

Environmental and Water Resources Committee

Draft Work Plan Revisions, Working Groups

Originated on August 10, 2021

(Latest revision: October 2025)

The Environmental and Water Resources Committee (EWRC) has a broad mandate that includes all aspects of the Valley Water mission (see attached excerpt from Board Resolution 17-75). However, this broad mandate can at times result in a dilution of purpose. These draft work plan revisions are aimed at focusing the EWRC's efforts in a way that takes better advantage of the resources and experience of a strong and diverse membership, while strengthening the advisory role of the EWRC to the benefit of the Valley Water Board and staff.

The EWRC takes its direction from the Board. Action items as directed by the Board will take top priority in Committee business.

The defined roles of the EWRC are to:

1. Provide input on policy.
2. Provide comment on activities in the implementation of Valley Water's mission.
3. Act as a link between Valley Water and the public.
4. Produce and present an Annual Accomplishments Report.

With these simple guiding principles in mind, to make the committee more directly connected to its stated purpose, we propose the following structure:

Policy and Implementation Input (roles 1 and 2 above)

The formation of 5 Working Groups:

1. **Integrated Water Resources Management** (sample topics: One Water Plan [Integrated Water Resources Master Plan], Flood-MAR [Managed Aquifer Recharge], Green stormwater infrastructure); staff liaison: Senior Water Resources Specialist overseeing One Water (currently Heidi Williams)
2. **Water Supply** (sample topics: Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit project, Purified Water, Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project); staff liaison: Senior Water Resources Specialist (currently Jing Wu)
3. **Natural Flood Protection** (sample topics: Shoreline Phase 2, Upper Penitencia Creek); staff liaison: Unit Manager (currently Katie Muller)
4. **Environmental Stewardship** (sample topics: FAHCE, habitat connectivity and riparian corridors, fish passage including gravel and LWD); staff liaison: Unit Manager (currently John Bourgeois)
5. **Climate Change** (sample topics: Climate Change Action Plan [CCAP] Implementation, GHG methodology updates); staff liaison: Senior Water Resources Specialist overseeing CCAP (currently Nick Mascarello)

Access to the staff liaisons should be used respectfully, with the intent of 1) clarifying questions on specific topics and 2) obtaining access to background information and/or resources being provided to other committees.

Each Working Group will have 4-8 members and will designate a Lead.

Assigned Work: Assigned tasks by the Board will take priority for the EWRC. When input on an issue is desired by the Board, the item will go first to the Working Group (unless time does not permit and the WG feels the item can go straight to the full Committee). The Working Group will then present recommendations to the full committee for action if deemed appropriate.

Proactive Topics: If there are items that the EWRC would like more information on, and they are not an item requested from the Board, we suggest the following process:

- When applicable, EWRC liaison (see below) will attend the relevant Board or Committee where the item is being discussed.
- Discuss the item at the Working Group level to see if there is consensus on whether an item is appropriate to be brought to the entire Committee.
- Bring the item to the full EWRC during the standing agenda item to review the work plan and vote on whether or not to fully agendaize the item for discussion at a subsequent meeting. If time is short, the Working Group Lead may bring the item to the Chair and Vice Chair of the EWRC who will consult with staff and may agendaize it for the next meeting.
- Questions to consider when voting on an item:
 - Is the item being adequately addressed in another forum (see Standing Items Report for updates)?
 - Will the item, if brought to the EWRC, fall under one of the stated purposes of the Committee?
 - Can the EWRC positively contribute to the item to benefit Valley Water and the community?
 - Is there support from the Board liaisons for spending time on this item?

Board and Committee Liaisons (roles 1 and 2 above)

We recommend that EWRC assign a liaison (plus an alternate) to each Board Committee and that these Committee members briefly report out at each quarterly EWRC (as done under the Working Groups Update, a standing item on the agenda). The Chair will assign at-large appointments, and each Working Group will assign those liaisons for committees designated to that Working Group (see below). Updates will include any items that may be of interest to the EWRC and/or pertinent to the Committee Work Plan.

The Board Committees that we recommend designated liaisons include (with Working Group designation in parenthesis):

- Board Audit Committee (At-Large)
- Board Policy and Planning Committee (At-Large)
- Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee (At-Large)
- Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee (At-Large)
- Homeless Encampment Committee (Environmental Stewardship)
- Recycled Water Committee (Water Supply)

- Stream Planning and Operations Committee (Environmental Stewardship)
- Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee (Water Supply)
- Water Storage Exploratory Committee (Water Supply)

Roles and responsibilities: The Board Committee liaisons are expected to regularly attend their designated Board Committee meetings, alerting their alternate if they are unable to attend. At those meetings, they will represent EWRC interests, report back to EWRC any items of interest, and elevate recommendations within their Working Groups on any items desired for proactive engagement (see above). The meeting schedule of these committees can be located as part of the regular meeting minutes and ongoing agenda item (Informational Link Reports), as well as at the below links. Typical meeting frequency and duration are listed below but are subject to variances.

<https://www.valleywater.org/how-we-operate/committees/board-committees>

- Board Policy and Planning Committee (BPPC) (typically 1 meeting per month, 2 hours)
- Stream Planning and Operations Committee (SPOC) (formerly FAHCE Ad Hoc Committee, typically every other month, 2 hours)
- Homeless Encampment Committee (typically every other month, 2 hours)
- Water Storage Exploratory Committee (WSEC) meetings are scheduled as called for by the Committee Chair, but typically 2 hours

<https://www.valleywater.org/how-we-operate/committees/board-advisory-committees>

- Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC) this is a special Committee for Redistricting and will be completed by March 2022.
- Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee (WCaDMC) (typically 1 meeting per month, 2 hours)

Stakeholder Engagement (role 3 above)

The EWRC represents a vital cross-section of the Valley Water constituency. We want to emphasize the EWRC's role in being an extension of the larger community. As such, we request that EWRC members perform three vital functions:

1. Communicate relevant Valley Water issues and project updates to your network.
2. Bring to the Committee any environmental and water resources concerns or issues you are hearing in the community.
3. Bring to the Committee any environmental justice concerns or issues you are hearing in the community.

EWRC members have been carefully selected by Board members to represent a broad cross-section of the community. As leaders in the community, the Board values and relies on the EWRC members to assist in two-way communication with stakeholders and residents.

Pertinent excerpts from Board Resolution 17-75 on the functions of advisory committees.

RESOLUTION 17- 75
PROVIDING FOR AND DEFINING THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF
ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND REPEALING RESOLUTION

...

1.2 The Committees are established to assist the Board with policy review and development, provide comment on activities in the implementation of the District's mission for Board consideration, and to identify Board-related issues pertaining to the following:

1.2.2 Environmental and Water Resources Committee: ***water supply, flood protection, and environmental stewardship.***

...

1.3 In accordance with Governance Process Policy-8, the specific duties of the Committees are to:

1.3.1. Provide ***input on policy alternatives*** for Board deliberation.

1.3.2 Provide ***comment on the activities in the implementation*** of the District's mission for Board consideration.

1.3.3 Produce and present to the Board an ***Annual Accomplishments Report*** summarizing the outcomes of the Committee's annual Board-approved work plan.

1.3.4 Further, in accordance with Governance Process Policy-3, when requested by the Board, the Advisory Committees may help the Board produce the ***link between the District and the public*** through information sharing to the communities they represent.