

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
July 21, 2010
1:00-3:00 pm
at the Watershed Institute, CSUMB**

Attendees:

Marc Los Huertos (Watershed Institute)	Rob Johnson
Christina McKnew (Watershed Institute)	Sierra Ryan
Dipti Bhatnagar	Ken Ekelund
Horacio Amezcuita	Gary Rogers
Elizabeth Krafft	Bryan Largay
Brad Hagemann	Nathan Chaney (ESNERR)
Bridget Hoover	Michael Ricker
Bill Phillips	Donna Meyers
Dawn Mathes	Eric Tynan

Non-RWMG members:

Susan Robinson — IRWMP Project Coordinator
Ernie Taylor, DWR Regional Coordinator
Darlene Din, Salinas River Channel Coalition

Meeting Minutes:

Item #1: Project Review Update

The four Project Committees gave updates on the project review process.

Water Quality: The Water Quality subcommittee has 7 implementation projects and 7 concept proposals to review. Bridget reported that each member of the subcommittee has been assigned one implementation project and one concept proposal. They are still in the middle of the review process and expect to be finished by August 1st.

Flood/Watershed Management: Ken gave the report for this subcommittee. He began by noting some problems with the review sheet, which included categories unfamiliar to some of the reviewers (such as whether a project is consistent with the State's 20x2020 Plan); he suggested that the review sheet be revised in the future to be oriented more to the subject matter of the proposal. He also raised the question of whether we should expect the subcommittees to provide an overall assessment of each proposal (i.e., how much more time do we ask of these volunteer-experts?). Susan suggested that we should be satisfied with however much time the Project Committee volunteers are willing to give to the process. If they do not have additional time to meet with their subcommittee for an overall evaluation of each proposal, let's just say "thank you" and take it from there ourselves. We're fortunate to have had their input.

Ken pointed out that a full one-quarter of all 58 proposals submitted are focused in the same area: the lower Salinas watershed. Some of these proposals directly conflict with each other, and there is also significant overlap between proposals. How do we reconcile them? This is difficult stuff.

A great deal of discussion ensued. Darlene Din noted concerns by landowners, and the special circumstances of the Salinas River given private ownership and that the river flows underground. The RWMG discussed the possibilities of initiating a new planning process to work out the issues

(conflicts) in the lower Salinas region. Ken said it would be a big watershed study. We would have to take great care in setting this up. We would have to have a completely neutral facilitator; funds would have to come from a neutral source. Donna emphasized that this planning process would come out of the context of integrated regional water management planning, from this regional group. Darlene recommended “having a meeting to have a meeting.”

Between the lines: All seemed to acknowledge that if successful, the benefits of such a process would be absolutely immense, potentially resolving conflicts in the lower Salinas that have been ongoing for decades, and enabling the region to move forward in implementing much-needed projects. However, no one pretends it will be easy.

The RWMG decided to form a subcommittee to consider what to do in the short term about the projects submitted for the lower Salinas region, and how to approach this issue on a longer term basis (i.e., to propose a planning process). Some projects may be “non-controversial” and considered urgent; these should be pulled aside. Darlene pointed out that projects may have been in the works for many years, and part of the RDIPAC recommendations. Rob noted that the RDIPAC recommendations should be reviewed and considered, though he also noted that the document is now 10 years old.

There was debate about whether to bring all the project proponents together, or convene a group of other individuals to participate on the subcommittee. Questions were raised about the qualifications of certain project proponents. It was decided that a subcommittee of RWMG members would be formed for now. The following individuals volunteered to participate on the subcommittee: Sierra, Michael, Ken, Dawn, Donna, Bryan, and Rob. They will meet next week.

Water Supply: Rob gave the update for the Water Supply subcommittee. The subcommittee consists of just Rob, Brad, and Dana, and the three of them have 8 implementation proposals and 8 concept proposals to review. Thus far they have reviewed only the implementation proposals. Rob made mention of just how much money is needed for projects... The subcommittee struggled a bit with how projects met the goals and objectives. They will need to check back with project proponents to get clarity on some issues.

The subcommittee also had some questions about DACs (which communities were DACs, which weren't). Susan explained that DACs in our region were determined based on 2000 US Census data, and include communities with annual median household incomes (MHI) that are less than 80% of the statewide MHI, as well communities with American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, and/or Hispanic/Latino populations exceeding 50% of the total population. She noted that the RWMG had agreed on this definition for DACs early on in this process. Ernie Taylor also offered to send us a list of DACs from DWR.

Natural Resource Enhancement: Elizabeth gave the update for this subcommittee. Each person reviewed 3 proposals. Kevin will be putting together a summary of the review. Sierra raised the question of whether project proponents should be checking the “project benefit” boxes for the overall project, or just for the component of the project that grant funds are being requested for. No one quite knew the answer to this, though some seemed to think that benefits should be for the entire project. Ken suggested we look at the Guidelines. Dawn also suggested that we need guidance regarding match requirements so that applicants know what the standard is. Liz noted that match was sometimes listed in the project budgets as “TBD.” Donna pointed out that sometimes actual implementation is still far enough off that match simply isn't determined yet.

Susan asked the Project Committee members whether they would like to have a conversation to talk about these sorts of questions and work out any problems they have encountered in the course of the project review. It was agreed that Susan would send an email to the Project Committee RWMG members requesting a list of any problems/difficulties, and we'll go from there. It was also requested that Susan send guidance to the Integration Committee, for both integration and project ranking. She agreed to do so.

DAC Review: Horacio reviewed the Water Quality and Natural Resource Enhancement proposals for possible DAC impacts. He found two Water Quality projects that would positively affect DACs (Castroville Well 2B Treatment Project and San Jerardo Wastewater Project). He found no negative impacts from any project and noted the positive benefits of several of the Natural Resource Enhancement projects.

Dipti reviewed the Water Supply and Flood/Watershed Management implementation proposals (she has not gotten to the concept proposals yet). She found no harmful impacts from any of these proposals for DACs specifically. She wanted the RWMG to keep in mind that DACs don't just need clean water, etc., they also need access to open space, community spaces, etc. She also noted that there are communities within unincorporated Monterey County and within DACs that have more serious problems than others.

Native American Review: Susan received contacts for six Native American representatives for our region from the California Native American Heritage Commission. She has contacted all of them. Three so far have responded positively to participating in a review for potential Native American impacts.

[The original items on the agenda were moved around due to limited time left in the meeting...]

Item #2: Introduction to the Watershed Institute

Dr. Marc Los Huertos gave a brief overview of the staff and work conducted by the Watershed Institute and Return of the Natives at CSUMB. He gave an example of a project that the Watershed Institute conducted in the Pajaro River watershed, and expressed a willingness to partner with RWMG members and other project proponents on implementation projects in the region, particularly in regard to monitoring.

Item #3: Central Coast IRWM Regions Meeting July 23rd

Bill Phillips led a brief discussion about the upcoming "face-to-face" meeting of Central Coast IRWM regions on July 23rd. He noted that it was his intention to tell the Central Coast group that it is too early in the process for us to contribute information regarding projects that we wish to put forward for funding.

The RWMG briefly discussed the "principles" that had been sent by Rob Almy as a basis for the Central Coast regions working together and a strategy for applying for future IRWM grants. Susan emphasized the principle suggesting that regions that received Prop 50 funds would "step back" in the subsequent round to allow those regions that didn't receive Prop 50 funds to get funded. Bill summarized the history of the Central Coast IRWM regions' past efforts around Prop 50. Ken said he supports a possible reduction in our share, but if there is any chance we can get some funds for implementation, we should. Bill pointed out that this process is *very competitive*, and if want to put a project forward it had better be strong (i.e., high match, regional consensus, etc).

Ernie Taylor (DWR) informed the RWMG that Planning Grant proposals will probably be due in October, and Implementation Grant proposals will probably be due in January. He noted that project prioritization is key, and suggested we check out the process developed by the Upper Kings River group.

Item #4: Financial Support for Project Coordinator

The RWMG ran out of time in the meeting to discuss this agenda item. Donna will send an email to RWMG members regarding financial support for the Project Coordinator.

Item #5: Data Management

Sierra asked the RWMG members to please respond to the email sent by Bridget (and forwarded again by Sierra on July 21, 2010), regarding specific data management questions.

Item #6: Resource Management Strategies

The question of whether the resource management strategy “Water and Wastewater Treatment” should get omitted from the approved list of strategies will be addressed at next month’s RWMG meeting.

Next month’s meeting is scheduled for August 18th from 1:00 – 3:00 PM, tentatively at the MCWRA.