

LA COUNTY WATER PLAN

Los Angeles County Nature-based Solutions Blue Ribbon Panel Workshop #3 – Facilitators' Agenda

Meeting Details

Date: Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Location: Room 1-102

Metropolitan Water District, 700 Alameda St, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Meeting Objectives

1. Refine Countywide standards and criteria for nature-based solutions.
 2. Build understanding of the Safe, Clean Water Program's Metrics and Monitoring Study and 2022 Interim Guidance
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Attendees

Panel Co-Chair: Eileen Alduenda (Council for Watershed Health)

Panel Members:

Amanda Begley (TreePeople)

Isaac Brown (Stillwater Sciences)

Maggie Gardner (LA Waterkeeper)

Mark Gold (NRDC)

Keith Hala (LA County DPW)

Bruce Hamamoto (LA County DPW)

Kelsey Jessup (TNC)

Samantha Johnson (Tonga Taraxat Paxaavxa Land Conservancy)

Nurit Katz (UCLA)

Gary Lai (Quixotic Nature-based Solutions)

Stephanie Landregan (UCLA)

Esther Lofton (UCCE)

Annelisa Moe (Heal the Bay)

Susie Santilena (City of LA – Sanitation) **For Mark Nguyen*

Jane Tsong (Watershed Conservation Authority)

Melina Watts (SCWP)

Melanie Winter (The River Project)

Panel Facilitation Support Team:

Tanishka Chellani (Council for Watershed Health)

Debbie Enos (Council for Watershed Health)

Shona Calzada Ganguly (Better World Group)

Colleen Easler (Better World Group)

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Agenda Item	Notes
<p>1. Welcome & Agenda Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eileen kicked off the meeting with a welcome and round of introductions, including a prompt for participants to share any Tribal engagement they are doing or partnerships that they have. Shona gave an overview of the agenda. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant noted that because much of Los Angeles' water is sourced from the Owens Valley, Los Angeles' water plan should be developed with input from tribes in Inyo as well as local tribes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants recommended <i>The Aqueduct Between Us</i>, a docuseries from an Indigenous perspective on water in Los Angeles.
<p>2. Review of Task Force Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eileen shared that the Task Force commented on the NbS definition using this Miro board and offered the Blue Ribbon Panel the opportunity to contribute to the Miro board as well. The Task Force will shift its focus to the NbS Standard and related Criteria but will return to the NbS definition later. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants raised the concern that "Mediterranean" might not be the correct word to use in the group's work to describe the climate in Los Angeles, particularly as climate change impacts increase. Participants noted that because Los Angeles has a combination of climates and ecosystems, it is important to plant and encourage native plant and animal species that have been present and that are adapted to Los Angeles' climates and ecosystems for centuries.
<p>3. Nature-based Solutions Standard and Criteria (Draft)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shona provided an overview of the Nature-based Solutions Standard and Criteria and defined the terms "Standard" and "Criteria." She led the Blue Ribbon Panel through a group activity to annotate the Standard and Criteria. <p>Discussion (group poster activity share-out):</p> <p>Standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the ideas of connectivity, geographic relevance, adaptability/adaptive management, and strategic integration. Clarify that both quantitative and qualitative data will be crucial in the evaluation processes. <p>Criterion 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include qualifiers that indicate adaptive management do not exclude smaller projects. <p>Criterion 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify what needs to be "monitored and evaluated."

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not limit consultation only to landscaping specialists. Other people such as biologists, water/utility companies, etc will likely need to consult. • Remove “traditional” – it is covered by the other categories listed. <p>Criterion 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Economically viable” does not fit in this situation, as it likely indicates a traditional cost-benefit analysis that does not take into account factors such as health and wellness. Sustainable Return on Investment (SROI) could be a better framework for NbS, as it tries to consider all factors, not just first, last, and maintenance costs. • We should emphasize stewardship over operations and maintenance and consider stewardship to have economic value in addition to cost. • “Sustainable” would be a better criterion than “viable”. • Criterion 6 in the IUCN document might be a better means of getting at economic issues while considering other factors. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider building numeric metrics for different categories of projects to score them. The indicators provided weren’t necessarily memorable or impactful as is.
<p>4. Presentation: Safe, Clean Water Program’s Metrics and Monitoring Study and 2022 Interim Guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maggie presented on Safe, Clean Water Program’s Metrics and Monitoring Study from OurWater LA. She directed participants to reach out to her with any recommendations to address with OWLA. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant raised the question of who the groups in OWLA are and how they are funded. Maggie responded that the work is mostly funded through grants. Each organization has its own funding as well, usually also through grants or philanthropy • A participant expressed that there is a lack of concern over trying to combine stormwater and sewer water in the upper LA River watershed and asked what Maggie’s and OWLA’s thoughts are. Maggie agreed that facilities are not being constructed yet to treat and divert water to recycle water and that there should be greater concern at this point. • A participant noted that site-specific studies are crucial for each area being considered for groundwater recharge. • A participant noted that 2.5 cents may not be enough to incentivize homeowners or other smaller properties to make changes to their property. • A participant expressed that LA County is losing native plant nurseries because it is not economically viable for people to grow native plants. The participant recommended considering economic viability of native plant nurseries as part of the solution. How do we connect the need for native plants to funding? How do we loop in the workforce training programs?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants noted that the good/better/best model is a helpful narrative to direct projects. They recommended incorporating the model into project scoring so that funding applicants incorporate NbS during the planning and design.• A participant noted that “good” is not necessarily a helpful category because the category hints at actual NbS, but is not something we would actually want to see. Adopting the model as is may lead to project applicants only striving for “good” in project planning and design, which would not help the region reach a high level of NbS.• A participant noted the need to think about renters and homeowners’ associations. These properties seem to be where the least progress is being made, even though they are a majority in the County. Reaching out to renters and homeowners’ associations to educate and require them to make changes could make significant process.• Participants noted the need to decide if nature-mimicking is actually a NbS.
6. Wrap Up & Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eileen reviewed the timeline of upcoming Blue Ribbon Panel meetings.