



THE WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN AUTHORITY
FOUNDED 1992

Special Meeting of the Water Conservation Garden Authority
Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 3:30 p.m.
Water Conservation Garden Multipurpose Room
12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, California 92019

OPEN MEETING

1. Call meeting to order and roll call.

- a. The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Director Hedberg, who chaired the meeting.
- b. Voting members present:
 - i. Steve Castaneda, Sweetwater Authority
 - ii. Kathleen Hedberg, SDCWA
 - iii. Dan McMillan, Helix Water District
 - iv. Lynn Neault, GCCCD
 - v. Jose Lopez, Otay Water District
- c. Guests, presenters and staff members present:
 - i. Lauren Magnuson, Water Conservation Garden
 - ii. Steve Zolezzi, Garden Volunteer Coordinator
 - iii. Andrea Beth Damsky, Helix Water District
 - iv. Jeremy Jungreis, Legal Counsel
 - v. Jennifer Bryant, Helix Water District
 - vi. Timothy Parr, Helix Water District
 - vii. Jessica Mackey, Helix Water District
 - viii. Lisa Prus, San Diego County Water Authority

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

- a. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Approve agenda (additions and/or deletions).

- a. **Motion:** Director Castaneda moved to approve the agenda, and Director Lopez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with the director from City of San Diego absent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

4. Public comments.

- a. Volunteer Rose Steinhardt thanked the board and noted there have been an increase in new visitors of all ages at the Garden which can lead to new memberships.

ACTION ITEMS

- 5. The board approve the May 27, 2025, regular board meeting minutes.**

- a. Chair Hedberg noted a change to Item 12, which should read Director Neault not Ms. Magnuson's absence.
- b. **Motion:** Director McMillan moved to approve the amended minutes, and Director Castaneda seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with director from City of San Diego and absent.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

6. The board receive an update on Garden operations and finances from Director of Garden Operations Lauren Magnuson.

- a. Ms. Magnuson gave an update on Garden operations, upcoming Garden events and May admission numbers. Steve Zolezzi reported on volunteer hours for May, the volunteer luncheon, and an updated volunteer orientation and handbook. The board discussed options for additional volunteer and sponsorship opportunities. Treasurer Jennifer Bryant reviewed the Garden's treasurer's report. The board agreed on a board retreat meeting on July 8 at 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and cancellation of the July 22 meeting.

7. The board receive the fiscal year 2023-24 annual audit.

- a. Treasurer Jennifer Bryant reviewed the annual audit and confirmed the auditors gave a clean opinion. Ms. Magnuson confirmed the audit would be on the Garden website.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. The board discuss options for continued funding and operations of the Garden after June 30, 2025.

- a. Item 8 was presented prior to Item 6.
- b. Temporary Acting Administrator Jennifer Bryant confirmed all signatures on the Memorandum of Understanding for the Water Conservation Garden Authority must be signed by June 30, 2025. Director McMillan noted the June 18 Helix Water District board meeting would have the MOU on their agenda for board approval. Director Castaneda confirmed he had authority to sign on behalf of the Sweetwater Authority board. Director Neault said she could sign after certain amendments were made. Director Hedberg discussed the upcoming June 26 San Diego County Water Authority board meeting would have the Garden MOU for board discussion and approval. Legal Counsel Jungreis noted he would send an amended MOU out for signatures.
- c. **Motion:** Director Castaneda moved to approve the MOU as amended, and Director McMillan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with director from City of San Diego and absent.

9. Director comments.

- a. Director Lopez apologized for missing the May 27 board meeting but noted he enjoyed the volunteer luncheon. There were no additional comments made.

10. President comments.

- a. Director Hedberg reported attending the City of La Mesa June 14 Flag Day Parade.

11. Acting administrator comments.

- a. There were no additional comments.

12. Legal counsel comments.

- a. There were no additional comments.

13. Adjourn regular board meeting.

- a. The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Next meeting Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 10 a.m. at the Water Conservation Garden Multipurpose Room.

DRAFT

FIRE, PLANTS, DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND YOU



Fire resistant does not mean fire-proof. Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not properly maintained. Be sure to keep all your plants watered properly and pruned.

See tips, links and education resources below!

**Suggested Plant
List for a
defensible space**



**Fire Safe
Council of SD
County**



**Embrace
WaterSmart
Living-SDCWA**



**County of San Diego
tips for defensible
spaces**



THE ¹
water conservation
garden
www.thegarden.org

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Preparing for Wildfire

Creating Defensible Space

Get notified of emergency incidents and evacuations

in your area with the Genasys Protect app.

Scan here!



Preparing for wildfire is a community effort!

Please evaluate your own properties and help educate your neighbors.

For more information please visit SanMiguelFire.gov or email FirePrevention@sanmiguelfire.org.



Additional Steps

- Relocate firewood at least 30 feet away from structures and 10 feet off of property line.
- Remove all hazardous/combustible vegetation within 20 feet along both sides of driveways and roadways that bound the property.
- Maintain a 13-foot 6-inch vertical clearance over all roads and driveways for emergency vehicle access.
- Remove vegetation to create bare soil within ten feet of ground mounted solar panels.
- Remove vegetation to create bare soil within ten feet of propane tanks.
- Remove refuse, trash and cuttings immediately.
- Install 4-inch address numbers on your house and provide an address monument if you have a long driveway.
- In all cases, fuel reduction means arranging the trees, shrubs and other fuel sources in a way that makes it difficult for fire to transfer from one fuel source to another. It does not mean cutting down all trees and shrubs on the property.

Tips for Safely Removing Vegetation

- Complete mowing and weed whipping before 10:00 am, especially if it is a hot or windy day.
- Use a weed whipper instead of a lawn mower, brush blade, and tractor on weeds and dry grasses.
- Before you begin, remove all rocks from the area as a blade striking a rock can create a spark and cause a fire.
- Spark arresters are mandated for all portable gasoline-powered equipment.
- Make sure the exhaust system, spark arresters, and mower are working correctly.
- Keep the mower, including the engine, free of dust, oil, carbon build up, and other flammable materials.
- Have a garden hose or fire extinguisher and shovel on hand at all times and know how to use them. Keep a cell phone nearby in case of an emergency.
- Double check that equipment has not been recalled.
- If possible, have a spotter work with you to help watch for fire.



Preparing for Wildfire

Creating Defensible Space



0 Zone 0 (0-5 ft)

Zone Zero: is 0 - 5 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. This zone functions to reduce the potential of embers landing near a building, igniting fuels, and exposing the area around a home to a direct flame. There should be no combustibles in this zone.

- Remove combustible mulch, bark, and compost.
- Use hardscape such as gravel, brick pavers, cement, or sand.
- Remove leaves and dead vegetation from roofs, gutters and under decks.
- Remove combustible storage from under decks and close to exterior walls.
- Replace combustible fencing with non-combustible material such as metal, concrete block, or fiber cement board. Start with gates or fencing directly attached to your home.
- Install approved ember-resistant eaves and attic vents or screen with 1/8th non-combustible mesh.

1 Zone 1 (5-50 ft)

Zone One: is 5 - 50 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. This zone requires the greatest reduction of flammable vegetation and consists of low growing fire-resistant plants.

- Cut weeds and annual grasses to a minimum of 4 inches.
- Remove dead trees, grasses, weeds, plants, and foliage.
- Replace flammable plants with fire resistant plants and keep them well irrigated.
- Maintain low growing plants (6 to 18 inches in max height).
- Create spacing between shrubs and add additional spacing along steeper slopes.
- Cut tree branches 10 feet from chimneys and rooftops.
- Relocate firewood a minimum of 30 feet from structures.

2 Zone 2 (50-100 ft)

Zone Two: is 50 - 100 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove tree branches 6 to 10 feet from the ground. If tree is less than 18 feet in height, remove lowest limbs that are 1/3 of the tree height.
- Remove plant/shrub branches off the ground, so the lowest branches are 1/3 of the plant/shrub height.
- Create 10 feet of separation between tree canopies and remove dead limbs.
- Reduce the natural vegetation by 50% of the square footage within this area.
- Cut weeds and annual grasses to a minimum of 4 inches.
- Remove dead trees, grasses, weeds, plants, and foliage.



Water District

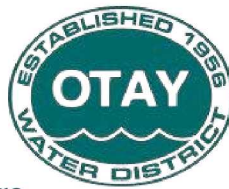
WAVE-IN DAY

San Diego County Water Authority member agencies enjoy free garden entry the last Saturday of the month, just bring your current water bill! Connect with your local water district to explore sustainable landscapes and discover water-wise gardening tips.

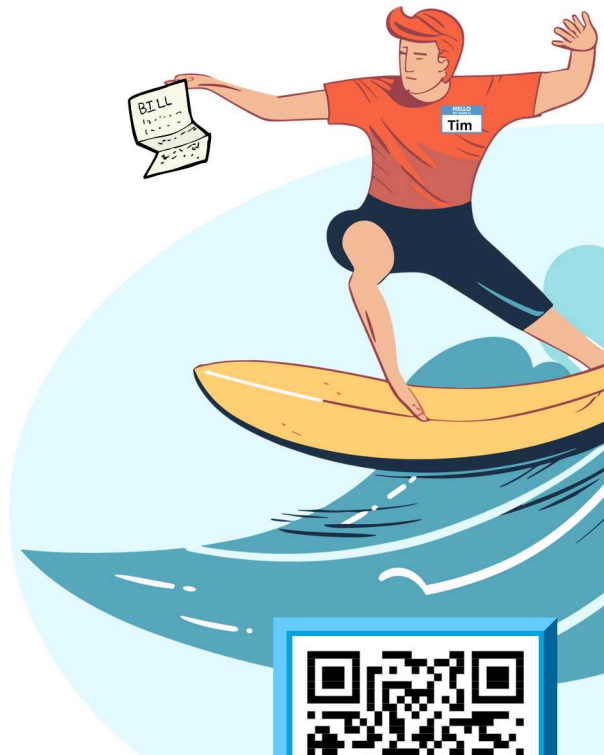
This promotion is available to customers of **any of the 22 member agencies** of the San Diego County Water Authority. Visit our website for a list of participating member agencies.



LAST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH



Highlighted JPA Members



www.thegarden.org

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