

ACONA Meeting Notes

May 22, 2018

Introductions:

Altadena Sheriff's Station

Lt. Alex Canchola, assisting Captain Stuckey in Operations. Previously with the Sheriff's Station in the City of Industry.

Topics:

Update on the Drought — Demitri Polyzos, Water Resource Management Group
4 million acre-feet (MAF) of water needed for MWD's served population (19 million people), 1.9 MAF comes from Northern California (if available) and another 1.2 MAF (.5 MAF basic allocation) from Colorado.

Colorado River system: Snow pack is below average, and expecting about half of the seasonal average runoff from snow melt.

Northern California has seen below average precipitation this year, although there was above average rainfall in November and March. Rainfall is at 82% of average this year. Snow pack is at about 50% of average. Snow melt runoff is at 72% of average. Southern California is receiving about 35% of average allocation from Northern California.

There will possibly be a 98 thousand acre-feet (TAF) shortfall from these two sources this year. MWD may have to use stored water unless the allocations increase, but because of last year's good rainfall, there is plenty in reserve.

Important to note the difference between surface water (rainfall, snowfall) and groundwater.

Groundwater levels are still very low. It takes multiple years of good precipitation for groundwater to fully recharge

Capturing & Conserving Water in Altadena — Nicki Sherman (nicki@theriverproject.org),
The River Project

Water LA is their project, with funding for Altadena from the Department of Public Works; plan on hosting educational workshops. Focus on climate resilience. Right now most rainfall runs off into the ocean. Concrete cover and compacted soil prevent water from percolating into the groundwater reserves.

Six strategies: rain tanks, rain grading, parkway basins, gray water systems, permeable paving, infiltration trenches. Parkway basins are the main focus for Altadena, planned for the summer. Project is to pull out compacted soil and put in mulch and drought-friendly plants.

Information is available on the River Project's website: bit.ly/2IKpqQJ.

Pruning/Removing Trees by SoCal Edison — David Guzman, Manager, Vegetation
Management Dept, Southern California Edison

Introduced Jason Allen, of CN Utility Consulting, who is a contractor to SCE on vegetation management.

SCE covers a 50,000 square-mile service area. Maintain 1.5 million trees under their compliance program (trees near SCE equipment). Another 10 million are hazard trees: trees that could fall onto equipment.

Territory is divided into grids and each grid is on a maintenance schedule. California Public Utilities Commission requires that there is from 18" of clearance + 1 year's growth for fast growing trees, to 4' + 1 year's growth for slow growing trees.

Recently a 16 kilovolt system was installed in Altadena (now in its final stages of installation), replacing a 4 kilovolt system; crews needed to make sure there was clearance for the new system. Trees trimmed for this installation were not part of the routine maintenance.

SCE maintains the easement around their equipment, so trees growing or encroaching on the easement are their responsibility. They notify residents when they are planning on trimming trees, usually 30-45 days in advance. Tree trimmers leave a notice 48-72 hours before they plan on trimming trees. If customers refuse to allow their trees to be trimmed, SCE works with the customer to resolve issues. But if the tree is contacting the high voltage lines, that is considered an emergency situation and SCE has more authority than for maintenance trimming. If SCE has to trim back trees farther than they have been doing for maintenance, they have to get written permission from the homeowner.

800-455-6555 is the number for SCE that reaches the arborist assigned to an area, or if there are concerns about a tree.

Because of the increase in wildfires, the guidelines have become more stringent, especially with regard to brush clearance, but the new standard will also affect tree trimming. However, the standards in Altadena are more stringent than the state requirements, so residents won't see a lot of change.

Q&A

Q: What are we doing to become more water independent? A: MWD has a long-term plan to expand and conserve local resources, including recycling and encouraging conservation as a way of life. The River Project is taking a smaller scale approach as detailed in their presentation and on their website.

Q: Do we have a right to when you trim the trees? Trees are stressed because of the drought. A: You have a right to say no unless the tree is encroaching on SCE equipment.

Q: Palm trees seem to be the ones that are falling on the lines. What's being done about that?

A: They are SCE's biggest nemesis (they are in the category of hazard trees). SCE tries to work with the municipalities to maintain them. If there is a power outage caused by a palm tree, SCE goes out and tries to determine which tree is the culprit but that can be difficult because there is never just one palm tree; usually there's a row of them.

Q: There are hardly any parkways in my neighborhood. Do you think that the Water LA project might inspire DPW to put in more sidewalks and parkways? A: Don't have information about DPW's plans, but will ask. Right now Water LA is canvassing the neighborhood to see where sidewalks exist.

Q: Who does the pre-inspection for SCE? Who does the actual tree trimming? Who is the arborist? Why can't lines be put underground? A: Pre-inspection company is CN Utility. Jason Allen (from CN Utility) and David Guzman (from SCE) are the qualified arborists. Mario's Tree Service and Pacific Tree service are the tree trimmers. Not everything can be put underground because there are a lot of conflicts underground. Going underground will damage tree roots and cause more damage than trimming.

Q: Are deodars protected? A: Deodars might be protected under a local ordinance, but SCE is exempt from ordinances in the easement.

Q: Bark beetle infestation: is it still going on? A: It's died down a lot, but SCE still has a program for it.

Comment: There's a project to add sidewalks along New York Drive between Lake and Altadena. Maybe Water LA could work with them on adding parkways.

Q: How do you keep parkways from becoming mosquito nurseries? A: We use mulch and plan for water not to stand but to be in motion.

Q: Edison has an easement in my backyard, but I've never had Edison come and inspect or trim. Do you send a bill when you trim? A: We are trimming for high voltage conductors but you can request an inspector to come out and take a look. We don't bill for trimming. SCE is required to do this.

Q: Instead of undergrounding lines, what about insulation? A: We have aerial cable that is insulated but in most places we use coated wire that requires clearance. Aerial cable still has a clearance area, but it is smaller. Aerial cable is not appropriate for all locations because it's big and heavy.

Q: Do you trim trees during nesting season? A: We don't do tree trimming in environmentally protected areas from February to September.

Q: What do you think of Yes on 68 (bond on June ballot with funding for water projects and parks)? A: Not knowledgeable enough to comment.

Q: If you tell me I need my trees trimmed, does it have to be done by your guys? A: There are OSHA rules that people not electrically qualified can't be within 10' of conductors. But if they can stay 10' away or are electrically qualified, outside services are allowed to do the trimming.