

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
January 18, 2012
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Moss Landing Marine Labs, Moss Landing, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Sierra Ryan
Donna Meyers
Bridget Hoover
Dana Jacobson
Ken Ekelund
Horacio Amezcuita
Rob Johnson
Michele Lancot
Paul Robins
Kathy Thomasberg
Dawn Mathes
Karen McBride

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson – IRWMP Coordinator
Hector Hernandez – Central Coast RWQCB

Meeting Minutes:

1. Funding Committee: Donna led a discussion on behalf of the Funding Committee about securing long-term, ongoing funding for the IRWM Plan and planning effort. She explained that the Prop 84 IRWM Program Guidelines require us to include a discussion in the Plan about how the RWMG intends to fund the long-term IRWM planning effort. The Funding Committee figures that after the initial IRWM Plan is completed, ongoing IRWM planning and “maintenance” for the Plan will most likely entail:

- about four RWMG meetings a year
- project solicitations for the IRWM Plan, which would probably occur about every 18 months
- ongoing subcommittee work associated with the project solicitations, which may add another four meetings a year
- and Susan added: a Plan Performance Evaluation Report, which would occur annually or bi-annually

The budget for ongoing IRWM planning and IRWM Plan maintenance would probably be on the order of \$30K-\$40K. Donna noted that the Funding Committee is sensitive to the fact that our RWMG includes a lot of non-profits, and public agencies that are over-burdened. We *don't* want to get into a “pay to play” situation. The Funding Committee suggests a sliding scale, entities pay what they can. Donna asked the RWMG to start thinking, from this meeting onward, about requesting funds from their organizations on an annual basis to help support the ongoing IRWM planning effort. The Funding Committee proposes that everyone begin setting aside funds beginning with this upcoming fiscal year.

Donna also noted that the Funding Committee will become more proactive in investigating alternative sources of non-IRWM grant funds, and in helping IRWMP projects get funded through these other sources. She noted as an example that both the Transportation Bill and the Farm Bill will be re-authorized this year; what does that mean for IRWMP projects?

Bridget said that the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation is willing to consider acting as a fiscal agent for the RWMG contributions. There was some discussion about whether there should be some sort of formal request to

submit to the RWMG entity boards and management. Donna has agreed to be the point person and will send an email to the entire RWMG, and work with each of the members to figure out the best way to go about this.

2. Planning Grant Round 2: Susan reminded everyone that the Planning Grant Round 2 proposal is due March 9th, and that we can request up to \$244,736. This is the last Planning Grant round, and we cannot be assured of getting these funds – it's competitive. A Planning Grant subcommittee is helping Susan draft the task descriptions and develop budgets for each task. Susan gave a brief summary of the tasks and associated budget amounts, noting that the costs below add up to more than our maximum possible request amount; we will need to adjust these numbers:

- **Grant Administration:** \$37K. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation has agreed to act as fiscal agent for this grant.
- **Increased technical assistance to DACs:** \$45K-\$50K. Susan noted that we are receiving \$160K for DAC outreach and technical assistance through Planning Grant Round 1. That grant will end June 1, 2013. The Round 2 grant would provide additional technical assistance through August 2014.
- **Co-management of Food Safety and Water Quality:** \$45K-\$50K. Lisa Lurie at the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will lead this effort. Bridget explained that the task will include: support for the annual food safety forum; translating research into outreach materials that can be distributed to growers and auditors, etc.; and summarizing the most current information about food safety, and specifically what's happening in our region, in the IRWM Plan. Dawn commented that the proposed food safety co-management scope seems to focus just on water quality, but the IRWMP goals encompass more than water quality. It was suggested that the planning grant proponents consider looking at how food safety can be co-managed with water quality protection and environmental restoration efforts (i.e., riparian restoration adjacent to farmlands).
- **Assessment of environmental water needs:** \$5K. Michele is leading this effort. The idea is to hire CSUMB student(s) to gather and summarize all existing information regarding environmental water needs in the Monterey County region, and then do a simple gap analysis. This would represent a first step in assessing environmental water needs for the IRWM Plan.
- **Website Maintenance:** \$5K. This includes funds for the Central Coast Wetlands Group to continue website maintenance and some minor updating of IRWM Plan maps, if needed.
- **FireScope Monterey:** Donna suggests we set aside about \$7,500 toward supporting the FireScope Monterey effort and summarizing information about that effort as a new section in the IRWM Plan. The Planning Grant subcommittee has yet to work out the details regarding this task. Donna will talk with Butch Kronlund.
- **IRWMP Coordination and Development:** \$95K. This task would support the overall IRWM coordination and IRWM Plan development effort over about two years. It would include the ongoing coordination of the planning effort (RWMG meetings, Plan Performance Evaluation, etc.), plus writing up all of the results of the Planning Grant Round 1 effort and all of the results of the Planning Grant Round 2 effort into the IRWM Plan. Dawn commented that, even at the cost of reducing budgets of the other tasks, she felt we should increase the budget of this task. Donna agreed, and then everyone agreed, with several emphasizing the importance of this task. Susan noted that it will be tricky to reduce the budgets of the other tasks, but the Planning Grant subcommittee will take this into consideration.

Ken asked whether we plan to submit an Interregional Planning Grant proposal. Susan said no, and explained that Ross was told by DWR that Interregional Planning Grant funds are not a separate pot of funds as we originally thought, but that these funds would come out of the overall Planning Grant pot. So essentially, we would be competing against ourselves if we applied for an Interregional grant. Ross said that the Santa Cruz region wasn't interested in applying, for that reason. DWR suggested that rather than applying for an Interregional Planning

Grant to conduct a region-wide climate change assessment, as we considered, we should apply for an Implementation Grant (in Round 2). Ken said there are other interregional needs – such as a water supply pipeline between Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. Rob added Quagga mussels and the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin as two more pressing interregional issues. Susan will look into whether there are separate funds set aside for Interregional *Implementation Grants*.

Susan reminded everyone to please send her their match dollars for this Planning Grant (i.e., hourly rates and number of hours worked on the IRWM planning effort). We really need everyone to contribute to the match, as the match requirement is 25% (non-State funds). Bridget said we can probably get some match from the Food Safety task.

The RWMG will have a chance to review and comment on the Planning Grant tasks before the proposal is submitted. We will have one more RWMG meeting before the proposal is due.

3. IRWMP Development: Susan reviewed the timeframe for IRWMP completion, noting that the schedule is ambitious if we are to complete the Plan by end of August (to meet the State’s deadline by September). She urged everyone to begin reviewing the IRWMP on DropBox now – not to delay, as the document is quite long. She also said that if anyone doesn’t have time to review the whole document, no problem, but at least be sure to skim it for sections that pertain to their organization and to their area of expertise – and to please review those sections carefully. Susan asked everyone to let her know if they need her to re-invite them to DropBox.

Susan said that the public comment period for the ranked project list is still open; it will end January 27th. Thus far she has received no comments. Rob piped up that he will be bringing the draft ranked project list to the MCWRA Board, along with an update of the IRWM process, on Monday – so we might expect some comments after that. Ken noted that one board member did have questions about one of the proposed projects on the list concerning in particular the construction of a public trail, which would in fact abut his land. Dawn noted that this is the type of issue that will be addressed and hopefully resolved through the Water Resource Project Coordination (WRPC) process. Susan also reminded Rob to remind his Board that no project will ever get put forward for funding through the IRWM process without landowner approval. Ken added that Rob has worked closely with the Board, and that this shouldn’t be a problem.

Susan had forwarded an email from Monica Reis (DWR) to the RWMG earlier that day, regarding a requirement in the Prop 84 IRWM Program Guidelines to include a preliminary economic feasibility analysis as part of the project selection process for the IRWM Plan. Since the RWMG has been strongly opposed to requiring an economic feasibility analysis from project proponents during the early stage of submitting a project for the Plan, Susan had asked Monica whether this might conceivably render our Plan non-compliant. Monica’s response indicated “not necessarily.” Susan asked whether the RWMG was comfortable with our current project submission and project ranking process, knowing this information. Everyone said they were. Susan asked whether the Group thought she should speak to this explicitly in the Plan. Rob said yes; be explicit, document our decision and be clear about our justification for that decision.

4. Other Business. Sierra gave a brief update on the WRPC effort. The kickoff meeting for stakeholders and project proponents is January 30th at the Ag Commissioner’s Office. Bridget also informed the Group that the kickoff meeting for Project Tracker is January 31st.

Next month’s RWMG meeting is scheduled for February 15th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, at MCWRA.