

WaterTalks For Agencies and Electeds



Workshop 2: Community-Engaged Planning

Upper San Gabriel River & Rio Hondo Watershed Area

Thursday, Dec. 8th | 10AM – 12PM | On Zoom!

Expert Speaker Bios:

David Diaz

Executive Director, Active SGV

David Diaz is a public health professional offering extensive and successful experience in planning, developing, and implementing community-based initiatives throughout Greater Los Angeles County. He's a dedicated public servant and advocate with project management, coalition building experience that has successfully worked with youth, schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and cities to advance environmental justice, equity, and community development.

As the Executive Director of ActiveSGV, David is responsible for overall organization management, development, supervision of staff, and execution of various transportation, open space, and energy-related initiatives. David also serves on the Measure A Oversight Committee, Metro San Gabriel Valley Service Council, Measure W Scoring Committee (+USGR WASC) and serves on the board of the El Monte Union High School District.

David lives in the City of El Monte with his wife Anais, baby boy Maceo, and pets Xoco and Xavi.

Rene Salas

Interim City Manager, City of South El Monte

Rene Salas currently works for the City of South El Monte. Rene has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Engineering from California State University Northridge. He's been with South El Monte for 5 years, starting out as the Public Works Director, then Community Development Director, Deputy City Manager, and now Interim City Manager. Prior to South El Monte, Rene worked for various cities as the Public Works Director in charge of budgets ranging from \$7 million to \$28 million. Prior to his public sector career path, Rene worked in the private sector for Southern California Gas Company and its parent company Sempra Energy International. While at Sempra Energy International, Rene worked in Uruguay for 2 years on a natural gas pipeline project and distribution infrastructure with partners from Spain and Argentina.

James Cortes-Rivera

Watershed Coordinator, Day One

James Cortes-Rivera is the Watershed Coordinator for the Upper San Gabriel River watershed area, one of nine areas under the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP). An expert in community outreach, James has significant experience engaging with underrepresented communities—particularly Spanish speakers—throughout the San Gabriel Valley. As a member of Day One, his goal is to help create healthy and resilient communities for all residents.

Richard Watson

Watershed Coordinator, RWA Planning

Richard Watson is a geographer/planner who consults to private and public clients on both technical stormwater issues and stormwater quality funding. He serves as lead Watershed Coordinator for the Rio Hondo Watershed Area for the Safe, Clean Water Program.

He has long served as the principal consultant for the Los Cerritos Channel Watershed Group and led the development of its comprehensive Watershed Management Program (WMP). His stormwater management expertise includes prioritizing water quality issues and identifying implementation strategies and control measures to achieve water quality outcomes within required timeframes.

Mr. Watson helped secure \$91 million in funding through the Caltrans Cooperative Implementation Agreement Program for five (5) water capture projects and one (1) water treatment project in Los Angeles County. He has prepared formal comments and testified before the Los Angeles Regional Water Board and State Water Board on numerous stormwater policy issues.