

Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency

Executive Director

Herbert I. Nakasone

SARFPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Members

City of Anaheim
City of Buena Park
City of Cypress
City of Fountain Valley
City of Fullerton
City of Garden Grove
City of Huntington Beach
City of Irvine
City of Newport Beach
City of Orange
City of Placentia
City of Santa Ana
City of Seal Beach
City of Stanton
City of Tustin
City of Westminster
City of Yorba Linda
County of Orange
Costa Mesa Sanitary District
O C Sanitation District
O C Flood Control District
O C Water District

March 28, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance/Attendees:

Bruce Whitaker, SARFPA Vice-Chairman, Council Member City of Fullerton
Pat Burns, Director, Orange County Sanitation District
Cathy Green, President, Orange County Water District
Gracey Van Der Mark, Mayor, City of Huntington Beach
Janice Lim, Council Member, City of Yorba Linda
Erik Weigand, Director, Orange County Water District
Rob Thompson, General Manager, Orange County Sanitation District
Chris Olsen, Orange County Water District
James Tyler, SARFPA Executive Committee, OC Public Works, Alt. to Supervisor Don Wagner
Herb Nakasone, Executive Director, Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 4048
Santa Ana, CA 92702-4048

Email Address:

Herb.Nakasone@ocpw.ocgov.com
hinakasone22@gmail.com

Phone

(714) 647-3938
(949) 922-1852

Location

601 N. Ross Street
Santa Ana CA 92701

Website

www.ocflood.com/sarp/sarfpa

1. Call to Order

Meeting Call to Order at 4:07 pm by Vice Chairman Bruce Whitaker, Council Member, City of Fullerton

2. Pledge of Allegiance

At the request of Vice Chairman Bruce Whitaker, Council Member, City of Fullerton, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Eric Weigand, Director, Orange County Water District

3. Approve Minutes of January 25, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting

The Minutes of the January 25, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting were unanimously approved on a Motion by Pat Burns, Director, Orange County Sanitation District and Second by Art Perry, Director, Costa Mesa Sanitation District

4. Santa Ana River Mainstem and Westminster Project Status – James Tyler, Flood Programs Manager, OC Public Works

Santa Ana River Mainstem Project:

James Tyler, Flood Program Manager with OC Public Works presented the current status of the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project (SARMP) as follows:

- a. James Tyler, Engineering Manager with OC Public Works began his report on the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project (SARMP) by introducing the SARMP a Cooperative Project with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Orange County Flood Control District, the Riverside Flood Control District and the San Bernardino Flood Control District identified as Local Sponsors of the SARMP. James indicated the Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) is directly

Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency

involved in the Seven Oaks Dam, the Prado Dam and Lower Santa Ana River projects. The SARMP projects in Riverside and San Bernardino counties were administered by the USACE and the respective Flood Control Districts in those counties.

- b. James reported the SARMP has two major dams in the project. The Seven Oaks Dam in San Bernardino County is the dam constructed as part of the SARMP and completed in 2007 on the Santa Ana River in the head waters of the San Bernardino mountains below Big Bear in the vicinity of the City of Highlands. Seven Oaks Dam is the responsibility of the OCFCD to operate and maintain and contracts with the San Bernardino Flood Control District for its on site maintenance. The second major dam on the Santa Ana River is Prado Dam. Prado Dam is an existing dam constructed by the USACE in 1945. As part of the SARMP, the USACE enlarged the capacity of the dam by raising its height, installed new outlet gates which increase its discharged capacity from 10,000 cfs to 30,000 cfs. and is currently in the process of designing a new spillway scheduled for construction in 2025.
- c. As reported by James Tyler, the remaining features of the SARMP currently under design and construction along with its estimated cost are listed below. All features are anticipated to be completed by FY 31.
 - Norco Bluffs (29.7M)
 - River Road Dike (\$18.1M)
 - Alcoa Dike – Phase 2 (\$30.8M)
 - Prado Dam Spillway (\$1.35B)
 - Santiago Creek (\$141M)
- d. The Norco Bluff, River Road Dike and Alcoa Dike projects are scheduled to be completed in the current calendar year although the Norco Bluff Project is being delayed due to proposed construction change orders. In regards to a question from Director Cathy Green on the purpose of the Norco Bluff project, James explained the project purpose is to buttress the toe of the slopes and prevent the reservoir storage water behind the dam from eroding the base of the slopes. James further explained the steep bluff slopes themselves above the protection may erode due to its steepness, the prevention of erosion from the steep slopes is the responsibility of the owner of the slopes.
- e. In regard to the Prado Dam Spillway project, James reported the USACE is currently undertaking a program called Early Construction Involvement whereby the USACE staff is seeking input from contractors interested in bidding on the spillway construction project to comment on construction techniques to be allowed in the construction contract that would allow efficiency in reconstructing the spillway.
- f. On the Santiago Creek Project, \$2.5 million was allocated to develop a design that meets the intent of the original project with a final Engineering Design Report (EDR) and Passive Reservoir Design estimated to be approved in June 2024. The EDR is scheduled to be submitted to HQ USACE in Oct. 2024 for a decision in Jan 2025 whether the project will be funded through BBA or regular appropriations. A public meeting is scheduled for April 4, 2025 when the Orange County Water District will discuss its efforts on water conversation within the Santiago Creek Watershed.
- g. Bank protection construction projects on the Santa Ana River in Reach 9 of the

Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency

SARMP below Prado Dam and upstream of Weir Canyon Bridge have been completed and awaiting turn over by the USACE to the OCFCD for maintenance. The completion of these bank protection projects will allow for the maximum 30,000 cfs release of discharge from Prado Dam.

- h. James also reported on a design deficiency discovered during an annual inspection by the USACE on the westerly levee height of the Lower Santa Ana River in the vicinity of the I-5 frwy and the SR 22 fwy. The OCFCD has scheduled to award construction contracts to raise the levee height to meet the design criteria by December 2025.
- i. In regards property acquisitions and utility relocation behind Prado Dam, James reported the property acquisition process is progressing with 110 of the 113 properties to be acquired have been acquired with three remaining to be acquired possibly under eminent domain to allow the USACE to proceed with the Spillway contract.
- j. James also reported the County of Orange is seeking assistance from our Congressional delegation for reimbursement from the USACE of property acquisition funds expended by the OCFCD. While the funding of property acquisition at Prado Dam is the responsibility of the USACE, per the Cooperative Agreement between the USACE and the OCFCD, the property acquisition must first be acquired by the OCFCD and the cost refunded by the USACE.

Westminster Watershed Feasibility Study

- a. James Tyler, Engineering Manager OC Public Works used a Power Point presentation and explained the Westminster Watershed Feasibility Study is a project to address the deficiency of flood protecting in a 74 square mile watershed in the cities of Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Westminster, Garden Grove and Santa Ana. The area has a population of 250,000 residents with an estimated \$5.45 billion in damages from a 100-year storm event.
- b. Residents currently pay approximately \$3.5 million per year in annual flood insurance premiums.
- c. The Project was authorized by Congress as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 and signed by the President as part of the Omnibus Bill December 2020.
- d. The OCFCD is requesting the \$1.2 billion Locally Preferred Plan which will provide a 100 year level of protection. However, it's The cost share for the project will be \$910 million for the OCFCD while the federal share will be \$310 million since the USACE current policy does not fund a locally preferred plan whose project cost exceeds the anticipated flood protection benefits.
- e. The County of Orange is also initiating a separate request for funding of two separate but related projects on the Westminster Watershed. The first is the \$32.7 million Bolsa Bay Outlet to initiate the Westminster Improvement Project. The second is the \$20 million Westminster East Garden Grove Wintersburg Channel Tide Gates Removal Project. These are two projects are part of the Westminster project being request for congressional earmarks to initiate initial funding for the larger Westminster Watershed project.
- f. James also reported the County is planning to initiate the larger Westminster Project by seeking \$2.5 million Planning Engineering Design Funding for the design of tide gates project.

Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency

- g. As James has reported previously, the OCFCD is proceeding to construct segments of the East Garden Grove Wintersburg Channel, which is a significant part of the Westminster Project utilizing existing local OCFCD funding. The OCFCD is currently expanding the channel capacity by improving bridge crossing at Warner Ave., Springdale Street and Edwards Street.

5. Report from Executive Director- Herb Nakasone

- a. Herb reported on a request from the County of Orange to support its effort to seek funding through congressional earmarks on two features of the Westminster Project. The first is on a propose \$32.7 million improvement to Bolsa Bay Outlet and the second is a \$20 million project to remove the tide gates on the East Garden Grove Wintersburg Channel.
- b. Since SARFPA supports the Westminster Project, Herb prepared a letter of support from SARFPA for the requested earmark funding on the Bolsa Bay Outlet and the Tide Gate Removal project features of the larger Westminster Project, as requested by the County of Orange. Copies of the letter of support to Orange County's congressional delegation for the two projects on the Westminster Project signed by Chairman Patrick Harper was attached to the May 23, 2024 meeting Agenda.
- c. As discussed during comments on the Hugh Houser's video presentation on Seven Oaks Dam, the Executive Director will seek input from SARFPA members on scheduling a date for a field trip to Seven Oaks Dam.

6. Public and Representative Comments:

No public members were present and no comments were received from the Representatives.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned the Meeting at 5:04 pm.