

NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

TASK FORCE MEETING 1

FEBRUARY 2026



NbS Statewide

CNRA NbS Summit Key Takeaways

- **Decision-making must better measure and value multi-benefit outcomes**, including ecological, social, and stewardship benefits, to more accurately assess trade-offs and long-term value.
- **Nature-based Solutions function as integrated systems**, where outcomes are shaped by the interaction of components and should be evaluated holistically, not in isolation.
- **Soil health is an increasingly important consideration** and should be treated as foundational to Nature-based Solutions rather than a secondary co-benefit.
- **Baseline assessments and planning frameworks need to integrate long-term, multi-horizon thinking**, working backward from a shared future vision even when current programs or funding structures are limiting.
- **Clear incentive pathways and coordination mechanisms are essential**, including expedited review and permitting and stronger alignment across County and state efforts.

Background & Purpose

Nature-based Solutions Task Force “NbS Task Force” goals:

Champion the implementation of NbS to improve the health of communities and ecosystems throughout Los Angeles County by:

- 1 Developing a countywide definition and standard for Nature-based Solutions
- 2 Creating a framework to more effectively prioritize Nature-based Solutions in stormwater capture projects, and
- 3 Building upon the LA County Safe, Clean Water Program’s (SCWP) Metrics & Monitoring Study and 2025 Interim Guidance.

Phase 2 Purpose

Recommend metrics tied to the Task Force's proposed Definition, Standard, and Criteria, ensuring they are measurable, tangible, and rooted in ecological and social outcomes.

- **Frame metrics to encourage comprehensive, systems-based assessment of Nature-based Solutions**, capturing benefits across hydrology, soil health, vegetation, climate resilience, and long-term functionality.

Discuss the integration of these metrics into the Safe, Clean Water Program, including Watershed Area reporting, tracking progress, and longer-term program evaluation.

Explore approaches for Countywide Application, exploring how Nature-based Solutions metrics may be adopted or adapted across planning processes, departmental initiatives, and multi-agency collaborations beyond SCWP.

Introductions

Please Share:

- Name, pronouns, affiliation.
- Icebreaker: What's one question or concern you're bringing into this next phase of work?



**Draft NbS Task Force
Recommendations Report**



Visual 2-page Summary

NbS Definition(s)

NbS Definition: Nature-based Solutions address societal challenges through **sustainable actions** that **protect and restore living ecosystems and their functions** to ensure **human well-being** and benefit **biodiversity** by meeting the established NbS standard and associated criteria.

Water-specific Definition: Nature-based Solutions address **water quality, water supply and stormwater challenges** through **sustainable actions** that **protect and restore living ecosystems and their functions** to ensure **human well-being** and benefit **biodiversity** by meeting the established NbS standard and associated criteria.

NbS Standard:

NbS Standard: Nature-based Solutions must implement **place-appropriate** and **evidence-backed living processes and infrastructure**, such as soil and vegetation, to improve **long-term ecosystem function, habitat connectivity, and community health and well-being**. Success of Nature-based Solutions should be **qualitatively and quantitatively evaluated** using the following criteria and indicators (full set of criteria outlined in the Standard, to be read as an integrated framework, can be found in the report).

NbS Criteria

Key NbS Criteria

Foundational for any project to qualify as a Nature-based Solution

Criterion 1: NbS result in a benefit to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

Criterion 2: Design of NbS is informed by scale.

Criterion 3: NbS effectively respond to societal and communal challenges.

Criterion 4: NbS are a communal asset cared for through adaptive management and stewardship.

Metrics Phase 1

Interim Guidance: Key Observations

- Identified limitations in the Good–Better–Best (GBB) framing for evaluating Nature-based Solutions
 - distinct, siloed metric categories
- Highlighted the need for a **more holistic assessment approach**

Metrics & Monitoring Study (MMS) Review

- Reviewed Appendix D for alignment with the Task Force’s understanding of Nature-based Solutions
- Ranked Appendix D metrics on a 1–4 scale:
 - 4 = Strong alignment
 - 1 = Limited relevance
- Assessed the Achievement Unit approach and its alignment with the GBB framework

<p>F4. Net conversion of impermeable hardscape to green space (acres, % of impervious hardscape)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1/16th for initial qualification) 	<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Including both acreage and percentage is important for comprehensive data collection ● Scoring should account for both total area reduced and percent of site improved, so large projects with significant reductions aren’t undervalued and small projects with high percentages aren’t overvalued.
<p>F10. Other design elements improving permeability (drop down list)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct runoff to infiltrating surfaces - Improve soil health - Creation of well connected self-sustaining natural landscape <p><i>No achievement units associated</i></p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This metric overlaps with other categories and lacks clarity on how it contributes to improved permeability. The relationship between soil health, permeability, and infiltration needs further explanation to be meaningful.

Permeability Metrics including in Appendix D of the MMS

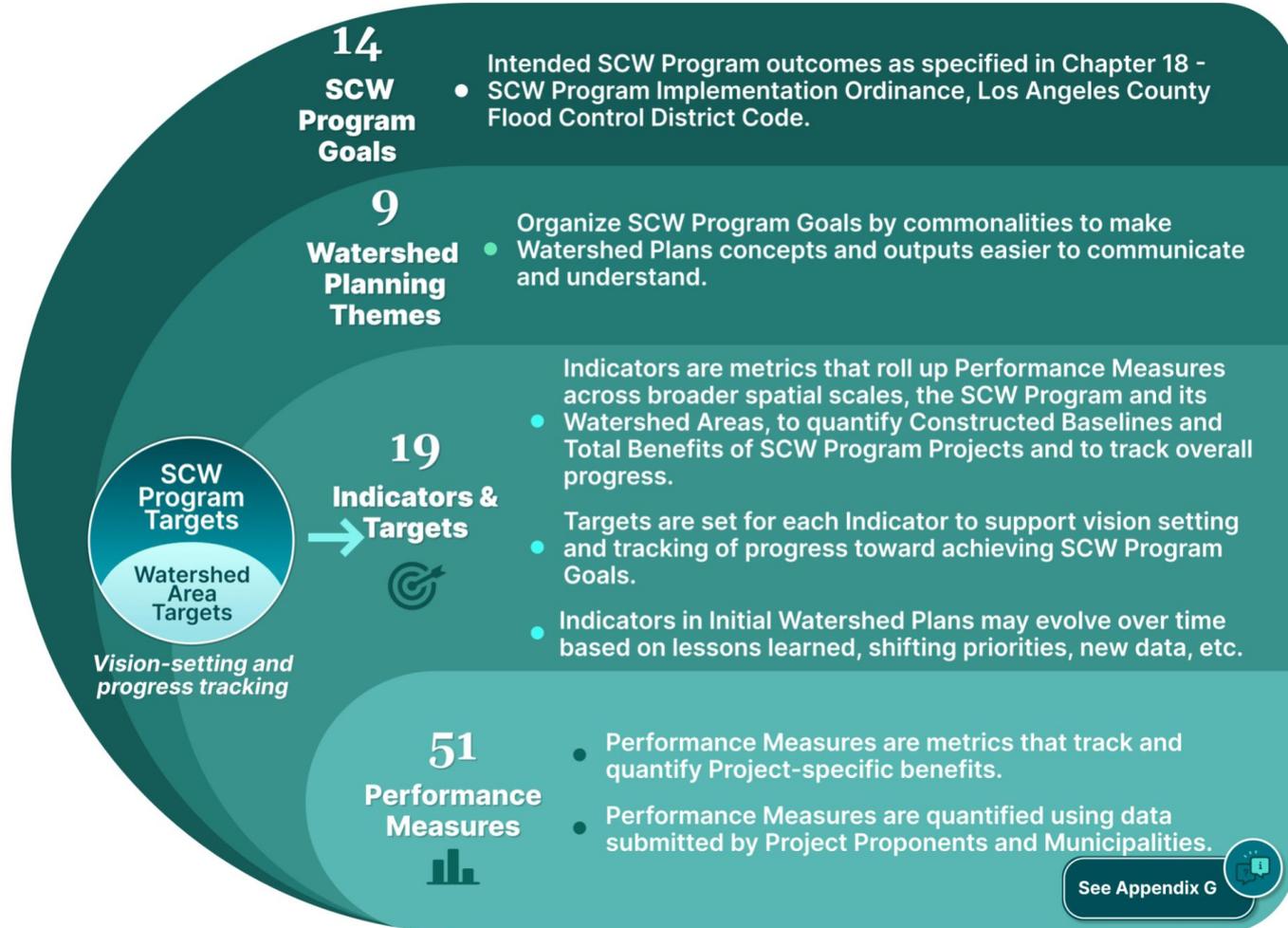
Additional Categories of Metrics

Suggested **Additional Categories of Metrics** were suggested including

- **Improved Soil Health**
 - **Suggested metrics include:** Soil Biodiversity or other Bioindicators, Soil Structure and Aggregate Stability, Soil Infiltration Rate, Soil Organic Matter, Absorption Rate, Soil Temperature, Water Holding Capacity, and Cooling Air Time.
- **Functional flows Metrics**
 - **Suggested metrics include:** Streamflow Regimes, Base Flow Maintenance, Floodplain Connectivity, Sediment Transport, Biodiversity Indicators, and Ecosystem Resilience.
- **Tree Canopy**
 - **Suggested metrics include:** Percentage of the site covered by Tree Canopy, Projected Mature Tree Canopy, Net Change in Tree Canopy on Project Site (based on projected tree maturity), Net New Tree Canopy.
- **Biodiversity**
 - **Suggested Project Design Metrics:** % of Existing Habitat Restored, % Increase in Native Plant Cover, Number of Culturally Significant Species Expected to Return, Target Species Return/Increase, Indicator Species designed for
 - **Additional Post-Project Implementation Metrics:** Macroinvertebrate Pollinator Presence/Diversity, Habitat Complexity Index, Presence of Bird or Amphibian Indicator Species.
- **Ecosystem Health and Function**
 - **Suggested Ecosystem Health and Function Metrics Include:** Acres of Riparian or Wetland Habitat Restored/Created, Species Composition, Habitat Structure, and Ecosystem Processes, Diversity of Species Richness, Resilience Measured by Recovery Time, Species Richness and Functional Diversity, Habitat Structure and Vegetation Arrangement, Habitat Connectivity Index, Connectivity Across Edge Zones (ecotones)

Introduction to County Subcontractors

Existing Metrics



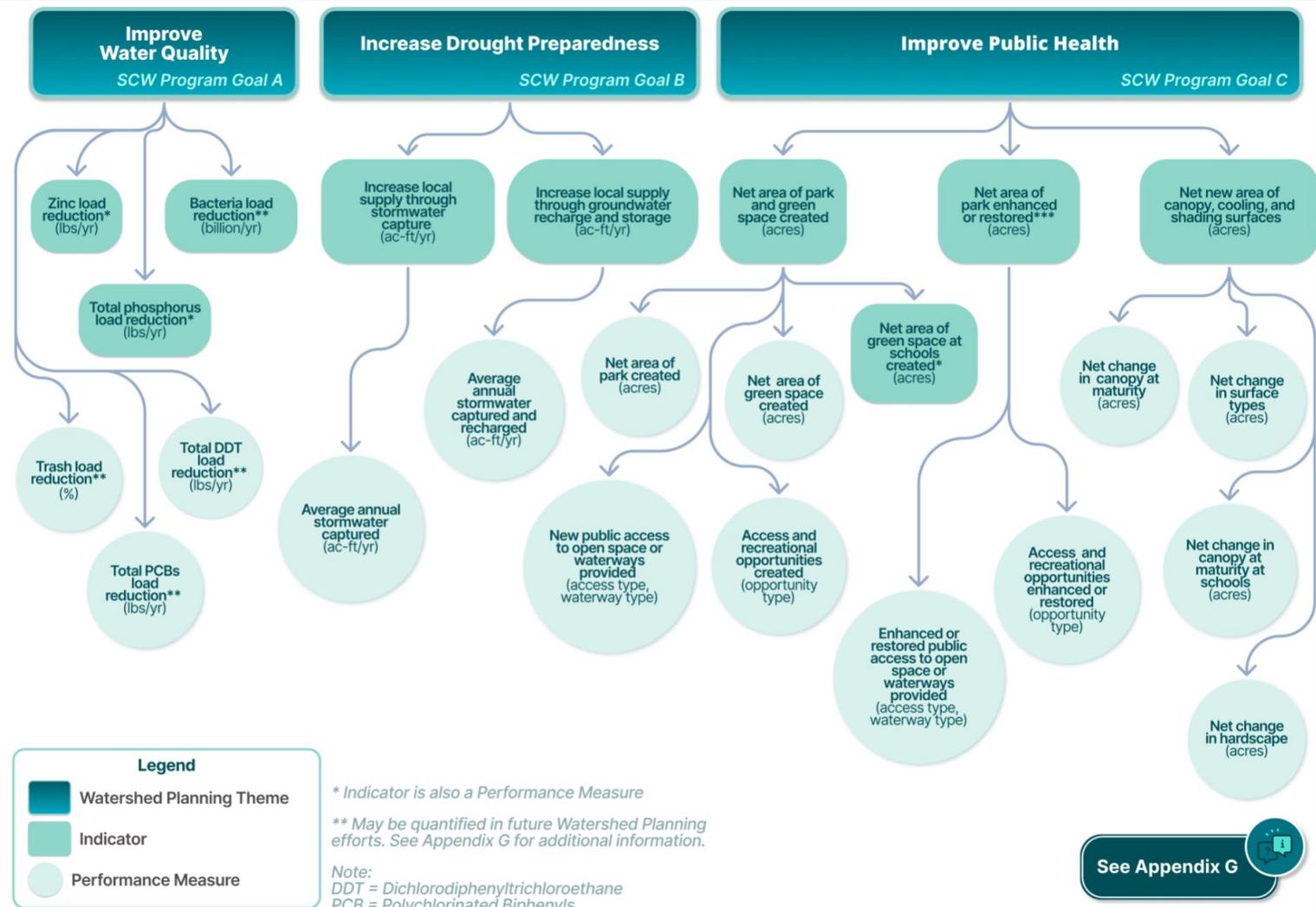


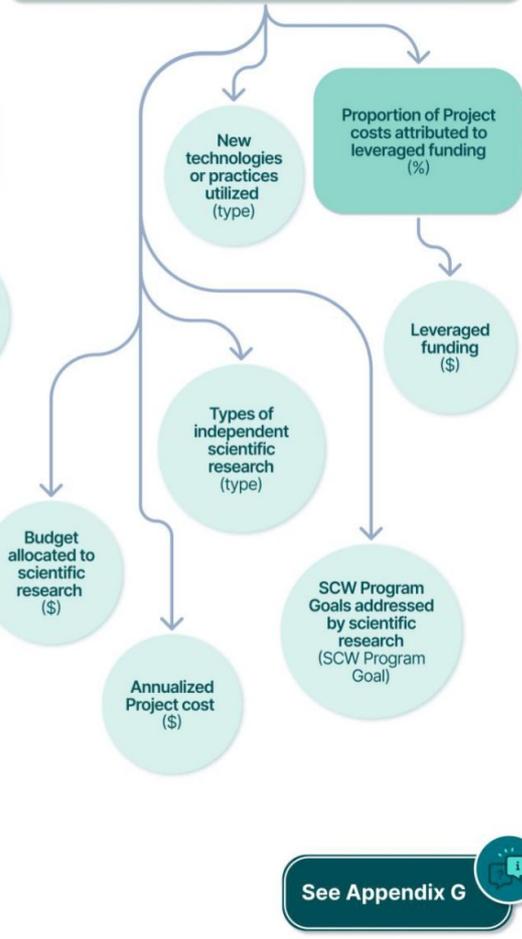
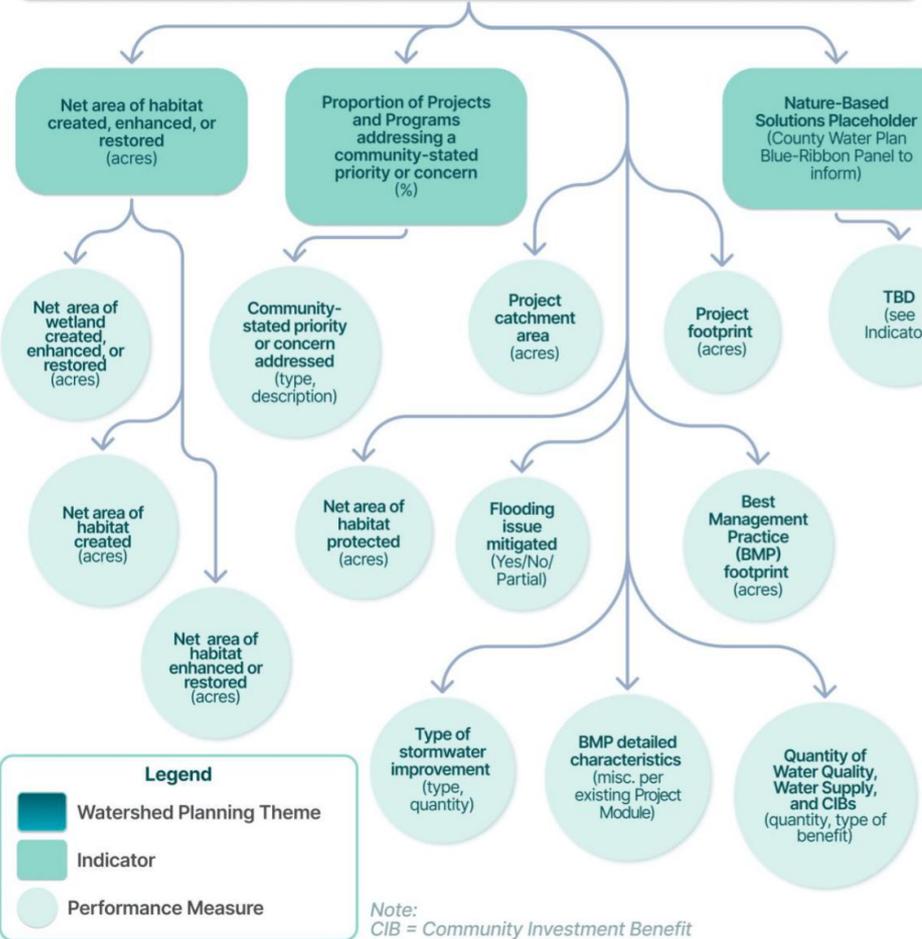
Figure 4-2. Indicators and PMs

Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects

SCW Program Goals E, F, G

Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development

SCW Program Goals D, H, I



Legend

- Watershed Planning Theme
- Indicator
- Performance Measure

Note:
CIB = Community Investment Benefit

See Appendix G

Figure 4-2. Indicators and PMs (continued)

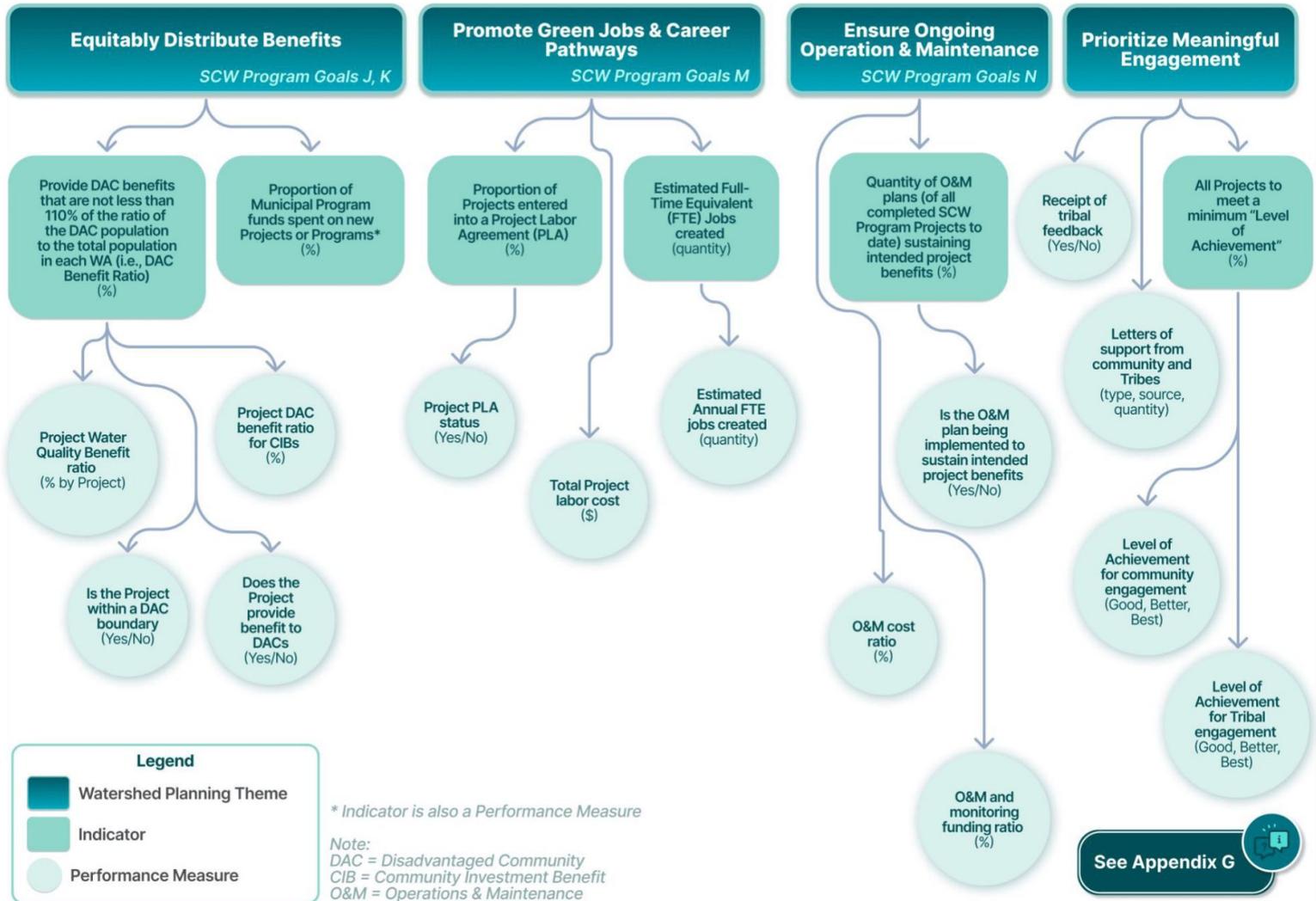


Figure 4-2. Indicators and PMs (continued)

County's Desired Outcome:

- 3 Key Metrics
- Associated with the NbS Criteria
- Compliment existing metrics in Watershed Plans

Watershed Planning Q&A

Metrics and Indicators

Measures

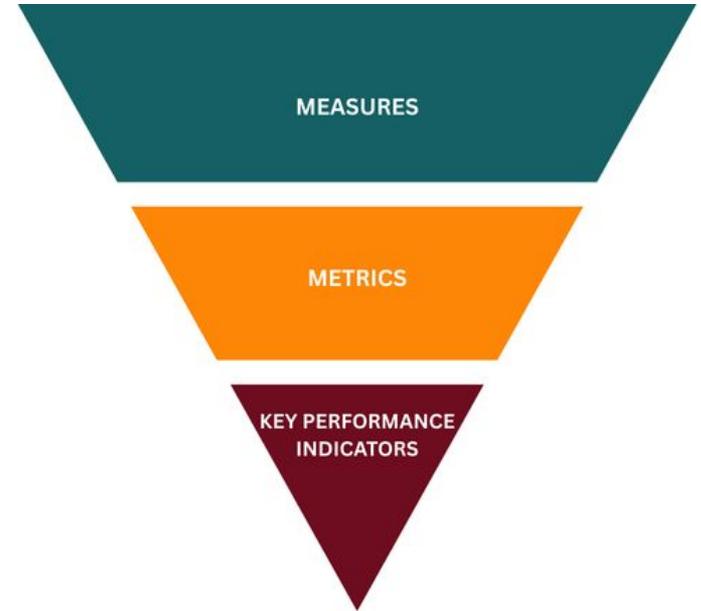
Measures are raw pieces of data that quantify a specific attribute or condition (e.g., square feet of permeable surface installed, number of trees planted, gallons of stormwater captured).

Metrics (PMs)

Metrics, referred to interchangeably in the SCWP as **Performance Measures (PMs)**, are standardized values derived from one or more measures. **Metrics quantify benefits provided by individual projects or programs and may express relationships among data points** (e.g., gallons captured per acre, trees planted per project). While metrics are measurable and used for analysis, they do not necessarily correspond directly to a target or objective.

Indicators (Key Performance Indicators)

Indicators (or KPIs) are a subset of metrics that measure progress toward defined goals or targets. In the context of the Safe, Clean Water Program, indicators aggregate or summarize Metrics (PMs) at the Watershed Area scale and at the SCWP-wide scale. Indicators are used to quantify cumulative benefits of SCWP-funded projects and to communicate and track progress toward Watershed and Program goals.



BREAK

Challenge Framing

At a minimum, metrics must:

- Measure alignment with the **NbS Criteria**
- Support **holistic** implementation and assessment of NbS

Metrics should also:

- Fill gaps in current practice by
 - Improving how NbS are selected and evaluated
 - Supporting evaluation of **tradeoffs**, not just benefits
 - Enabling **long-term monitoring** of outcomes
 - Reinforcing measurement of **system performance**, rather than isolated interventions or outputs

What else must the metrics accomplish?

Why Metrics Matter

Metrics are not neutral. They can shape what gets designed, funded, and built and they can challenge fragmentation.

In the context of the SCWP, they:

- Influence what gets designed, funded, and built
- Reinforce what “counts” as a Nature-based Solution
- Shape project design over time

Well designed metrics can encourage integrated, systems-oriented projects, while poorly designed metrics risk incentivizing narrow approaches to NbS while increasing applicant burden.

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Project-Level Guidance

Criteria for application across all projects including NbS

Criterion 5: Economic viability over time.

Criterion 6: Projects balance trade-offs and ensure equitable outcomes.

Program-Level Guidance

Criteria for broader policy and governance structures that enable NbS

Criterion 7: Inclusive, transparent, and empowering governance.

Criterion 8: Alignment across jurisdictions and agencies.

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Breakout Groups

Questions:

- Looking at the proposed metrics development process, what step is missing or underdeveloped?
- What questions do you need answered before diving into metrics development?
- What information, expertise, or perspectives need to be brought into this process?

Phase 2 Anticipated Schedule

~~Jan. 20, 2026 | Kick-off Meeting~~

~~Feb. 10, 2026 | In-person Task Force Meeting 1~~

Mar. 10, 2026 | In-person Task Force Meeting 2

Apr. 7, 2026 | In-person Task Force Meeting 3

May 5, 2026 | Feb. 10, 2026 | In-person Task Force Meeting 4

June 2, 2026 | In-person Task Force Meeting 5