



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH WATER QUALITY/COASTAL TIDELANDS COMMITTEE AGENDA

Crystal Cove Room (Bay 2D)

Thursday, June 4, 2026 - 3:00 PM

Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee Members:

Councilmember Michelle Barto, Chair
Councilmember Joe Stapleton, Vice Chair
Eros Bilyeu, Member
Curtis Black, Member
Tim Burnham, Member
Charles Fancher, Member
Craig Hudson, Member
Sharon Ray, Member
John Wadsworth, Member

Staff Members:

Jim Houlihan, Deputy Public Works Director/City Engineer
Chris Miller, Administrative Manager
Karen Gallagher, Administrative Assistant

The Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee meeting is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act. Among other things, the Brown Act requires that the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee agenda be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of each regular meeting and that the public be allowed to comment on agenda items before the Committee and items not on the agenda but are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee. The Chair may limit public comments to a reasonable amount of time, generally three (3) minutes per person.

The City of Newport Beach's goal is to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all respects. If, as an attendee or a participant at this meeting, you will need special assistance beyond what is normally provided, we will attempt to accommodate you in every reasonable manner. Please contact John Kappeler, Water Quality Enforcement Manager, at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is feasible at (949) 644-3218 or jkappeler@newportbeachca.gov.

NOTICE REGARDING PRESENTATIONS REQUIRING USE OF CITY EQUIPMENT

Any presentation requiring the use of the City of Newport Beach's equipment must be submitted to the Public Works Department 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

- 1) **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
- 2) **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 3) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Public comments are invited on agenda items. Speakers must limit comments to five minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Committee has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers. As a courtesy, please turn cell phones off or set them in silent mode.

- 4) **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Recommendation: Approve minutes as presented.

[WQCT Draft Minutes 05072026](#)

- 5) **CURRENT BUSINESS**

(a) Santa Ana River Trash Source Identification and Program Update (Tracy Ingebrigtsen, OC Public Works)

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

(b) Vessel Sewage Pumpouts in Newport Harbor (Chris Miller, Public Works)

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

6) COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM) (10 min)

(a) Big Canyon Phase 3 Restoration Site Tour (July 2026 - Tyler Parra)

(b) Ocean Beach Sand Renourishment plans, efforts, status - (Spring/Summer 2026, Chris Miller)

(c) Southern California Sand Collaborative

(d) Santa Isabella Restoration Grant Application (Summer 2026 - Heather Cieslak)

(e) Santa Ana River trash mitigation (Winter 2026 - TBD)

(f) Draft copper Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Winter 2026 - TBD)

7) PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Public comments are invited on non-agenda items generally considered to be within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee. Speakers must limit comments to three minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Committee has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on non-agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers. As a courtesy, please turn cell phones off or set them in silent mode.

8) SET NEXT MEETING DATE

Recommendation: July 9, 2026 (Note: revised schedule due to July 4 holiday weekend)

9) ADJOURNMENT

Date: May 7, 2026
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: Crystal Cove Conference Room, Newport Beach Civic Center
Meeting Minutes prepared by:

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember/Chair Michelle Barto
Committee Member Eros Bilyeu
Committee Member Sharon Ray
Committee Member John Wadsworth

Committee Members Absent:

Councilmember/Vice Chair Joe Stapleton
Committee Member Curtis Black
Committee Member Tim Burnham
Committee Member Charles Fancher
Committee Member Craig Hudson

Staff Present: Karen Gallagher, Administrative Assistant
Chris Miller, Administrative Manager
Dave Webb, Public Works Director

Guests Present: Jim Mosher, Resident
Nancy Gardner, Orange Coast River Park
Nancy Skinner, SPON
Brian Brannon, OCVCD
Bethany Nelms, Creek Team
Brett Sanders, UC Irvine

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

4. Review and approval of minutes

Recommendation: Approve minutes as presented

The item was continued to the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

5. Current Business

- a. Single Use Plastics – Public Information Outreach Status Update (Michelle Barto)
Update on future education outreach program.
Recommendation: Committee Discussion

Chair Barto reported that she did not receive an update from Public Information Manager Georgia Rios, but is aware that she is working on a single-use plastics outreach campaign for the City's Instagram account. She added that she met with Public Works Director Dave Webb and Administrative Manager Chris Miller about ways to get Orange County more involved.

Committee Member Wadsworth stated that this campaign would tie into other Committee initiatives and noted that they have discussed things the City could do to assist in a reduced trash footprint.

In response to Committee Member Wadsworth's inquiry, Chair Barto agreed that some of the Committee's initiatives that could involve City staff have been lost, and others would involve the County too. She reported talking with Supervisor Katrina Foley, who was supportive but acknowledged needing more help in persuading Supervisor Foley to act. She noted that the City should implement Committee suggestions, like putting additional recycling bins on the beach.

Committee Member Ray added that the Committee has discussed using University of California at Irvine (UCI) students to help study trash.

Chair Barto reported meeting with UCI and receiving interest, but they need to come up with a more specific project for the students.

Orange Coast River Park's Nancy Gardner stated that the City could do more to encourage use reduction for the average person by talking about the impacts.

Chair Barto lamented that she does not have the full support of the City Council on some initiatives.

Committee Member Wadsworth agreed that full Council support is what is missing.

Chair Barto reported that the best they will likely be able to get right now is the Instagram campaign about single-use plastics to help comply with Senate Bill 54.

b. Orange County Mosquito and Vector Control District - Update (Brian Brannon, OCVCD)

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

Orange County Mosquito and Vector Control District (OCVCD) Public Information Officer Brian Brannon reported on his organization's work to protect citizens from vectors that can spread disease, particularly those borne by mosquitoes. He reported on larvicides used by the County to control the mosquito population when standing water cannot be eliminated, along with how a variety of vectors can transmit diseases to humans. He reported that OCVCD responds to calls for service on a first-come, first-served basis, and the wait times can be longer during their busier summer months. He discussed the County's trapping methods and reported on OCVCD's community outreach efforts, including visits to schools and library youth programming.

Mr. Brannon presented County maps documenting 37 cases of flea-borne typhus and four cases of mosquito-borne West Nile virus, noting that none of the cases were in Newport Beach. He noted that the County is concerned about mosquito-borne dengue fever, although it has not seen any local transmissions. He cautioned that travelers have returned to Orange County from throughout the world, having contracted it while abroad, and most Southern California counties have seen a handful of localized cases. He reported on how flea-borne typhus can spread to humans, with 80-90% of cases leading to hospitalization.

In response to Still Protecting Our Newport's (SPON) Nancy Skinner's inquiry, Mr. Brannon confirmed that, although they are not on the list he presented, squirrels can also carry typhus-infected fleas. He added that they can live on any animal with fur.

Mr. Brannon encouraged residents to put their pets on flea control or medication to prevent heartworm. He noted how the mosquito population is higher than usual after a rainy spring, adding that the population usually peaks in mid-June. He discussed how the aedes mosquito population is controlled through a sterilization process, like how the fruit fly population has been controlled since the 1950s. He cautioned about removing standing water reservoirs, no matter how small, as they serve as potential mosquito breeding grounds.

In response to Creek Team Orange County's Bethany Nelms' inquiry, Mr. Brannon stated that it takes about a week for mosquitoes to breed.

In response to Ms. Skinner's inquiry, Mr. Brannon stated that mosquitoes can go anywhere there is standing water due to their small size, including small cracks around the edge of a manhole cover that leads to an underground water collection point.

Mr. Brannon cautioned about culex mosquitoes that can cause West Nile virus and encephalitis with human-biting during mornings and at night. He encouraged residents to stay covered, particularly with thicker clothing, and to use insect repellent. He cautioned about potential breeding grounds in storm drains that do not have a mosquito cover and unmaintained swimming pools. He noted that neighbors can report others anonymously if they sense an issue in a nearby yard, adding that they treat the mosquitoes in an environmentally conscious manner. He stated that mosquito fish will eat the mosquito larvae, however they must be judicious in where they are used due to potential impacts to other fish. He reported on the County's Sterile Insect Technique (SIT), adding that it is expensive but effective by releasing sterilized mosquitoes to help control the overall population.

Mr. Brannon reported on issues caused by rats, discussing many ways that they penetrate houses, along with their common household food sources like bird feeders, pet food bowls, and yard fruit trees. He recommended using snap traps for rat infestations, adding that the County no longer uses bait traps because other animals will find and eat the dead and possibly diseased rats.

In response to Ms. Gardner's inquiry, Mr. Brannon could not make a recommendation about a past squirrel issue she encountered, aside from eliminating food sources from her yard. He noted that fleas like warm bodies and recommended removing dead vectors like rats without touching them.

In response to Ms. Skinner's inquiry, Public Works Director Webb noted that he lives in the City of Mission Viejo and reported that ankle-bitter mosquitoes are everywhere.

c. Regional Sediment Management – Update (Brett Sanders, UCI)

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

UCI Professor Brett Sanders reported that UCI researchers have been leaning more heavily on satellite imagery to assess how beach widths have been changing, with sufficiently clear images existing back to the mid-1980s. He noted that satellite data shows that Southern California's beach area has increased by two million square meters since 1985. He cautioned that some beaches in the region have been hit hard by erosion on a site-specific basis, but added that, contrary to public perception, the region's beaches have widened since 1985, crediting it to a focus on nourishment. He stated that California has gained 500 acres since 1985 due to the increased beach space.

Professor Sanders reported that the sand is not always where it is most needed because pockets of narrowing exist, citing growth in the City of Huntington Beach as a positive, along with multiple examples of areas that have been hit hard by erosion, including Surfside-Sunset Beach in the City of Seal Beach. He added that structures and the direction of the waves exacerbate this issue there. He presented satellite images of various beaches that have gained and lost sand, noting that 10% of the coastline has accounted for 50% of the overall increase Statewide.

In response to Administrative Manager Miller's inquiry, Professor Sanders agreed that the Surfside-Sunset Beach Nourishment Project has impacted their situation.

In response to Public Works Director Webb's inquiry, Professor Sanders clarified that a combination of coastal structures, convergence zones, and the angle of the beaches leads to places seeing the most drastic changes and sand distribution levels. He noted that bluffs that were blasted away to construct the Dana Point Harbor and San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, helping create the thinning beaches in those communities, as the implanted sediment used to create unnaturally wide beaches washed away. He added that drought is also a contributing factor, with less sediment flowing to the coastlines over the past 20 years.

Professor Sanders reported on how the waves crest in Newport Beach can move sand to the north and away from the Balboa Peninsula, which has no natural sand supplies.

In response to Ms. Skinner's inquiry, Professor Sanders agreed that the waves move differently at some times of year and confirmed that his example was from the winter.

Professor Sanders focused on the San Pedro Littoral Cell between the San Gabriel River and Newport Harbor and how the winter waves coming from the west, along with southerly summer swells, impact the direction and strength of sand transportation within the Cell. He reported that Balboa Peninsula's sand volume since 1985 remains stable as a credit to the City's Public Works Department. He demonstrated how the summer and winter flows tend to settle the Cell's sand at Huntington State Beach, with Newport Beach benefiting the most during the winter.

Public Works Director Webb reported that, every two years, the City dredges the mouth of the Santa Ana River to fill the groin fields and help keep the City's beaches stable.

Professor Sanders agreed that this work by the City is compensating for what the waves remove. He presented a chart of long-term changes to beaches within the Cell, noting how the nourishment projects conducted by those respective cities have been critical. He added that, in addition to the peninsula's stability, West Newport Beach has seen some widening over the past 40 years. He clarified that this is just the beach's width and not the total volume of sand.

Professor Sanders reported that the sea level has increased 0.35 feet since the 1920s but, according to the 2024 United States Interagency Sea Level Task Force Report, the warming planet projects to increase sea level rise by anywhere from 0.3 feet to a full foot through 2050, depending on future environmental protection progress levels. He noted that rising sea levels will make waves break closer to the shoreline and thus run up farther on the beach, increasing the risk of overtopping. He cautioned that beaches cannot be made steeper and expect to survive because the wave activity will flatten them out over time.

Professor Sanders presented five potential adaptation measures for the City to consider: increasing natural sand nourishment, increasing artificial wave nourishment, reducing wave energy, improving sand retention, and raising the grade of infrastructure. He stated that dunes are a promising option for the area because the vegetation can attract wind-blown sand and lead to vertical growth of the beach. He acknowledged that this can be difficult to sell in communities like Newport Beach because oceanside residents do not want their view blocked, but it must be balanced against the greater community's interest in preventing floods. He added that successful dunes also require the public's participation by not walking all over them and damaging the essential vegetation.

Professor Sanders reported that UCI will begin a new project over the summer in collaboration with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and others, about the excess sand in Prado Basin. He lamented that the 80 million cubic yards of sediment are needed by the area's beach communities, but removal and transportation are expensive. He reported that the project, made possible through support from United States Congressman Dave Min, will use a computer model to simulate how a large storm could be used to help take the sand to the coastline down the Santa Ana River. He cautioned about potential pitfalls in the concept as it impacts the infrastructure owned by several groups.

In response to Ms. Nelms' inquiries, Professor Sanders stated that there is an economist and regulatory permitting specialist on their team to help figure out potential costs, along with two USGS geomorphologists. He stated that the project has not yet started and expressed hopes that the City will be one of their partners. He added that there would be biannual meetings to get perspectives on their work from civic partners during what he expects to be a two-year project. He expressed hopes for a future with more nature-based beach functions and less heavy armoring.

Professor Sanders reported that the work will be titled the Healthy Coast Project, with the goal of having less mechanical transport and more river-based transport. He added that a consideration could be redesigning the concrete channels so they can better move sand and otherwise benefit residents. He cited as an example how the OCVIBE project in the City of Anaheim will transform a portion of the Santa Ana River to the benefit of residents. He stated that the biggest challenge is how to open the channels to more uses without increasing flood risk.

Chair Barto stated that her takeaway from the presentation is that Newport Beach needs dune preservation more than it needs sand. She noted that the City did not have areas of depletion.

In response to Ms. Nelms' inquiry, Chair Barto stated that the City should help its neighbors in attempting to obtain sand, but it also needs to plan for what sea levels will look like in 25 years, with a focus on dune restoration.

Professor Sanders stated that prioritizing dune restoration would make a great contribution. He cautioned that what has worked for the City using current sea level rise patterns will not keep up in the future as the rate of rise accelerates.

Ms. Gardner pondered why the City cannot prioritize both dune restoration and sand replenishment.

Chair Barto clarified that a focus on dune restoration would be most helpful for Newport Beach, in addition to forming partnerships with other cities for sand, but the dunes should be the top priority. She encouraged signing up for the UCI project.

Professor Sanders stated that priority on dunes is an enormous step forward. He added that it would benefit the UCI project to have Newport Beach's thoughts and ideas. He cautioned that Newport Beach will have an enormous future problem based on sea level rise projections, with thousands of residents living below high tide levels and only the thin buffer of beaches facing potential for erosion. He noted that the City is currently doing well in managing sediment.

Chair Barto noted that obtaining Prado Dam sand has been a focus of many previous meetings but added that this presentation was eye-opening in terms of the need for more dune work.

Professor Sanders recommended having several near-term goals with trigger points to prompt transitions in focus. He added that the project's data will help inform priorities over short, medium, and long-term periods.

Public Works Director Webb commended the work of the groins since the late 1960s. He noted that recent large storms have moved the sand through the cells to the backside to the point where maintenance is needed due to a loss in elevation. He pondered the advantages of raising their height and extending them farther to the side.

Professor Sanders agreed that after 50-60 years, the groins have likely settled and need refurbishment. He lamented that groin projects are unpopular today around the State, but Newport Beach has shown that they can be successful.

Public Works Director Webb noted that the California Coastal Commission is against armoring, and it makes it hard to get new groins considered. He shared stories of residents who want the beach bulldozed so they can see the ocean better, oblivious to the flood protection provided.

Professor Sanders reported working with the City to study Newport Harbor before the Balboa Seawall was raised, noting that it only takes one low spot somewhere on the peninsula or Balboa Island for the entire area to flood. He acknowledged that the beach can be difficult to oversee with so many private landowners on the coastline.

Public Works Director Webb cautioned that once dunes get protected, they can be hard to work around and are a constraint to City staff.

In response to Committee Member Wadsworth's inquiry, Public Works Director Webb stated that illegal trails through dunes become an issue. He added that there are also constraining regulatory issues about dogs. Professor Sanders added that once vegetation gets established in a flood channel, it could be considered a wetland, which adds more complexity to maintenance. He agreed that there is an opportunity for regulatory improvements around dunes.

Administrative Manager Miller added that the piers with piles along South Bay Front give a lesson in the advantage of groins on a micro level through stopping sand.

Public Works Director Webb noted that Balboa Pier similarly acts as a groin and stops sand.

In response to Committee Member Ray's inquiry, Professor Sanders agreed that the changes to the Randall Preserve are part of the puzzle. He noted that the area is largely independent of many flood events due to a flood gate. He added that coastal wetlands generally do not lessen ocean flood risk unless they dissipate wave energy.

In response to Committee Member Bilyeu's inquiry, Professor Sanders confirmed that California has native vegetation that will grow and establish itself on a dune. He reported that most of the region's coastal wetlands were removed in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, when marinas and harbors were built out. He stated that the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) has a historical wetlands database showing just how much dune and wetland space existed before the 1950s, adding that it is based on coastal survey maps from 1856-1858.

6. COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

- (a) Status of trash source identification in Santa Ana River (Spring 2026 – John Wadsworth)
- (b) Big Canyon Phase 3 Restoration Site Tour (Spring/Summer 2026 – Andy Tran)
- (c) Ocean Beach Sand Renourishment plans, efforts, status (Spring/Summer 2026 –Chris Miller)
- (d) Southern California Sand Collaborative
- (e) Santa Isabella Restoration Grant Application (Summer 2026 – Heather Cieslak)
- (f) Pumpout maintenance update (Summer 2026 – Chris Miller)
- (g) Santa Ana River trash mitigation (Winter 2026 - TBD)
- (h) Draft copper Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Winter 2026 - TBD)

Committee Member Ray requested an update on the Randall Preserve restoration efforts sometime around September. She noted that they continue to find old and unmarked oil wells.

Chair Barto agreed that September would be good timing for this update.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Nelms reported that she is one of the founders of Creek Team, a regional non-profit that started in the City of San Juan Capistrano, trying to better the community with an educational focus. She stated that they have an ongoing campaign to urge the County away from using herbicides like glyphosate and other toxins that seep into waterways, noting that San Diego Creek and Peter's Canyon Channel flow downstream to Newport Beach's Back Bay. She reported catching the County using toxic herbicides in April, prompting a CDFW investigation. She noted that the Back Bay is designated as an impaired body of water due to herbicides banned 50 years ago remaining in the sediment. She recommended that the City encourage the County to move away from its current herbicide practices, noting that other counties have switched to organic herbicides.

In response to Ms. Gardner's inquiries, Ms. Nelms reported that Creek Team started in February with a focus on waterways but has already had other environmental problems brought to its attention, including toxic herbicides in public parks. She stated that their concern is with the blanket use of these toxic herbicides as opposed to selective use only where necessary. She added that one of the

County's potential violations from April was not conducting a bird survey before spraying an area. She added that Creek Team's goal is to adjust the County's policies to use organic herbicides first, matching the policies of neighboring jurisdictions.

8. SET NEXT MEETING DATE

Recommendation: June 4, 2026

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Chair / Michelle Barto

DRAFT