

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
March 16, 2011
1:00 - 3:00 PM
Moss Landing Marine Labs, Moss Landing, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Sierra Ryan
Kevin O'Connor
Michael Ricker
Horacio Amezcuita
Ken Ekelund
Dawn Mathes
Paul Robins
Dana Jacobson
Rob Johnson
Ross Clark
Brian True (Marina Coast Water District, sitting in for Gary Rogers)
Donna Meyers

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson — IRWMP Coordinator

Meeting Minutes:

1. Ranked Project List

Susan noted that the ranked list of projects had been discussed at length during the past few RWMG meetings, but at the last meeting (January 19, 2011) the Group decided to put off voting on whether or not to officially accept the project list for two reasons: 1) Gary Rogers requested that we look into the reasons for the discrepancy in points between two similar projects on the list (i.e., RUWAP and the City of Soledad Recycling Project); and 2) Rob Johnson requested additional time for the MCWRA Board of Directors to consider the project list.

The discrepancy between the two projects was reviewed by Gary, Rob, and Dana following the January meeting, and their email comments were forwarded to the RWMG prior to today's meeting. Susan summarized their main findings:

- Points for disadvantaged communities (DACs) are awarded in both "objectives" and in "program preferences" – are we double-counting? Are we giving *too* much weight to DACs?
- There is a potential problem with subjectivity/applicant differences in checking check boxes for "objectives" (the more objectives checked, the more points a project is awarded).

Some discussion ensued. Ken remarked that we need to revisit goals and objectives and make some changes there (i.e., which will affect project ranking), but overall, he was impressed by how well the project ranking system worked. Horacio asked, What about Granite Ridge? (There had been considerable concern at the January meeting that Granite Ridge was ranked too low.) Ken responded that there were two problems with Granite Ridge in terms of project ranking: 1) the project benefits are limited in scope, and 2) it's not a DAC. We are somewhat constrained by the program preferences of Prop 84, which aim to fund projects with *multiple benefits* (and give preference to DACs). He noted (harking back to the discussion at the January RWMG meeting)

that when we revisit the project ranking system, perhaps we can add a criterion for “need” (in this case, for drinking water/public health). Others agreed. Rob added, keep in mind that it’s just good to have these projects listed in the IRWMP. There are other grant programs besides IRWM which could fund these projects (and having the projects included in the IRWMP gives them visibility and added credibility).

Rob reported that he presented the ranked project list to the MCWRA Board of Directors, emphasizing to the Board members that the list is dynamic and will continue to change with each new project solicitation. With that caveat, the Board was OK with the current project list.

Ken made the motion to vote to officially accept the list for inclusion in the IRWMP. All present (in the room and on the phone) voted in favor of accepting the ranked project list; there were none opposed and no abstentions. Susan noted that both Gary Rogers and Bryan Largay, who were unable to attend the meeting, had emailed in advance of the meeting with votes in favor (Gary with the caveat that the project ranking system will get re-considered and “issues” addressed).

Finally, Susan brought up Bryan’s suggestion (via email) that we do more to stratify our projects into different tiers based on their planning status. She noted that we did plan to organize projects into “readiness-to-proceed” groupings following the overall ranking. Did we want to do that now, or wait until the next IRWM Grant Program solicitation? The Group decided that it would make more sense to organize the projects into readiness-to-proceed categories later, either before the next IRWM Grant Program solicitation and/or shortly before the IRWMP is ready for print, since project readiness will change considerably between now and then.

Ken asked Susan about the expected timing for completing the IRWMP. Susan explained that our goal is to complete the Plan within a year. She noted that this timeframe may be a bit optimistic, particularly given the time needed for public review/comment and for agency approvals, but that is our goal. She also noted that we only *need* to complete the Plan in advance of the next IRWM Grant solicitation, which we anticipate to be quite a bit longer than a year from now. She also noted that the IRWM Planning Grant guidelines require that we complete the Plan within two years of signing the grant contract. [NOTE: This was in error: The Implementation Grant guidelines, not the Planning Grant guidelines, require the IRWMP to meet the Prop 84 IRWM Plan standards within two years of the execution date of the grant agreement. In that case, we will have two years to complete and approve the Plan from the time the Implementation Grant contract is signed, assuming that grant is awarded.] Ken stressed the need to leave ample time for the agencies’ review of the IRWMP – e.g., months, not weeks.

2. Proposed Meeting with John Laird

Ken initiated a discussion about the possibility of setting up a meeting with John Laird, the new Secretary for Natural Resources, to talk about improving the water/watershed grant process. Ken emphasized that he was not suggesting that the RWMG meet with John Laird as a group, but was inviting any RWMG members interested to participate as individuals. But he did want feedback from the RWMG in terms of what issues to bring up. Several RWMG members expressed interest in participating.

Donna said rumor has it that there will be a new head at DWR soon. She asked Susan if she knew how the Roundtable of Regions survey, which requested feedback from all of the different IRWM regions throughout the state regarding the Prop 84 grant application process, would be presented to DWR. Susan noted that a Roundtable meeting is being scheduled for the first week in April; we will learn more about the survey results and process for presenting the results to DWR then. Donna expressed her frustration with the IRWM grant application process. Several others joined

in, pointing out specifically the Bond Management System (requiring digital upload of the completed application), the economic analysis, and the overall onerousness of the application. Someone noted that the original intention was for grant funds to go to the local level, but the legislative bonds have created a huge bureaucracy that folks on the local level aren't set up to deal with. Someone else remarked that the State regulating agencies do not understand how local governments work.

The discussion came back around to the meeting with John Laird: We should ask him to consider how to make some of these grant programs easier to navigate and more accessible to local organizations and agencies. Donna added, we can't just come with complaints, we need to have solutions, what we can do to help him. Ross emphasized the need also to recognize the positives and overall value of the IRWM planning process – integrating projects, bringing people together – and all agreed. But Donna reiterated: administratively the system has problems. She added, the key is to stay ahead of the 2012 bonds, make sure the bond language doesn't contain such burdensome requirements.

3. Re-Convening the Goals and Objectives Subcommittee

Susan recognized the outstanding work of the original Goals and Objectives Subcommittee in identifying goals and objectives for the region last year. However, since that time the new Prop 84 Guidelines were released, adding the requirement that objectives be *measurable*, and strongly recommending that they be *prioritized*. Hence the need to revisit goals and objectives. Susan asked for volunteers to take on that task. The following RWMG members agreed to participate on a new Goals and Objectives Subcommittee:

Michael
Rob
Horacio
Bryan
Dawn
Kevin

Gary Rogers was volunteered by his MCWD colleague Brian True, and has been added to the subcommittee on condition of his consent.

4. Other Business

Bryan Largay, who was not present at the meeting because of a conflict with another meeting regularly scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month, had emailed prior to today's meeting asking the Group whether the third Wednesday was still the best meeting date. This was discussed. The Group kicked around several different days, but different people had problems with each of the alternatives. In the end it was decided to keep the original day – third Wednesday of every month – but to change the start time from 1:00PM to 1:30PM. The new meeting time will therefore be 1:30PM – 3:30PM.

Susan noted that the Planning Grant will be discussed at next month's RWMG meeting. Bridget (who was unable to attend today's meeting) will provide an update at that time on the status of the contract between the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation (lead agency) and DWR, and will discuss Planning Grant task details.

Next month's meeting is scheduled for April 20th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, at the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Monterey.