



**REGULAR MEETING  
GOLDEN RAIN FOUNDATION LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE\***

**Wednesday, May 10, 2023 – 1:30 p.m.  
BOARD ROOM/VIRTUAL MEETING  
Laguna Woods Village  
24351 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA**

*Laguna Woods Village owners/residents are welcome to participate in all open committee meetings and submit comments or questions for virtual meetings using one of three options:*

- 1. Join the meeting in-person in the Community Center Board Room.*
- 2. Join the meeting via Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/99225095454>. Please “Raise Your Hand” during the agenda item you would like to speak to. If you have an item that is NOT on the agenda, please “Raise Your Hand” during the Member Comments agenda item.*
- 3. Via email to [meeting@vmsinc.org](mailto:meeting@vmsinc.org) any time before the meeting is scheduled to begin or during the meeting. Please use the name GRF Landscape Committee in the subject line of the email. Name and unit number must be included.*

**NOTICE AND AGENDA**  
*This Meeting May Be Recorded*

1. Call to Order
2. Acknowledgment of Media
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Approval of Meeting Report for February 8, 2023
5. Chair Remarks
6. Department Head Update
  - a. Aliso Creek Update

**Items for Discussion and Consideration**

7. Member Comments (Items Not on the Agenda)
8. Response to Member Comments
9. Electric Equipment – Presentation by Kurt Wiemann and Staff

Concluding Business:

10. Committee Member Comments

11. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

12. Adjournment

Juanita Skillman, Chair  
Kurt Wiemann, Staff Officer  
Jayanna Abolmoloki, Landscape Administrative Assistant  
Telephone: 949-268-2565

\*A quorum of the GRF Board, or more, may also be present at the meeting.



**OPEN MEETING**

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE GOLDEN RAIN FOUNDATION  
LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, February 8, 2022 – 1:30 P.M.  
BOARD ROOM / VIRTUAL MEETING  
Laguna Woods Village Community Center  
24351 El Toro Road**

**REPORT**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair – Juanita Skillman, Elsie Addington, Lenny Ross, Ira Lewis, Diane Casey, Andy Ginoccio

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** Yvonne Horton (Excused), Jules Zalon (Excused)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Maggie Blackwell

**ADVISORS PRESENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Kurt Wiemann, Jayanna Abolmoloki

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Chair Skillman called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

**2. Acknowledgment of Media**

No press was present.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

Director Casey made a motion to approve the agenda. Director Ross seconded. The committee was in unanimous support.

**4. Approval of the Meeting Report for December 14, 2022**

The report was approved without objections.

**5. Committee Chair Remarks**

Chair Skillman reminded the audience to contact herself, Kurt Wiemann, or Jayanna Abolmoloki if they would like to see a specific item listed on the next agenda.

**6. Department Head Update**

Mr. Wiemann provided updates on the progress of Aliso Creek verbally.

**6a. Key Performance Indicators Presentation**

Mr. Wiemann discussed the presentation provided in detail.

Members made comments and asked questions.

**6b. Update on Aliso Creek**

Mr. Wiemann discussed the presentation provided in detail.

Members made comments and asked questions.

Items for Discussion and Consideration**7. Member Comments (Items Not on the Agenda)**

Several members made comments and asked questions. Topics included:

- Questions about previous contracts
- Willow trees in Aliso Creek
- Debris in Aliso Creek after storms


**8. Response to Members Comments**

Members of the Committee responded to member comments.

Concluding Business:**9. Committee Member Comments**

Several comments were made.

**10. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.****11. Adjourned at 2:42 p.m.**

  
Juanita Skillman (Feb 16, 2023 23:10 PST)

Juanita Skillman, Chair

# Aliso Creek Compliance Monitoring-Spring 2023

Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Woods

# CHAMBERS GROUP

May 2, 2023

3151 Airway Ave, Suite F208

Costa Mesa, CA 92626

20905.01-009

Kurt Wiemann, Director of Landscape Services  
Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Woods  
PO Box 2220  
Laguna Woods, CA 92637

**SUBJECT: APRIL 2023 MONITORING SUMMARY IN SUPPORT OF ALISO CREEK ANNUAL MAINTENANCE, PERMIT COMPLIANCE, AND BIOLOGICAL MONITORING SERVICES IN LAGUNA WOODS, CALIFORNIA**

Dear Mr. Wiemann,

Chambers Group has prepared this brief maintenance monitoring summary for Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Woods (GRF) in support of routine vegetation maintenance occurring within and adjacent to Aliso Creek (Creek) within the Laguna Woods Village residential community, located in Laguna Woods, California. The portion of the Creek maintained by the GRF extends from Moulton Parkway to the west, is bisected by the Avenida Sevilla crossing and terminates under Paseo de Valencia to the east.

The Creek and surrounding area are known to provide habitat for biologically sensitive resources including nesting birds, southwestern pond turtle (SWPT) (*Actinemys pallida*), native riparian plants, and protected waters. Specific biological surveys and monitoring efforts are required by the GRF's California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) number 1600-2013-0151-R5 (Amended August 2022), the Southwestern Pond Turtle Avoidance and Mitigation Plan for Laguna Woods (Endemic 2020), and the Herbicide Use Plan for Aliso Woods Park (Chambers Group 2022).

## Pre-Maintenance Site Conditions

Improvements in maintenance strategies and the use of herbicide in 2022 to reduce the dense monoculture thickets of plants such as non-native Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) and native southern cattail (*Typha domingensis*) from inhibiting water flow have substantially improved water quality, clarity, and flood control capacity within the Creek. There are no substantial patches of vegetation present within the center portions of the Creek. However, the presence of dense herbaceous weeds (primarily annual grass species) along the banks and within the sandbar areas were substantially greater than previous years (likely due to a very wet winter). Patches of Bermuda grass are re-growing within the banks and sandbar areas and may require a subsequent herbicide treatment in Summer. A substantial amount of trash and debris was also observed.

## Pre-Maintenance Monitoring

Prior to the start of maintenance or monitoring efforts Chambers Group submitted an E-mail notification to CDFW documenting the proposed pre-maintenance survey. On Friday April 21 and Monday April 24, a Chambers Group biologist surveyed all suitable nesting bird and SWPT habitat prior to the start of maintenance activities within and adjacent to the proposed maintenance areas. Although numerous birds were observed foraging and vocalizing within the general area, no nests were documented within the maintenance area. One SWPT was observed within the pond area of slower moving water northeast of Avenida Sevilla. Appropriate avoidance buffers were established, and crews were directed to avoid the area.

## Description of Maintenance Activities

Vegetation management and maintenance activities were performed April 24 through April 28, 2023. GRF Landscape crew size per day ranged from three to six. Tasks included the mechanical mowing and hand removal of undesirable vegetation primarily along the banks and sandbar areas of the Creek such as non-native burclover (*Medicago*



# Aliso Creek Compliance Monitoring-Spring 2023

Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Woods

# CHAMBERS GROUP

*polymorpha*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), Spanish sunflower (*Pulicaria paludosa*) and white sweet clover (*Melilotus alba*). The trunks of native trees such as willows (*Salix* spp.) were cleared of debris accumulation and their lower portions pruned to reduce future debris accumulation following subsequent precipitation events. Filamentous (hair) algae were thinned in areas where it was obstructing waterflow. Very limited trimming of southern cattails was required during this maintenance effort to enhance flow or promote habitat diversity. However, a substantial amount of trash was also removed from the Creek (See Attachment A, Site Photographs).

## Maintenance Monitoring

A Chambers Group biologist conducted daily permit compliance and biological monitoring during maintenance activities and verified maintenance staff were adhering to CDFW permit conditions and plans related to special status species avoidance and aquatic resource protections (e.g., nesting birds, SWPT, herbicide use protocols, Best Management Practices (BMPs), and native plant protections). Prior to the start of maintenance activities, Chambers Group led a brief worker awareness training to inform crews about specific permit requirements related to special status species avoidance and resource protections. No adverse impacts to native or otherwise protected nesting birds or SWPT occurred during the maintenance activities.

## Conclusions/Recommendations

In addition to water quality and flood control improvements, the selective reduction in Creek vegetation has improved habitat diversity and foraging opportunities for local wildlife. Continued removal of undesirable and non-native plant species is recommended to progress natural recruitment of native riparian plant species, provide foraging and nesting opportunities for wildlife, and to maintain water quality and flood control capacities.

Continued modifications to the maintenance approach and use of approved herbicides are anticipated to substantially reduce annual maintenance needs within the Creek over time. Chambers Group recommends a site inspection occur in late May or early June 2023 to evaluate potential vegetation management needs for Summer 2023. No additional maintenance activities are recommended in the interim.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (949) 331-2223 at [jkipper@chambersgroupinc.com](mailto:jkipper@chambersgroupinc.com) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter report.

Sincerely,





**CHAMBERS GROUP, INC.**



**Joanna Kipper**  
Biologist



Attachment A. Site Photographs April 2023

	
<p><b>Photograph 1a Before.</b> Taken April 2023 at the north end near the concrete crossing facing upstream. Substantial overgrowth of non-native annual weedy plants along the both banks and on the sandbar.</p>	<p><b>Photograph 1b After.</b> Non-native plants mechanically mowed and hand removed. Existing native plant were avoided. Base of willow tree (<i>Salix</i> spp.) trunks pruned.</p>
	
<p><b>Photograph 2a Before.</b> Taken April 2023 of facing downstream toward large herriage sycamore within Aliso Park.</p>	<p><b>Photograph 2b After.</b> Non-native plants mechanically mowed and hand removed from both banks and sandbar. Native plants were avoided.</p>





**Photograph 4a** Taken April 2023 of one of the larger ponded areas within Aliso Park. Substantial overgrowth of herbaceous vegetation.



**Photo 4b.** Non-native plants mechanically mowed and hand removed. Native plants were avoided. Three non-native red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) observed within the area of this pond.



**Photograph 5a Before** Taken April 2023. Substantial overgrowth of non-native annual weedy plants along the both banks and within the shallow and sandy portion of the Creek bed. Trash and debris build up along the willow trunks.

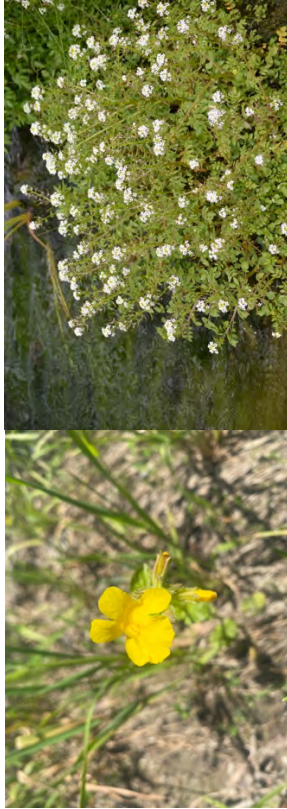


**Photo 5b After.** Non-native plants mechanically mowed and hand removed. Existing native plant were avoided. Base of willow tree (*Salix* spp.) trunks pruned and cleared of trash/debris. Algae removed from center channel to encourage flow.





**Photograph 6.** Taken April 2023. Filamentous (hair) algae is blooming throughout the creek. This is a natural occurrence, possibly enhanced by excess nutrients in the systems (i.e., nitrogen and phosphorus) from upstream inputs and wet winter. Crews removed algae from the center portions of the Creek that was hindering water flows. Bloom should dissipate overtime but should be monitored to verify water quality and flow is maintained.



**Photograph 8.** Native seep monkeyflower (*mimulus guttatus*) (left) and Watercress (*Nasturium officinale*)(right) observed growing in increasing abundance within the Creek.



**Photograph 7.** Non-native perennial plant called egg leaf spurge (*Euphorbia oblongata*) was observed growing along the north western banks of the creek. This invasive may be toxic to humans, is inedible to wildlife, and inhibits growth of surrounding plants. Crews removed this plant growing within 20 feet of the banks, but control within the community is recommended.



**Photograph 9.** Substantial quantities of trash pulled from vegetation within the creek. Much of which was tangled within native vegetation.