

2026 USMS Virtual Annual Meeting

2026 Southwest Zone Annual Committee Meeting

Welcome to the Southwest Zone Annual Meeting and Agenda. Southwest Zone includes Arizona, New Mexico, San Diego-Imperial and the Southern Pacific LMSCs. This committee meets annually at the USMS Convention. We conduct other business on an as needed basis during the year by email or phone calls.

Committee Members

Diana Dolan LaMar, Chair; Becky Cleavenger, Secretary for Meeting

Ken Brisbin, Southern Pacific LMSC Chair, Barbara Dunbar, San Diego-Imperial LMSC Chair, Barbara Sloan, Arizona LMSC Chair, Rebecca (Bex) Friedberg New Mexico LMSC Chair, Christie Ciraulo, Robin Smith, Alina DeArmas, Stephen Ingram, Anita Cole, Kelly Harrigan, Cory Nguyen, Jeff Commings, Marilyn Fink, Omar DeArmas, Emily Challis-Clark, Robert Mitchell, Fiona Duncan, Brandon Franklin

Ex-Officio: Ed Coates, USMS President Jeff Commings, USMS SW Zone Representative

The Southwest Zone Committee meets annually prior to the USMS Annual Meeting. Each LMSC Zone Chair provides an overview of the year and Zone Championship Meets and locations are determined for the upcoming year.

Discussions and Projects Since Last Annual Meeting

1. Diana Dolan LaMar was elected as the new Southwest Zone Chair. The next election will occur at the 2027 Annual Southwest Zone Meeting.
2. The LMSC Chairs met with Jeff Commings in July 2026 to obtain an updated USMS Board report. LMSC Chairs shared information with Jeff regarding LMSC updates and news.

Action Items

1. LMSC Zone Chairs were notified about utilizing Slack in lieu of email moving forward.

No other actions taken since the last annual meeting in 2025.

Agenda

1. 2026 LMSC recaps by LMSC Chairs
2. 2027 Zone Championship Meet locations for SCY, SCM, LCM, and Open Water
3. Other items as needed

USMS President Ed Coates joined and expressed his appreciation to all the Zone volunteers for all they are doing to support USMS' mission.

1) 2026 LMSC recaps

San Diego-Imperial LMSC Chair Update, Barbara Dunbar

Individual and club registrations: San Diego-Imperial LMSC club and individual registrations remain relatively stable. SI club numbers are identical to last year while individual memberships are slightly behind last year. We surmise that the reduction of individual numbers is due to the economic instability of the San Diego area and more importantly due to reduced pool hours and availability. An uptick in registrations is noted prior to local pool competitions but the uptick expected when Nationals are in the western region did not happen this year. For the near future, SI LMSC does not anticipate any great change in registration numbers.

Three sanctioned pool competitions were calendared for this year. The April SCY meet at UCSD was quite well attended by SI standards. Pool availability, timing system challenges, pool and meet management costs, and locating qualified individuals to run or help run meets remain as major issues for meet directors who run local meets. A sanctioned LCM meet is scheduled for Sept. 13 at UCSD, and a SCM meet is still being planned for early November or late October. Next year, SI LMSC hopes to schedule at least 3 one-day sanctioned meets (SCY, LCM, SCM) but pool availability is limited.

The ongoing San Diego City budget deficit problems have continued and worsened and resulted in massive cuts. Cuts have included San Diego City pool closures and reduction of operating hours, as well as some resulting oddball staffing hours that are not compatible with Masters workout times. Fewer lifeguards and rising costs have also impacted the situation.

The SI LMSC Financial operating reserves continue to dwindle due to decreased income received from the LMSC portion of USMS registrations and to a decrease in donations made to the LMSC. This will result in a reduction of LMSC subsidies for meet expenses, pool costs, and officials and a reduction of SI LMSC participation in USMS events. While the cost of living and consumer price index have both increased and are high in the San Diego region, the amount of registration funds received by LMSCs has not increased. For the near future, SI LMSC will continue to fully subsidize the annual club registration renewal fees for SI clubs (14) for as long as possible and will continue to subsidize local masters meets for as long as possible.

Noted issues and challenges include the following:

1. Problems reported to me include an inability to log in to personal "My USMS Accounts." I have first-hand experience with this complaint since I also periodically have problems logging in due ReCAPTCHA verification issues. The system gives an "error" message that states, "We couldn't verify that you're human. Please try again. This is highly annoying, can affect productivity, and impacts USMS website usage for volunteers and members. Clearing footprints and caches, updating browsers settings, etc. do not always solve the problem.
2. With regard to the "My USMS log in," another reported problem has been that the wrong first name appears at the top right corner of the swimmer's log-in page. Again, this has been verified by me and one other LMSC officer since it has happened to us as well.
3. Swimmer-initiated transfers remain confusing for some. Intra-LMSC transfers are difficult to document for the membership coordinator as there is no direct notification or apparent list. A member who transfers within the LMSC only appears in the "Members with Recent Activity" list which only shows the 20 most recent listings and includes all activity. How are transfers tracked?
4. Noted USMS sanction process glitches have been reported and remain unresolved. I have not initiated another sanction since my previous frustrating and failed attempt as I was denied access. The sanction process needs to be more user friendly with better instructions.

5. So far, I have received only one message from the new general LMSC Contact Form. Unfortunately, it was a junk/SPAM message.

6. I found the roll-out and transition to SLACK for communications to be confusing. It is not well-documented for those unfamiliar with the system.

7. As the membership coordinator for SI LMSC, my member communication concerns remain. LMSC email alias addresses are being fully discontinued by 2027. How do membership coordinators send mass emails from the registration system to all registered LMSC members without divulging their personal email addresses?

8. Thank all volunteers, particularly the behind-the-scenes individuals, for their efforts.

Arizona LMSC Chair Update, Barbara Sloan

Membership is down approximately 200 from 2025.

Clubs are growing with 2 new clubs coming on.

ALTS is growing

Grown Up Swimming is growing very fast, which may account for the decrease in USMS membership numbers.

The LMSC Board will discuss paying club registration fees.

Arizona LMSC is hosting the Zone SCM meet in November. Meet host will be Mesa Aquatics, which has a new owner.

The LMSC rewrote meet host requirements to be less onerous. They will request Board approval for subsidies to meet hosts that don't clear a prespecified dollar amount.

Arizona LMSC participated in Swim Across America this year, and shared that they have a nice relationship with Mayo.

The LMSC is endeavoring to find out what types of meets members are most interested in attending.

New Mexico LMSC Chair Update, Rebecca "Bex" Friedberg

Introduced Emily Challis Clark (annual meeting delegate) also on. the call. She is also the NM LMSC Treasurer.

Swim lane usage is UP.

Meet Attendance within NM/West Texas and outside of the NM LMSC is UP.

Open Water participation is UP.

of meets held within New Mexico and West Texas for Masters is UP.

We received a few USMS Annual Membership reimbursement requests for college club swimmers joining NM LMSC and continue to publicize this benefit through our newsletter e-mails.

We have had no complaints or protests.

We subsidize an amount of \$500 to clubs starting to host Masters meets. After traction has taken place and clubs are profitable (ie, make over their break-even comfortably) with their meet-hosting, we will consider sunsetting this benefit on a per-club basis.

Many Senior Olympics swimmers are becoming inspired to swim USMS events. Some even went to Nationals.

We continue to focus on perhaps hosting an open water zones event possibly at Abiquiu Lake, NM and BEX continues to cultivate interest and volunteerism in this endeavor. BEX attended an online Open Water event officials clinic and understands that a minimum of (12-) 16 volunteer roles will be needed.

When asked about LCM future Zones, mention of. the two natatoriums in El Paso and the new natatorium (3 years old) in Las Cruces was made. Both offer ease in flying to a local airport and a plethora of hospitality stay locations.

I will not be at RELAY. We will have two designees from West Texas and one from Albuquerque in attendance.

I require they write summaries of their experiences to accompany their Expense Reports so the NM LMSC can share their insights.

SPMS Chair Update, Ken Brisbin

SPMS has had another active year. We remain one of the larger LMSCs, with approximately 4,500 members we are down about 200 members from the previous year with 91 registered clubs.

Meets & Competition

Our competition calendar continues to be very active. For 2026, we have 21 sanctioned pool meets completed or scheduled:

- **9 SCY meets** — 7 completed and 2 pending
- **8 LCM meets**
- **4 SCM meets** — 1 completed and 3 pending
- **2 recognized meets**, both Senior Games
- **4 dual-sanctioned meets** — 3 completed and 1 pending
- We still have **5 pool meets remaining** in 2026

We continue to work with our meet hosts on ways SPMS can support their events and help make hosting meets financially sustainable by offering funds to meet hosts. Upon request, meet hosts may be eligible for \$500 subsidy per day (eg, a 2-day meet may be eligible for \$1000).

We also introduced Small, Medium and Large team divisions for our championship team awards. The goal is to give clubs of different sizes an opportunity to compete for team recognition.

Open Water

Open water continues to be an important part of our calendar. We continue looking for opportunities to support and grow open-water participation within SPMS.

- We have had 3 sanctioned open-water events
- 1 recognized/dual-sanctioned open-water event
- We have 1 additional open-water event remaining in 2026

Coaches & Programs

Our Coaches Chair continues working on ways to provide education and support directly to our coaches and clubs hosting a monthly coaches call and they are looking at additional coach education opportunities and stroke clinics and other regional programs for our members as we look into 2027.

Governance & Administration

We've continued reviewing and updating our Bylaws and Policies & Procedures and working through some of the organizational and administrative items for the LMSC.

We're also currently working on our contractor and volunteer positions for the next two-year terms, including the Newsletter Editor, Top Ten Recorder and Membership Coordinator.

We're also well into planning for our SPMS Annual Meeting on November 22. This year we're working with West Hollywood Aquatics, which has been very supportive in helping us put the event together.

We continue to build the Annual Meeting as more than simply a business meeting. We want to give members another reason to attend, learn something, connect with other SPMS members and then participate in the business of the LMSC. This year the clinic portion will have an Open Water focus, which fits well with our continued effort to grow and support open-water swimming within SPMS. We'll combine the clinic with our Annual Meeting, recognition of our volunteers and members, and an opportunity for our clubs and members to come together before we head into 2027.

Financial

Financially, SPMS remains in a strong position. We intentionally approved a deficit budget for 2026, allowing us to use some of our reserves to support our programs, events, and members. We are currently tracking within that approved budget. Our Finance Committee continues to play a significant role in reviewing our finances, monitoring the budget and reviewing proposed expenditures throughout the year.

We have 8 delegates for the USMS Annual Virtual Meeting, 10 SPMS member attending Relay, and 4 coaches attending NCC.

Communications

We continue working on our communications and website, particularly information related to meets, open water, records, Top Ten, fitness and other member programs. Our newsletter and other communication channels continue to help promote meets, clinics, open-water events and opportunities throughout SPMS.

Looking Ahead

Overall, SPMS is doing well and remains very active. As we move toward 2027, we'll continue focusing on supporting our clubs and meet hosts, maintaining a strong competition calendar, providing opportunities for our coaches and swimmers, and looking for ways to make our programs and events financially sustainable.

2) 2027 Zone Championship Meet locations for SCY, SCM, LCM, and Open Water

SCY Zone meet: Barbara Sloan will talk with the board about hosting a SCY Zone meet, possibly in Tucson.

LCM Zone meet: New Mexico LMSC mentioned that the two natatoriums in El Paso and the new natatorium (3 years old) in Las Cruces may be able to host in the future. Both offer ease in flying to a local airport and a plethora of hospitality stay locations. SPMS will host if no other LMSC can. Meet would be in Mission Viejo July 23-25 (SPMS championships meet).

SCM Zone meet: SPMS (Long Beach Grunions) to host.

Open Water Zone race: Bex indicated New Mexico LMSC potentially could host an open water zones event possibly at Abiquiu Lake, NM; Bex continues to cultivate interest and volunteerism in this endeavor.

3) Other items

Questions from LMSC Chairs:

- Barbara Dunbar asked how transfers within an LMSC is tracked, since the LMSC Membership Coordinator receives no notification. Robin Smith indicated that the USMS National Office has to monitor for the maximum number of transfers, as they are the only ones with access to the information. Diana Lamar shared Barbara's concern and noted a concern that monitoring needs to take place. Ken Brisbin said he would make sure that this is discussed at the USMS Board level.

- Barbara Dunbar also raised a question about the sanctions process, given her experience of not being able to complete a sanction. Robin Smith encouraged issues with the sanctions system be communicated to the National Office. She also recommend using the system when those on the East Coast are likely to be offline.
- Barbara Dunbar asked how Membership Coordinators will communicate to LMSC membership distribution lists when the email aliases are sunsetted, raising the concern that some may not want their personal email addresses known across the entire LMSC. Jeff Commings said the National Office is working on a new system, which is in beta testing and will rely on LMSCs to communicate what needs improvement.
- Kelly Harrigan asked about dual sanctions and what meet host subsidies cover, Robin will discuss SPMS experience with Kelly offline. Robert Mitchell offered to advise on meet manager concerns for dual sanctioned meets offline as well.

Jeff Commings, At-Large Director, is terming out of his position. Jeff indicated that he has enjoyed representing the Southwest Zone and thanked everyone for their great work. He indicated that the USMS board is pleased with the Zone's accomplishments.