

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
January 19, 2011
1:00 - 3:00 pm
Big Sur Land Trust Office, Monterey, CA**

RWVG Attendees:

Donna Meyers
Gary Rogers
Ken Ekelund
Bridget Hoover
Paul Robins
Sierra Ryan
Kevin O'Connor
Brad Hagemann
Dana Jacobson
Bill Phillips
Rob Johnson
Elizabeth Krafft
Horacio Amezcuita
Dipti Bhatnagar
Ross Clark

Non-RWVG Attendees:

Susan Robinson — IRWVG Coordinator

Meeting Minutes:

1. Implementation Grant Proposal Update

Prior to the meeting, Susan had emailed the Regional Water Management Group (RWVG) members a summary table of the seven projects that were submitted for Implementation Grant funds. She gave a brief overview of the grant proposal and the submission process.

Donna asked, given our experience with this Implementation Grant solicitation and in particular, with the economic analysis requirements, whether it still makes sense to hire an economic analyst to develop an “economic feasibility tool” as we requested to do through Planning Grant funds. We may want to consider revising that request or diverting those funds to a different task. There was general agreement that the economic analysis requirements as part of this first round were (fill in the blank) frustrating, difficult, and some suggested, not all that meaningful. Given the current economic analysis requirements, will an “economic feasibility tool” actually prove useful?

Ken noted that the CSUMB professor who had originally been contacted to help project proponents conduct the economic analysis for the Implementation Grant proposal, but who was unable to help because of time constraints, might provide more help in future rounds than would a consultant (from an economic consulting firm, as proposed in the Planning Grant), and would likely be less expensive. Ken suggested we might keep that person in mind, and others agreed.

Bill suggested we wait and see what the State decides to do about the economic analysis requirements. He noted that DWR has had a hard time with this, and there may well be changes for the next round in terms of what they require and/or what they expect from project proponents

for the economic analysis. Dipti said she (and others) had met with Tracie Billington to discuss assistance for DACs, and emphasized to DWR that the economic analyses were difficult not only for DACs but for everyone. In that conversation Dipti sensed acknowledgement on the part of DWR that they had “dropped the ball” in terms of getting assistance to DACs for the economic analysis requirements.

Susan suggested we bring this up at a Roundtable of Regions meeting, and perhaps craft a unified letter to DWR describing our problems with these requirements. Bill suggested we begin with our Funding Area. Susan agreed to get that conversation started with the other regions. The goal is to draft a letter from all six Central Coast regions and send it to Michelle Dooley and Joe Yun.

Donna reiterated that we need to revisit our Planning Grant request, and perhaps consider hiring someone (university professor or consultant) to gather cost/benefit information upfront for *every* project in the IRWM Plan, not just for projects during grant solicitations. Bill once again suggested that we wait to see what unfolds with DWR.

[Later in the meeting, Bill summarized for everyone the budget amount requests for each of the regions in the Central Coast funding area for the Implementation Grant. The total amount available to the Central Coast Funding Area is \$11,555,556. Proposals were submitted from four of the six Central Coast regions for the following amounts:

Greater Monterey County: \$4,868,441
Monterey Peninsula: \$6,127,286
San Luis Obispo: \$11,555,556
Santa Barbara: \$3,000,996

The list of all proposals from throughout the State submitted to DWR for Implementation Grant funds is posted on DWR’s website:
http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/docs/ImplementationGrants/Prop84_Round1/ApplicationSubmittalList.pdf]

2. Ranked Project List Discussion

Susan reminded everyone that the RWMG had discussed the ranked project list at length during the November RWMG meeting and, despite some questions about the resulting ordering of projects, the Group was generally satisfied with the ranked list at that time and decided it was ready for public review. The 30-day public comment period ended December 22, 2010; no comments were received. Because we received no comments from the public, and because the RWMG seemed generally satisfied with the ranked project list during the November RWMG meeting, and because having an officially approved project list would have been beneficial for the purposes of the Implementation Grant proposal, Susan emailed the RWMG in late December requesting an electronic vote to approve the ranked project list for inclusion in the IRWM Plan. There was a quorum, and the vote was in favor of accepting the project list; however, two RWMG members requested that we defer the vote to allow more time for discussion and to allow time for the MCWRA Board of Directors to consider the list, and Susan agreed.

Gary voiced his main concern, which had also been brought up during the November RWMG meeting, regarding a discrepancy between two recycled water projects (Marina Coast Water District’s Regional Urban Water Augmentation Project [RUWAP] and the City of Soledad’s Recycled Water Project) in terms of the points they received for objectives. Gary noted that similar projects should presumably receive similar scoring in terms of objectives. He noted that there may well be good reasons for these discrepancies—he was not intimately familiar with the

Soledad project—but he was interested in understanding why.

Much discussion ensued regarding how these discrepancies occurred, and what we should do about it. Bill noted that we have learned a lot through the course of the project ranking process, and we should make improvements as we go (i.e., for next time). Ken agreed, and emphasized that we need to revisit goals and objectives specifically in terms of how projects get scored (regarding the inconsistent number of objectives under each goal category, leading to certain types of projects “automatically” getting more points). Susan reminded everyone that we will in fact be revisiting and prioritizing the goals and objectives soon, as part of the Planning Grant.

Bridget thought there was actually quite a bit of consistency between reviewers in the scoring of projects, generally. Bill pointed out that some project proponents were more “conservative” in checking boxes for objectives. Susan asked if we should ask the Project Committees to re-do just the objectives section for each project, and then re-rank the projects. Bill and Ken both said let’s not revisit the scoring now (with general agreement from the Group), particularly since we will be revisiting goals and objectives with the Planning Grant shortly. We can make changes with the next “round” of projects. Susan pointed out that the ranking of these projects is somewhat moot now anyway, since the Round 1 Implementation Grant solicitation has just passed and we will probably have a whole new project list and a new improved project ranking system in place before Round 2, anyway (noting that the IRWM grant solicitations are the main reason for ranking projects in the first place).

Regarding whether the RWMG needs to formally vote to approve the ranked project list, Bill said he thought we agreed to accept this list of projects by virtue of submitting it as part of the Implementation Grant proposal. Susan said she’d feel more comfortable if there was an official vote. Others agreed there should be a vote. Donna suggested that we don’t call it the “final project list” but the “first round” project list for the Plan; there was general support for that. Ross suggested we get a report on why those two projects in particular had such discrepant scores; we can learn from that and perhaps provide feedback to project proponents in future rounds on how to score better (i.e., to achieve more consistency in the checking of boxes by the project proponents). Dana, Rob, and Gary agreed to look into the two projects; they will report back to the Group.

The RWMG will plan to vote on the ranked project list at the March RWMG meeting, which should also give the MCWRA Board of Directors ample time to consider the issue.

3. Planning Grant

Prior to the meeting, Susan had emailed the RWMG the basic list of Planning Grant tasks (and who is responsible for each task) along with comments from the RWQCB. Though our region has been recommended Planning Grant funding for the full requested amount (\$775,264), final awards have not yet been announced. The final awards announcement is expected within the next few weeks. The official “award date” was January 17, 2011 and there was some discussion of whether this means we will get reimbursed for work performed as of that date or, as Elizabeth suggested from Prop 50 experience, whether the work performed between the award date and the signing of the grant agreement will not get reimbursed, but can be considered match toward the grant. Susan will double-check this with Michelle Dooley.

Regarding RWQCB comments, Ken recommended that we get a person from the Planning Department directly involved in this process, because, for example, only Planning has jurisdiction over LID requirements; water resource managers do not. Bill added that we need to also engage

the Building Inspection folks. We need to look at how the General Plan deals with this. The first step is to canvas what is actually going on.

Katie McNeill from the RWQCB underscored two of the RWQCB comments in particular: not enough emphasis on steelhead, and lack of Salt and Nutrient Planning as part of the Planning Grant. Ken said she raised a good point re: steelhead; let's not drop the ball on that. Bill reminded everyone, however, that we did receive about \$1M for steelhead through Prop 50. In regards to Salt and Nutrient Planning, several folks noted that we did not include that as part of the Planning Grant because we were not *required* to do so by DWR, and that we needed to focus on getting the IRWM Plan itself developed.

Regarding who should be responsible for leading the Water Project Reconciliation effort (Task 8), the RWMG decided that no one organization but rather a subcommittee should lead this effort (including hiring and working with a consultant). The subcommittee is:

Kevin/Sierra – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Rob – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Paul – RCD
Donna – Big Sur Land Trust

They will also invite Dawn from the Ag Commissioner's Office to join the subcommittee (Dawn was not present at the meeting).

Finally, regarding Task 9-Economic Feasibility Analysis, the RWMG decided to put this on hold (in terms of who should lead this effort) until we hear more from DWR regarding future requirements for economic analysis.

Donna said she heard that, given the State's financial crisis, there may no new IRWM grant solicitations until after 2012, as the State will not be considering selling any new bonds until after 2012.

4. Proposition 1E Grant

Susan reminded everyone about the upcoming Prop 1E Grant (deadline April 15th) and asked if anyone had a project they wanted to apply for these grant funds. No one did, nor knew of a project in our region that would appropriate at this time.

Next month's meeting is scheduled for February 16th from 1:00 – 3:00 PM, at the Monterey County Water Resources Agency in Salinas.