

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
November 16, 2011
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Salinas, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Rob Johnson
Bridget Hoover
Dana Jacobson
Ken Ekelund
Horacio Amezcuita
Michele Lanctot
Sierra Ryan
Kevin O'Connor
Donna Meyers
Bryan Largay
Paul Robins
Dawn Mathes
Tamara Doan
Karen McBride
Brad Hagemann

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson – IRWMP Coordinator
Monica Reis – Department of Water Resources (DWR)
David Hart – MCWRA Board Chair

Meeting Minutes:

1. Planning Grant Round 1: Bridget began with a brief update on the Planning Grant, and asked that everyone please submit their letters documenting match no later than Friday, November 25th. Bridget provided a template for the letters and a table was created by Susan that breaks down the contribution for each organization that committed match. It is very important to get these letters submitted with the first invoice to document the match, so that we can begin to get reimbursed by DWR. Contact Bridget if you have any questions.

2. Planning Grant Round 2: Susan reminded everyone that the Draft PSP for Round 2 (the final round) of the Planning Grant is currently out, with the final PSP expected to be released by the end of this month, applications due in January or February, and final awards expected in June 2012. We received \$755,264 in the first Planning Grant round so we can apply for up to \$244,736 in this last round. Susan had sent the RWMG a list of suggestions prior to the meeting for possible Planning Grant tasks in Round 2. She reviewed the suggestions one by one:

- **Increased outreach to DACs:** This can include specific outreach and engagement activities, maybe additional support to help with developing/writing proposals. Susan noted that about 24% of Planning Grant funds in Round 2 must be used to support proposals that facilitate and support the participation of DACs in IRWM planning. Increased outreach to DACs was included as a task in our first Planning Grant proposal, and everyone seemed to agree that it should continue to be included in our second Planning Grant.
- **Effectively integrate water management with land use planning:** The Group opposed including this as a task. However, the discussion about land use planning resulted in a new idea for the Planning Grant proposal: that we investigate local vs. State policy, focusing on County ordinances that may be getting in

the way of the IRWM Region's water resource management goals. Ken cited as an example the County's prohibition of grey water use, with Donna noting that the State had passed that legislation and that the City of Santa Cruz has just passed an ordinance allowing the use of grey water. Tamara noted that ABAG (Association of San Francisco Bay Area Governments) conducted a similar study; she will try to locate that study.

- **Stormwater Resource Plans:** The suggestion was to include actions designed to integrate the stormwater resource plan requirements specified in CWC §10562 into the IRWMP (this is a "Program Preference" for the Planning Grant in Round 2). Bridget said this is going to be challenging because there is a statewide draft general permit under review currently for all Phase II MS4s. We should include reference to the new City of Salinas, Phase I permit when it is adopted by the Central Coast Water Board. In addition, we should include outcomes from the Joint Effort Review Team (JERT) for LID and Hydromodification Control (which is also being led by the Regional Water Quality Control Board). This should be completed in early 2012.
- **Assessment of environmental water needs:** Several RWMG members felt that conducting an assessment of environmental water needs was too big a task for the funds available, and that since environmental water data tends to get collected in a regulatory environment (through permits, etc.), we could easily get ourselves into a sticky situation. Ken commented, "We want to keep this IRWMP process non-regulatory." Susan reminded everyone that the IRWMP is intended to be a planning tool for water resource use in our region for at least the next 20 years, and it should take into consideration not only urban and agricultural water needs, but environmental water needs as well. Since very little data seems to exist for environmental water needs at present, Susan is concerned that these needs may get overlooked. The Group acknowledged that as a legitimate concern. Donna suggested perhaps rather than conduct an analysis or assessment, we simply gather existing information and see what we've got, and then define the data gaps (Rob added, maybe in this grant we "ask questions" and in the next grant we "do something"). Michele suggested this is something that students could potentially do. For the Planning Grant, Donna suggested that we include a financing component (for conducting future analysis).
- **Enhanced integration of flood management issues into the IRWMP:** Several members agreed that more needs to be done in this area. Donna pointed out the work being conducted and proposed, for example, on the Carmel River floodplain (and included in the Monterey Peninsula IRWMP). However, there was no strong momentum from the Group behind including this as part of the Round 2 Planning Grant.
- **Integrated Watershed Restoration Program:** The IWRP for Monterey County, which focuses on watershed restoration projects, is modeled after the IWRP pioneered in Santa Cruz County that was developed by the RCD of Santa Cruz County, the Coastal Conservancy, DFG, the County and City of Santa Cruz, and the Coastal Watershed Council. The question was raised whether the IWRP for Monterey County could be integrated into the Greater Monterey County IRWM planning effort, as has been done in Santa Cruz. Paul explained that what typically happens in Santa Cruz is that the planning and permitting components of projects get funded through IWRP, and then implementation gets funded through the IRWM Program. Bridget noted that the reverse process could work for us: We identify concept proposals that need planning, design, and permitting funds, get them funded through IWRP, and then enable them to become implementation projects that are eligible for IRWM funding. Susan added that we *do* need a process for bringing concept proposals in our IRWMP to implementation, and perhaps this could be part of that process. But Donna commented that the Big Sur Land Trust and Coastlands tried to do exactly that with the Post Creek project; they tried to get IWRP funds for feasibility analysis, etc., but were unable to. She noted that the standards set for IWRP in Santa Cruz are high, and are less applicable in Monterey County. Paul agreed that we do not have the preponderance of fish-friendly projects in Monterey County, which has made the IWRP such a success in Santa Cruz County. Donna suggested maybe rather than Coastal Conservancy funds, we go after Farm Bill funds, which would be more relevant to our region. She added, perhaps this is something for the Funding Committee to investigate and to include as part of

the Finance Chapter in the IRWMP, rather than a Planning Grant task.

- **Expanding water conservation practices:** The suggestion was that we could use Planning Grant funds to come up with a region-wide plan to expand water conservation practices for both urban and agricultural water uses. After a short discussion, the Group concluded that perhaps we could tie this in with the earlier suggestion to examine local ordinances that potentially get in the way of (or promote) the IRWMP water resource management goals, as a “first step.”
- **FireScope Monterey:** Ken briefly described the FireScope Monterey program, which Butch Kronlund is co-leading, and noted that the FireScope Monterey coverage area syncs nicely with our IRWM planning region. Donna pointed out that so much of the water supply in Big Sur is reservoir and small water systems, which are all very susceptible to impacts of fire. Bridget was unsure what the “product” of the FireScope Monterey program was intended to be. Ken responded that there are no deadlines or products per se, but it is more like a community conversation, with the outcomes of that conversation intended to get incorporated into existing plans. Ken said we need to put more emphasis in the IRWMP on fire. Donna added, “As Butch says, the two issues in Big Sur are fire and water.” Rob says perhaps we *present* it that way in the IRWMP. The conclusion was that we need to talk with Butch, Jeff Kwasny, and Sherry Tune (who are leading this effort), and ask them how we can help them.
- **IRWMP Coordination:** This suggestion was to include funds for Susan to continue coordinating the IRWM planning process while incorporating new and updated elements into the IRWMP. Bridget emphasized that besides any new work we may do in the second Planning Grant round, we will also need to incorporate all of the outcomes from the first Planning Grant round into the IRWMP. The Group showed support for this task.
- **Climate change evaluation of water management systems in our region:** Susan raised the question, could we do this as an interregional application, expanding our existing climate change chapter to cover a Central Coast region-wide climate change analysis? Ross, who is working on climate change issues in our region and is drafting the climate change chapter for the IRWMP, was very enthusiastic about this idea. Ross said he is already working with Santa Cruz County on climate change data, he is hoping to get the Monterey Peninsula region involved, and he could easily see expanding south to the other Central Coast regions. Monica informed the Group that none of the interregional funds were used from Round 1, which means that up to \$1 million may be available in Round 2 for interregional projects. Donna wondered whether the State might be providing other sources of funds besides IRWM grant funds for climate change analysis/projects. There seemed to be general agreement that submitting an interregional application for climate change evaluation would be a good idea. It would entail a separate application, however, and we would need to figure out who would be responsible for writing the proposal. Next step: Bridget will contact the other Central Coast IRWM regions to gauge their interest.
- **Food Safety:** Kevin brought up an additional Planning Grant idea. The suggestion was to include in the IRWMP a discussion about food safety and water quality, seeing as it is such an important issue in our region. The task would involve gathering and summarizing existing information, and bringing existing ideas forward as implementation projects in the IRWMP. Bridget will check with Lisa Lurie, MBNMS Ag Water Quality Coordinator. She leads a Central Coast Food Safety Network, to determine if there are needs IRWMP can help with.

3. Convene Draft IRWMP Review Committee: Susan asked for volunteers to participate on the Draft IRWMP Review Committee. This subcommittee will review the draft plan and make suggestions for corrections or improvements before the draft goes out to the rest of the RWMG and to the public. Several RWMG members volunteered for the committee: Rob, Kevin, Tamara, Paul, Dana, Bridget, and Michele. Susan will send another email to the rest of the RWMG asking for more volunteers – the more eyes, the better!

4. RWMG Roundtable: Three RWMG members agreed to present and discuss their projects and goings-on with

the rest of the RWMG at this month's meeting:

Paul Robins, RCD of Monterey County: The RCD has submitted three implementation projects for inclusion in the IRWMP. The first is to fund irrigation and nutrient management evaluations for farmers. Paul explained that the RCD used to have a winter irrigation and nutrient management program for Hispanic farmers in North County for hillside farming. They're hoping to bring in a bi-lingual staff to re-start this program, focusing this time on water, nutrient, and sediment management. The second project is to provide outreach to livestock owners and operators, managing manure and sediment. They will focus in the lower Salinas River watershed and other small watersheds, which have numerous TMDLs. They are working currently with the Central Coast Cattleman's Leadership Group, figuring out how to proceed. The third project involves eradicating noxious weeds in the Salinas River watershed. The arundo infestation in the Salinas River watershed is the second largest infestation in the country and the largest untreated infestation in the US. They are currently going through the permitting process for this project. In addition, the RCD currently conducts a rural roads assistance erosion control program, and is working on small streams programs through the IWRP. They also have a professional services agreement with the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office for weed management support and erosion control to help landowners proactively comply with regulations.

Sierra Ryan, Central Coast Wetlands Group: Sierra provided a brief overview of CCWG's recent work and proposed projects (also described in their fall newsletter). CCWG was granted funding from the EPA to study California river mouth lagoons, and has completed the first draft of their CRAM (California Rapid Assessment Method) module for these systems, testing 17 lagoons on the Central Coast and with a plan to visit an additional 20-25 sites along the entire California coast. CCWG has partnered with the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History on an exhibit entitled *Coastal Lagoons: A Closer Look through Art, History and Science*. The exhibit includes art, historical analysis, and CRAM results for seven lagoons from Pescadero to Garrapata. Sierra encouraged everyone to visit the exhibit, which will run through February 2012. CCWG staff spent the summer assisting the USEPA in conducting the field data collection portion of the National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA) in California. The field work was intense; it took four staff members all over the state, visiting 43 sites over a five month period, with each site taking a full day to assess. In addition, CCWG represents the Central Coast region at the meetings of the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup, trying to ensure funds are allocated for the Central Coast. CCWG submitted six project proposals for inclusion in the IRWMP (see the project summary list for a description of these projects), and is currently working on two implementation projects funded through Round 1 Prop 84 IRWM Implementation Grant funds, one in Tembladero Slough and the other (with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary) in the Santa Rita Creek watershed.

Rob Johnson, Monterey County Water Resources Agency: In the few minutes remaining of the meeting, Rob gave a quick synopsis of the MCWRA projects. The MCWRA updated their projects from last year for inclusion in the IRWMP (see the project summary list), adding one new project to drill 12 monitoring wells for groundwater water quality monitoring. He said they are also looking for interregional opportunities, including construction of a tunnel between the San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs, and an aquatic invasive species vehicle inspection program. He said the infestation of quagga and zebra mussels in southern California is a big problem, and a vehicle inspection program on MCWRA-owned lakes would help prevent the spread of these invasive species while still allowing recreational boating on the lakes. In addition, Rob participates on the Paso Robles Groundwater Management Plan Steering Committee. More than 33% of the Paso Robles groundwater basin lies within Monterey County. The committee is discussing possible options for the basin.

5. Other Business. There was no other business.

Next month's RWMG meeting is scheduled for December 21st from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, location TBD.