

**MINUTES**  
**Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA)**  
**held on**

**Thursday, February 6, 2025 @ 12:30 p.m.**

**at**

**CCLB Headquarters**  
**340 Nieto Avenue**  
**Long Beach, CA 90814**

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Duggan called the meeting to order at approximately 12:36 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**Voting Members Present**

Kristina Duggan, Councilmember/Long Beach, Chair

Megan Cooper, Designee, State Coastal Conservancy, Vice-Chair

Joe Kalmick, City of Seal Beach

**Staff Present**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

John Natalizio, Deputy Attorney General

Eric Zahn, Principal Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence

Sebastian De Leon, Restoration Programs Manager/Tidal Influence

Christian Garcia, Restoration Programs Manager/Tidal Influence

Megan Wolff, Associate Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence

Neysa Frechette, Associate Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence

Chad Oberly, Staff Services Manager I

Amanda Chan, Staff Services Analyst I

Maria Medrano, Secretary

**Voting Members Absent**

Roberto Uranga, Councilmember/City of Long Beach

Amy Hutzler, State Coastal Conservancy

Sally Gee, Designee, State Coastal Conservancy,

**3. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**4. Chair's Report**

Chair Duggan stated she had nothing to report.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

One set of minutes from November 7, 2024, were approved.

**Board member Duggan moved to approve. Board member Cooper seconded. No objections noted, minutes approved.**

**Regular Calendar**

**6. Status Report on Work Plan Implementation**

**a. Land Management Update**

Sebastian De Leon stated the detailed Land Management report provided updates for the months of October through December. De Leon stated security was of major concern and highlighted efforts to secure highly trafficked areas. One security effort was the repair of 40 feet of fence that had been knocked down between Gum Grove Park and LCWA property. This also included the installation of 'no trespassing' signs. De Leon stated another method included changing the placement of the security cameras to monitor site access and deter unauthorized access. The placement of these cameras also gives them the ability to see vehicle information including license plate numbers. De Leon stated if there is any misuse on site, they are now able to share this information with local authorities, law enforcement, LADWP, etc. De Leon also mentioned the presence of wildlife, such as great egrets, blue herons, and coyotes, that were all captured on the security cameras.

Chair Duggan asked if he had stated or knew why the fence was down. DeLeon stated he did not know. Eric Zahn stated it was access for the Fire department, for a past first, and that it had not been put back up.

Board Member Kalmick asked if they were going to be able to keep an eye on and maintain the brush at the interfaces with Gum Grove Park and along the Hellman fence? De Leon stated they are working on maintaining brush vegetation 30 feet away from the fence lines as fire hazard precautions.

**b. Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewardship Program Coordinator Update**

Megan Wolff stated the last quarter saw an increase in volunteer engagement, with 202 volunteers attending their programs. Wolff showed a photo of 39 volunteers at one of their programs. Wolff discussed the progress of the stewardship program, highlighting the efforts of volunteers in mulching, removing weeds, and planting. She mentioned the successful Martin Luther King Jr. volunteer day where 50 volunteers installed 139 plants. Wolff showed

a picture of Mark Stanley doing some planting. Wolff stated planting efforts will continue and will probably be finished by the following month.

Wolff stated the stewardship program also focused on seeding areas in preparation for rain. Wolff showed a picture, back in November, where volunteers were collecting seeds and then spreading those seeds to focused areas.

Wolff discussed the two main initiatives funded by the AES Project 2 in the initiatives section of the report. The first was the expanding of the shaded area in the grow space or nursery. The second was the funding for the conservation of the endangered hemiparasite plant, the salt marsh bird's beak. Wolff stated they out planted 100,000 seeds of salt marsh bird's which was the first in Los Angeles County and expressed hope for the success of this out planting.

Chair Duggan asked with the help of AES funding, shade space was doubled? Wolff stated, that was correct. It effectively doubled the shade space by adding onto it towards the San Gabriel River. Wolff commented that the team that assisted were present. Duggan asked if there were more projects that they are partnering with AES? Wolff stated that she was not entirely sure about that and to what extent. Wolff stated they are continuing the efforts to improving the nursery and out planting and will continue to monitor that.

Vice Chair Cooper asked with the salt marsh bird's beak, if that was the typical water to restore that plant? Wolff stated, to her knowledge, yes distributing the seed is the preferred way.

Elizabeth Lambe discussed the field trip program for urban youth, primarily from Title 1 schools in Long Beach. She highlighted the importance of exposing these students to nature, as they often lack access to open spaces and resources for such experiences. Lambe shared that the program, initially a wild idea, has become robust and enduring, with funding from various partners. She also mentioned the summer program, Be S.A.F.E., which provides family-friendly activities in parks. Lambe expressed gratitude for the funding received and emphasized the need for continued expansion. She concluded by stating that the field trips aim to foster a sense of community ownership over the restored wetlands. Lambe showed several pictures of

Chair Duggan asked how long she had been doing these field trips? Lambe stated it has been about ten years and it all began at the parks. She had no idea that she needed to go through the City of Long Beach. It began with taking out families and then it moved to a more direct partnership with Parks & Recreation.

#### **c. Homeless Relocation Program Update**

Lenny Arkinstall, CEO of Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewards, provided an update on the homeless relocation program and stated things were going well. Arkinstall mentioned a fire incident that occurred in December at the intersection of Studebaker and 2nd Street. Arkinstall explained that the fire occurred on City property and involved trespassers. Arkinstall showed pictures of the fire from inside the wetlands. He detailed the cleanup efforts, which included obtaining approval from the Coastal Commission due to it being nesting season and removing invasive plants like pampas grass. Arkinstall also mentioned that they had successfully relocated a homeless individual who was a veteran to a hotel and were in the process of connecting him with VA services. Arkinstall emphasized the importance of cleaning up the area to prevent future fires and improve the City's appearance.

Chair Duggan asked if they were able to connect him with the VA? Arkinstall stated that they were in the process of connecting him with Vet services.

Arkinstall explained about the new homeless folks who set up camps overnight causing a lot of damage and torching surrounding vegetation. Arkinstall stated his team is constantly patrolling the area with the help of the police department. Arkinstall again stated their main goal is to get the homeless people help and into shelters.

Arkinstall discussed the importance of crime prevention through environmental design, particularly in relation to homeless individuals. He mentioned that they have been clearing vegetation, the removing of pampass grass, to discourage homeless people from returning to the area.

Chair Duggan asked if they were signing a 602 EPA for citing? Akininstall stated, yes, that they were doing that for all of LCWA, for all the landowners.

Chair Duggan asked about the palm trees, stating her office often calls on him regarding them. Arkinstall discussed the maintenance of palm trees, which are expensive to trim and maintain, and suggested that they might need to be reduced or replaced with native trees.

Chair Duggan asked Arkinstall if he knew how many palm trees were on LCWA property? Arkinstall stated, there were hundreds of them, everywhere. He mentioned they were very invasive, and they are not going away. Arkinstall also mentioned the need for land management and the potential for grants to fund these efforts.

#### **d. El Dorado Audubon Update**

Mary Parsell, President of the El Dorado Audubon, stated they enjoy their walks. Parsell highlighted the variety of birds they've seen, including lots of herons, egrets, and white crown sparrows. Parsell stated that when it is foggy

you can't see the birds but you can definitely hear them. She also mentioned seeing ducks, black phoebes, say's phoebes and goldfinches.

Parsell attributed not seeing homeless individuals due to all the work Lenny Arkinstall and his team do. She stated they are out doing their walks on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month, except for May, November and December because of the holidays.

Parsell mentioned also seeing a missing section of fence along the San Gabriel River and suggested that this might be an issue for County as she does not believe it to be on LCWA property. Chair Duggan asked where the missing section was? Parsell stated it was near Callaway Marsh.

Parsell mentioned the upcoming restoration plan and the involvement of Audubon California in supporting the restoration efforts.

**e. Expenditures Report**

Amanda Chan stated she would be reporting on the Expenditure Report. Chan stated Exhibit A reflects balances as of December 31, 2024. The Authority is approximately 25% through the current fiscal year and activities are on par for contributions with overall Revenue and Expense categories. Outstanding annual JPA contributions are expected to be received by the end of this quarter. Partners are aware as they have been contacted. Chair Duggan confirmed that it was for the \$30,000, which Chan stated was correct.

Chan mentioned they received an advance grant payment from the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), totaling \$1.5 million, for the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project. This will be used to pay the contractors. Chan also stated a new agreement was signed for security and staff is waiting for the initial invoices. Chan mentioned that the Overall Capital Outlay Expenses, in relation to grant funding, are in line with projections.

Chair Duggan asked about the \$1.5 million from the OPC, wondering if she had missed hearing about it last year. Chan stated that when this was last mentioned, several grants were also received, one from SEC and the other was AES. Staff was able to received advanced payments which enable them to pay the invoices and not have the contractors wait.

Vice Chair Cooper asked what the total OPC grant amount was. Mark Stanley, stated it was \$6 million.

**f. Status report for the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project**

Eric Zahn, Principal Restoration Ecologist/Tidal Influence, discussed the progress of the Southernmost Reals Wetlands Restoration Project. Zahn

highlighted the completion of 90% design plans, coordination with utility owners, and the submission of permit applications. Zahn discussed the great progress that has been made with Southern California Edison who are fully on board with the undergrounding of the power lines. Zahn also mentioned that the City of Seal Beach will complete their work of upgrading their waterlines to prevent leaking prior to Project breaking ground. Zahn stated that both Orange and LA County will demolish the two wells that are in the middle of the Project area. Permitting applications are all complete.

Vice Chair Cooper asked if the Coastal Commission meetings were hybrid and open to public comment? Zhan stated that they are fully hybrid meetings and open for public comments.

Zhan presented graphics of the 90% design giving detailed explanations of the general the layout of the new trail system that will connect Gum Grove Park to the state land parcels and to the San Gabriel River. Zhan mentioned that over 50 palm trees exist on state land and all but eight will be removed as they are a massive fire hazard. The remaining eight would be cut down to size so the trunks could be turned into nesting platforms for the various species of birds found in the area.

Zahn mentioned the ongoing community engagement and the collaboration with the Tribal Advisory Group. Zahn noted that the project is on track for a hearing in March for the Coastal Commission and a lease agreement hearing in May. Zahn stated the need for a construction manager and the initiation of pre-construction biological monitoring. He concluded by acknowledging the hard work of Moffatt and Nichol in the design process.

Board Member Kalmick asked if they were any plans for signage to inform the public of what is occurring. Zhan stated yes, there will be. Zhan further elaborated that there will also be plenty of other interpretive signage once the project was completed.

Chair Duggan expressed amazement at both the black and white versus the color design layouts illustrating the layout of the project.

**7. Consideration of a resolution to authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter a contract for construction management services for the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project.**

Chad Oberly presented a proposal to hire a construction manager for the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project. The construction manager's duties would be divided into pre-construction and construction phases, including assisting with bidding processes, reviewing documents, and providing overall coordination during construction.

Chad explained the competitive bid process for selecting the construction manager and the expected contract term of two years with an option to extend. The Board is asked to authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate a two-year contract for these services, with a budget of \$545,000 funded by a State Coastal Conservancy grant.

Chad stated it was staff's recommendation that the board authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter a contract for construction management services for the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project, not to exceed \$545,000 for contractor cost and contingencies.

Vice Chair Cooper asked if LCWA had similar requirements like the State's, for small business enterprises and disabled veterans business enterprises contracts. Stanley responded, not directly. Vice Chair Cooper recommended that it be made a part of the contract. Oberly mentioned that they would be using CalProcure which is the State's portal for finding certified contractors which are all SB/DVBE (Small Business/Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises).

**Board member Kalmick moved to approve. Board member Cooper seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: 3 Ayes. 0 Nays. 0 Abstentions.**

**8. Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter a contract for LCWA website accessibility remediation services.**

Chad Oberly provided an update on the LCWA website accessibility remediation services, including the release of a request for proposal (RFP) and the evaluation of proposals. Oberly explained the scope of work, would include accessibility assessment, remediation, testing and validation, documentation and ongoing maintenance to maintain accessibility standards. He further highlighted the importance of meeting WCAG 2.1 AAS conformance or higher and the potential need for additional technical support and hosting.

Chad stated it was staff's recommendation that the board authorize the Executive Officer to negotiate and enter a contract for website accessibility remediation services for an amount not to exceed \$29,000.

**Board member Duggan moved to approve. Board member Kalmick seconded. Approved. Roll call vote: 3 Ayes. 0 Nays. 0 Abstentions.**

**9. Oral Communications**

- a. Statements, responses, questions or directions to staff pursuant to Section 54954.2(a) of the Government Code.**
- b. Future agenda items.**

**10. Announcement of next meeting date – Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.**

**11. Adjournment.**

Chair Duggan adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:51 p.m.