPUC to own land that is near property they already own, and it does not make sense for them to own land that is farther away.

- **Chair Clary** asked if there were impacts to water quality after the fires.

Staff Ramirez responded there was not much of an impact because there was no runoff in the first couple years, and because the SFPUC does prescribed burns on the Peninsula, the fires acted like a long-prescribed burn.

- **Chair Clary** asked if the response team for the CZU Lightning Complex fire learned from the SFPUC's response to the fires that took place on the Peninsula.

Staff Ramirez responded that he was unsure if it was the same mechanism because the fires had different starts. He noted that it was helpful to have watershed keepers close by to respond quickly.

Member Sandkulla commented that there was a benefit to the SFPUC having people there while further south it is unincorporated county with homes and no fire or watershed personnel, or volunteer firefighters.

- **Member Kott** asked if the SFPUC strategically chooses the areas for prescribed burns.

Staff Ramirez responded affirmatively and noted that the SFPUC and CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) choose areas that are appropriate to reduce fire risk. He noted that places that contain grasses, understory areas, and thickets would be manually masticated rather than doing a controlled burn.

- **Chair Clary** asked if the dead trees that were removed from San Andreas Dam would be replaced.

Staff Ramirez responded that they would not be replaced because they are non-native trees.

- **Chair Clary** commented that the Dutch Slough Tidal Restoration Project had one of the highest carbon captures in the world. She then asked if the SFPUC knew of all the damage that had been done to Hetch Hetchy yet.

Staff Ramirez responded they do not because the SFPUC has not been able to get to some of the places in the watershed yet.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked how water quality was measured after the fires.

Staff Ramirez responded that the SFPUC conducts regular limnology surveys on the reservoirs. He commented that they had unprecedented turbidity problems in the Bay Area reservoirs from the storm and were out twice a week to collect samples because Hetch Hetchy was shut down, and they wanted to make sure that the plant knew what was going on. Staff Ramirez noted that after the fire, the SFPUC did not see much of a change from the historical pattern. He added that reports are done every two weeks and more frequently if needed. Staff Ramirez commented that the reports consider the previous two years of data to see everything seasonally and give the plant a better forecast of what might be coming.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked how many years of data do the reports cover.

Staff Ramirez responded that the reports only show two years, but the SFPUC has data that goes back 30 years.

- **Member Jacuzzi** commented that the data showed a year where there was no rain and four storms two years ago.

Staff Ramirez responded that there was nothing to measure because there was no runoff. He commented that because of the fire, the USGS (United States Geological Survey) added instantaneous turbidity measurements at the gauge of the Arroyo Hondo, which feeds the Calaveras Reservoir, to collect the hydrology and temperature data and use that during the storms.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked if improvements were seen in the turbidity measurements.

Staff Ramirez responded affirmatively and noted that although it was not great, it has been improving.

- **Member Perszyk** asked what the SFPUC's top priority was for a watershed health project that has not been funded yet.

Staff Ramirez responded that the SFPUC has been focused on storm damage, but he does have staff looking into that. He commented that on the Peninsula watershed, the SFPUC is working with CAL FIRE to push a road that goes through native plants behind the neighbors who are encroaching into the watershed to create a fire break and prevent people from using it. Staff Ramirez added that although this might seem small, the SFPUC is always trying to work on things that improve the health of the watershed and protect it.

Public Comment: None

6. **Presentation and Discussion:** [Groundwater Update](#), Nicholas Johnson, Water Operations Analyst & Obiajulu Nzewi, Groundwater Program Manager

Resources:

- [SFPUC Groundwater](#)
- [San Francisco Groundwater Feasibility Study](#)
- [2022 Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report](#)

Presentation

- Groundwater Update for SFPUC

- Westside Basin and SFGW Summary
- Requested Agenda Items
- 1. Plans and timeline for increasing groundwater blending-SFGW wells
- 1. Plans and timeline for increasing groundwater blending
- Metered Groundwater Pumping in Northern Westside Basin, January 2017 – February 2022
- 2. Wellhead water quality monitoring results and trends
- Golden Gate Park Central Well (GCW) – irrigation only groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2023
- North Lake Well (NLW) – irrigation only groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2023
- South Windmill Well (SWW) – irrigation only groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2023
- West Sunset Well (WSW) – currently not in use groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2023
- South Sunset Well (SSW) – currently not in use groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2023
- Lake Merced Pump Station well (LMW) – potable use, currently under repair – groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2023
- Raw Groundwater Nitrate Concentrations Compared to Reservoir Blends, 2018-2023
- Raw Groundwater Hexavalent Chromium Concentrations Compared to Reservoir Blends, 2018-2023
- 3. Estimated groundwater budget
- Westside Basin Groundwater Budget – Pre-SFGW and RGSR conditions (HydroFocus, 2017)
- Previous Water Budget Estimates for Westside Basin
- Westside Basin Water Budget Estimated From Numerical Modeling
- Simulated Westside Basin Groundwater Budget with SFGW and RGSR (SFPUC, 2021)
- 3. Estimated groundwater budget
 - a. Estimated annual groundwater recharge
- 3. Estimated groundwater budget
 - b. Aquifer sustainable yield
- 3. Estimated groundwater budget
 - c. Potential to enhance groundwater recharge
- 4. Evaluation of other SF watersheds
- 5. Non-potable water supply and demand
- 6. Community and stakeholder outreach for SFGW project
- Westside Basin and SFGW Summary

Discussion

- **Chair Clary** asked about the slide titled “West Sunset Well (WSW)” and if it showed the carbon tetrachloride.

Staff Johnson responded affirmatively.

- **Chair Clary** commented that the nitrate levels in the slide titled “West Sunset Well (WSW)” seem high in that well.

Staff Johnson responded that the green line was hexavalent chromium and not nitrate.

- **Chair Clary** commented that the hexavalent chromium levels seemed high as well.

Staff Johnson responded that the project was designed to achieve a level of blending where the nitrate and hexavalent chromium levels would be miniscule once blended. He added that the water spends about four days in the reservoir, which leads to good mixing.

- **Chair Clary** asked which well had manganese on slide titled “Lake Merced Pump Station well (LMW)”.

Staff Johnson responded that he is not plotting manganese because it was not a problem for this project.

- **Member Kott** asked what the dotted orange line is for on the slide titled “Golden Gate Park Central Well (GCW)”.

Staff Johnson responded that the orange line was a slight trend that shows a linear regression to the concentrations over time and shows that they are slightly increasing.

- **Member Perszyk** referred to the slide titled “3. Estimated groundwater budget a. Estimated annual groundwater recharge” and asked if the aquifer will go up 12 inches per year.

Staff Johnson responded that there is only a five-foot increase of water levels on the ground if the ground has only 20% porosity.

- **Chair Clary** commented that groundwater goes out to the ocean eventually.

Staff Johnson responded that globally, most groundwater flows to wells these days, and there are subsurface flows mostly to the southern basin.

- **Chair Clary** asked if Lake Merced was more of a buffer rather than a source.

Staff Johnson responded that Lake Merced was an important local source, but it is only so big and can only percolate so much water.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked what the historical millennial year worth of years baseline for the health of the aquifer was.

Staff Johnson clarified if Jacuzzi meant what the recharge used to be before people got here and noted that it was irrelevant. He commented that as soon as a well is pumped, the water budget changes and is no longer relevant. Staff Johnson added that the basin is being influenced by pumping, and all the water coming in makes the native condition moot because it no longer represents anything that is out there. He noted that plumbing was still the same, but the stressors are different. Staff Johnson commented that there are times when a model should be calibrated back to the beginning to how it was when it was native, but the SFPUC is concerned about the current conditions instead. He added that it was hard to see what recharge was in the past because if the basin is full, no recharge will happen.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked about stability with the ocean.

Staff Johnson responded that 10,000 years ago the sea level was 300 feet lower. He noted that there was fresh water in the aquifers under the ocean that has been there since the end of the ice age, so the SFPUC does not know where the boundary is.

- **Member Perszyk** commented that it would be great to receive the 2019 Groundwater Study. He then asked about measuring stormwater infiltration into the basin and whether flow measurement devices or modeling was used. Perszyk clarified he wanted to understand how the SFPUC would assess where a green infrastructure project would be most successful, and if it would make sense to have data on stormwater flows for a particular watershed.

Staff Nzewi responded that much of that was done by the SFPUC's Wastewater Enterprise due to how the system is designed as a combined system. He commented that regarding the recharge, the basin is not depleted, and the amount of recharge is impacted because there is no space to put the additional stormwater like there is with basins that do have more space. Staff Nzewi noted that the SFPUC did that with the South Westside Basin where there has been more pumping, and the water level was low. He added that they had a chance to use new storage and bring those levels back up again, which is an opportunity that does not exist in the City.

- **Chair Clary** commented that more water cannot be infiltrated unless more groundwater is used, so unless the SFPUC ramps up their groundwater system, there is no place to put the additional infiltration.

Staff Johnson responded that it was not the case in San Francisco.

Member Jacuzzi commented that it pushes out against the ocean.

- **Staff Johnson** commented that it would be great if the water table was raised by a foot everywhere, but it is not a requirement for this project.

Chair Clary responded that the Water Subcommittee is thinking more holistically because they are not bound by the project. She noted that treating rainwater as if it was sewage is problematic because every drop of water should be maximized.

- **Member Sandkulla** asked if the treatment for the three wells was included in the capital program.

Staff Nzewi responded that the SFPUC does have some money in the capital program that they are currently implementing. He noted that they do have the planning money, but the funding was used in the last cycle.

Public Comment:

- **Christine Doughty** commented that Lake Merced levels have dropped in the last 50 years and asked how good the hydraulic communication between the Lake Merced water body and the aquifer was. She added that if it was good, then the water levels in the aquifer might have similarly dropped quite a bit in the last 50 years making more room for mounding.

Staff Johnson responded that when Lake Merced was full, it was being used as a balancing reservoir for Hetch Hetchy. He commented that Hetch Hetchy came all the way out to the Lake Merced pump station, so the lake was full up to the 1940s because it was full of Hetch Hetchy water. Staff Johnson noted that when looking at a long-term record, it looks like the lake has gone down. He added that once that ended, there were a couple droughts and pumping for the golf courses leading the lake to fall in the drought from 1987 to 1984. Staff Johnson commented that with the SFPUC's RGSR (Regional Groundwater Storage and Recovery) Project, they have raised levels in San Mateo and there is less leakage with the lake. He noted that the lake was stable and was in direct communication with the water table, but there was an interest in adding recycled water and stormwater to it.

- **Christine Doughty** asked if a full Lake Merced would cause nuisance flooding in the Sunset.

Staff Johnson responded negatively because that is a site-specific issue. He commented that when water is added to a recharge site, much of it will be going in the ground in one place, so the water level would come up at that one place and then slowly spread out.

- **Christine Doughty** commented that she believed the sands in the basin were so permeable that water would spread out quickly.

7. Staff Report

- The next Full CAC meeting will be a joint meeting with the Southeast Facility Commission and will take place on Wednesday May 24, 2023 at 6 pm at 1550 Evans
- Reminder that District 1 and District 7 seats are still vacant

Public Comment: None

8. Future Agenda Items and Resolutions

Standing Subjects

- Groundwater
- Water Quality

Specific Subjects

- Alternative Water Supply – *tentatively June*
- Level of Service Goals Update
- Alameda Creek Watershed Center Field Trip
- Affordability - *confirmed for the Full CAC*
- Green Infrastructure - *tentatively WW Topic*
- Integrating Tribal Leaders into SFPUC Land Management Decisions
- State Board Water Rights
- Water Enterprise Environmental Stewardship Policy Implementation Report
- Debate about Bay Delta – Member Sandkulla suggested everyone watch the February 5, 2021, Commission workshop about the Voluntary Agreement
- COVID and Long-term Affordability Program
- Implementation of the Bay Delta Plan Flow Requirement
- Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Division Update

- State Policy and Programs on Affordability or Low-Income Rate Assistance (LIRA)
- Bay Delta Plan and voluntary settlement agreement
- Legislative Update
- State of the Regional Water System Report – Bi-annual report
- Drought resilience: 3-year water supply update
- Water Equity and Homelessness
- State of Local Water Report
- Retail Conservation Report
- Emergency Firefighting Water System Update
- Natural Resources and Land Management Division Update
- Harry Tracy Water Treatment Plant tour

Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up

- Resolution in Support of a Resilient Water Supply [adopted August 17, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of the Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension Project [adopted April 20, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of Interim Emergency Rate Assistance Program and Revised Community Assistance Program [adopted July 21, 2020](#)
- Resolution in Support of Improved Communications Related to the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project [adopted August 21, 2018](#)
- Resolution in Supporting Stewardship and Public Access in the Redeveloped Lake Merced West Property [adopted in March 15, 2016](#)
- Resolution on Impacts of Drought on System Maintenance and Improvements [adopted January 19, 2016](#)

Public Comment: None

- 9. Announcements/Comments** Please visit www.sfpuc.org/cac for final confirmation of the next scheduled meeting, agenda, and materials.

Public Comment: None

10. Adjournment

Motion was made (Sandkulla) and seconded (Clary) to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:19 pm.