

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
October 20, 2010
1:00-3:00 pm
Conference Call**

Attendees:

Ken Ekelund
Bridget Hoover
Sierra Ryan
Dana Jacobson
Rob Johnson
Elizabeth Krafft
Horacio Amezcuita
Gary Rogers
Non-RWMG member: Susan Robinson — IRWMP Coordinator

Meeting Minutes:

1. Update on Central Coast IRWM Funding Strategy

Bridget gave an overview of the Central Coast IRWM Regions meeting that was held on October 8th. The discussion focused largely on Round 1 Implementation Grants and a Central Coast funding strategy for Prop 84 IRWM funds. The status for Round 1: SLO is still intending to request the maximum award amount available to the entire Central Coast region (\$5.77 million), Monterey Peninsula is intending to request a similar amount, Santa Barbara is intending to request around \$3 million, Pajaro and Greater Monterey County are undecided whether or not to apply, and Santa Cruz has decided not to apply.

Bridget asked the Central Coast group if we were therefore at an impasse, and they responded “no, not necessarily.” The participants discussed an offer from the Santa Barbara region: Santa Barbara will “give up” some of their total share of IRWM funds (and give it to SLO and Monterey Peninsula, who did not receive funding in Prop 50) in return for being able to submit an application in Round 1 for \$3 million. SLO, Monterey Peninsula, and Pajaro will all be meeting with their RWMGs shortly and will discuss that possibility.

Bridget also noted an interesting discussion that ensued about the cost/benefits of regional cooperation, namely, that the application process itself will be less expensive if we have a funding strategy in place, and a funding strategy will also provide confidence in the outcomes.

Regarding Planning Grants, SLO was the only region in the Central Coast Funding Area that did not apply. John Ricker (Santa Cruz) put forward a suggestion that the Central Coast regions submit a joint letter to DWR, requesting that all Planning Grant proposals be funded with reduced amounts (or perhaps limiting just those proposals that requested the full or close to full \$1 million amount). There was no clear response to this suggestion from the group. Finally, several regions have requested funds for data management; this will be a topic for discussion at the next Central Coast Regions meeting, scheduled for October 29th.

The discussion turned back to whether or not we should apply in Round 1. Ken feels very strongly that we should apply, and brought up the three projects thus far that have been “waiting” since Prop 50 and the FEP (namely, Elkhorn Slough, Castroville, and San Jerardo). Susan

reminded everyone that actually, 19 projects are potentially eligible to apply in Round 1, and therefore to be fair, we need a clear-cut process to decide which projects would get put forward for funding in Round 1, should we decide to apply at all. Bridget added that we should continue with the project ranking process, and based on the merits of the proposals, *that* will help us decide whether or not to apply in Round 1; it would also provide justification to the other Central Coast regions for our decision to apply. Elizabeth disagreed, claiming that project ranking doesn't need to be the basis for whether or not we apply. Bridget noted that "what we get now (in grants), we won't get later" but Ken disagreed, noting that "if we don't get it now, we won't necessarily get it later." He has less faith in the other regions' commitment to a long-term funding strategy, given that some of the regions seem to be non-negotiable in the amounts they are requesting even now, at the starting gate (Round 1). Ken made a motion for the RWMG to apply in Round 1, but there was no quorum so a vote could not take place. Also, Gary pointed out that the meeting notice and agenda didn't include a vote on this issue, so it wouldn't be fair to vote on it today. Susan agreed.

Susan suggested next steps: We "de-couple" the decision of whether or not to apply in Round 1 from the project ranking process, but let's move ahead quickly with the ranking so that if we *do* decide to apply, we have a fair basis for determining which projects to put forward. Susan noted that we should also contact the proponents of those 19 potentially eligible projects to see who would be both interested and ready to apply in Round 1; that should make things clearer. There ensued some discussion about the various projects that are potentially eligible. The City of Soledad has a project that is eligible for Round 1, but Rob and Elizabeth noted that they won't realistically be ready to apply in Round 1: the MCWRA is working with them currently on "phase I" of the proposed project (through Prop 50 funds) and there have been some delays and difficulties, so they probably won't be ready for "phase II."

2. Update on Project Review Process: Integration

Ken gave an update on the integration process. There had been a special meeting last week at Moss Landing Marine Labs of proponents for projects located in the lower Salinas watershed, Elkhorn Slough, Moss Landing area. They discussed how to integrate these projects and how integrating them might affect project ranking. It was noted that some of these projects *should* be integrated, but what is actually needed is a much larger watershed process to determine how all of the projects fit in—and so the group decided to wait for the Water Project Reconciliation Process, which will hopefully come to fruition through Planning Grant funds. It did make sense to integrate certain other projects now, though, and those ideas were discussed with the project proponents at the meeting. It is now up to the project proponents to integrate or not; they have until the end of the month to come back to the RWMG with a new project description that combines their projects or project elements, and that in theory should show increased benefits.

Ken noted that the Integration Committee decided to rank both the original projects (as originally submitted for consideration in the IRWMP) *and* the new integrated projects; this way we can see their benefits side by side. Therefore, there is no need to wait on the new projects; we can begin ranking all projects now. The meeting concluded, but those who were also members of the Integration Committee stayed on the conference call to discuss how to get started on project ranking.

Next month's meeting is scheduled for November 17th from 1:00 – 3:00 PM at the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board Room in Salinas.