

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan  
Regional Water Management Group Meeting  
September 19, 2012  
1:30 - 3:30 PM  
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Monterey, CA**

**RWMG Attendees:**

Bridget Hoover, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
Kathy Thomasberg, Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Rachel Saunders, Big Sur Land Trust  
Horacio Amezcuita, San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.  
Brad Hagemann, Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency  
Sierra Ryan, Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Labs  
Ken Ekelund, Garrapata Creek Watershed Council  
Tamara Doan, California Coastal Commission  
Monique Fountain, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Ross Clark, Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Labs  
Paul Robins, RCD of Monterey County  
Paola Ramos, Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

**Non-RWMG Attendees:**

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator  
Monica Reis – California Department of Water Resources  
Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance  
Laura Smith – The Nature Conservancy  
Mike Thomas – Hartnell Center for Sustainable Design & Construction, and board member of Big Sur Land Trust

**Meeting Minutes:**

**1. IRWMP Public Comments:** The public comment period on the Draft IRWMP ended August 17th. Susan noted that we received comments from just three entities: the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA). Susan had drafted responses to the Regional Board and TNC, and had incorporated suggested revisions from MCWRA directly into the IRWMP. These revisions and responses have all been posted to a DropBox folder. Susan encouraged everyone to review MCWRA’s comments, which were mainly technical in nature, along with the corresponding changes in the revised documents on DropBox, and to contact her if they had questions or comments. Susan then gave an overview of the comments from the TNC and Regional Board, and asked for input regarding her draft responses.

TNC had recommended that the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) incorporate an objective within every goal category that identified multiple benefits associated with relevant projects. Susan’s draft response was basically that the Guiding Principle to “encourage projects with multiple benefits” makes that intention implicit throughout the goals and objectives, and therefore the RWMG does not feel it is necessary to include this principle explicitly in each of the goal categories. However, she asked the RWMG if perhaps we should incorporate some of TNC’s examples (particularly the “environment” and the “climate change” examples) into the goals and objectives. After some discussion, the Group thought it better not to change the objectives. A lot of work had gone into developing the objectives; adding new objectives would affect project ranking, and the Group didn’t feel the additions were necessary. Someone also noted that the importance of “multiple benefits” is reflected in our project ranking system: a project with strong and multiple benefits can score up to 10 additional points (out of a potential maximum of 100 points). Susan said she would include that in the response to TNC.

The Regional Water Board’s first comment was to recommend that “the Greater Monterey IRWM plan and

process prioritize projects that resolve the drinking water contamination problem, especially in disadvantaged communities.” Susan’s draft response pointed out that our project ranking system awards extra points both for projects with “urgent need” and for projects that address needs of disadvantaged communities, and in addition, that one of the last steps of our project ranking process is to “flag” disadvantaged community projects to ensure that these projects are given special consideration when selecting projects for application for IRWM grant funds. Therefore, the IRWM plan and process already prioritize projects that address the drinking water contamination problem for disadvantaged communities in the Salinas Valley. However, the RWMG will make a point to give projects that address this particular problem special consideration when considering projects to select for IRWM grant applications. The RWMG agreed with that response.

The Regional Water Board’s second comment was to recommend that the IRWMP elevate salt and nutrient management planning as a higher priority, such as by “identifying it as an Objective in the IRWMP, prioritizing SNMPing projects, and focusing RWMG efforts to realize effective SNMPing in the IRWM area.” This comment elicited much discussion among the RWMG members, with general agreement that the matter is “complex.” Kathy pointed out that the MCWRA has a Nitrate Management Program and has implemented 11 of the 13 program elements, and has incorporated several of the program elements into ongoing Agency programs. She would welcome a conversation about this. Bridget noted that San Luis Obispo County is developing a salt and nutrient management plan for the Paso Robles basin that will overlap with our region in the upper Salinas Valley. She pointed out that we can learn from their efforts. The Group concluded that we need to have a better understanding of what the objectives of a salt and nutrient management plan are; what are we looking to accomplish? Then we can see what already has been done in terms of studies, and what we need to do. Ken and Kathy agreed to talk with the MCWRA board about this, and Susan offered to talk with Katie McNeill to get a better sense of the expected outcomes of a salt and nutrient management plan.

The Regional Water Board’s final recommendations were that the IRWM plan “continue its commitment to implementation of LID practices to address the degradation of hydrologic processes” and “continue its commitment to preventing and correcting degradation of aquatic habitat.” Susan’s draft response to these comments, with agreement from the RWMG, was simply “Noted – thank you, we will!”

Ross then provided an overview of the revisions to the Climate Change chapter which resulted from work over the past several months by a TAC (comprised of Central Coast Wetlands Group, AMBAG, The Nature Conservancy, MCWRA, Santa Cruz County, Stanford University, NOAA...), as well as from input from Bryan Largay (Elkhorn Slough) and Center for Ocean Solutions. The TAC focused on impacts to our region:

- What driving forces over the next 100 years will change (e.g., sea level rise, rainfall, evapotranspiration)?
- What vulnerabilities does our region have based on those changes? Ross said the State has great guidance on this, with questions such as, “Do we have critical infrastructure within a 200-year floodplain?”

The TAC then put together a risk assessment, which Ross said is a great improvement over the former methodology used for the draft Climate Change chapter. The risk assessment points to priority areas that our region should focus on. “Extreme risk” includes factors related to threats to life, infrastructure, and the economy; but the TAC also developed a risk assessment based on threats to environmental factors alone (“just to see”). The TAC identified three top priorities for the region:

- Decreased water supply
- Increased flooding and erosion of creeks and rivers
- Coastal inundation of urban development, other land uses and impacts to coastal river and wetland ecosystems

The Central Coast Wetlands Group has just submitted a project proposal for inclusion in the IRWM Plan to help address coastal inundation issues. Also, the Stanford TAC members are in the process of completing an assessment on the effects of coastal adaptation strategies and climate scenarios on the ecosystem services provided by coastal and nearshore environments. This assessment will be included in the IRWM Plan as an

appendix.

Susan informed the RWMG that she will need to incorporate parts of the new Climate Change chapter into other chapters of the Plan, along with some other plan revisions, and should have the “final” plan ready within the next couple of weeks. She will post it on DropBox for the RWMG to review. Then at the October 17<sup>th</sup> RWMG meeting, the RWMG will vote on accepting that version as the final IRWM Plan to take to their governing boards for approval. The RWMG members will then begin the process of getting their governing boards’ approval (which should take 2-3 months), and when all of the resolutions with signatures have been obtained, the RWMG as a group will formally approve the IRWM Plan at a regularly scheduled RWMG meeting.

**2. New Implementation Projects - Status:** We received four new implementation project proposals and one new concept proposal during the latest IRWMP project solicitation. Those proposals are posted on DropBox (Susan said to let her know if anyone needs another invite). Susan gave a brief update on the Project Review process: the Project Review Committee plans to meet on October 3 and will be ranking all of the projects on that day. Susan will send the RWMG the recommended Ranked Project List shortly thereafter with plenty of time to review before the October 17 RWMG meeting, at which time the RWMG will vote to approve (hopefully) the list.

### **3. Miscellaneous News and Updates:**

- **AB 403:** Paola said AB 403—the bill sponsored by Assemblyman Alejo to provide \$2 million to the RWMG to develop a plan to address the lack of access to safe drinking water in the Salinas valley, especially by disadvantaged communities—had strong support, but didn’t pass mainly because there wasn’t enough time for the bill to go through the full legislative process. EJCW and the Governor’s Office will try again to get the bill passed in January. Paola will keep the RWMG posted.
- **California Coastal Commission:** Tamara announced that the California Coastal Commission will be unable to adopt the IRWM Plan due to potential conflicts of interest, and therefore must resign from the RWMG. The RWMG members were understanding, and urged Tamara to continue to stay actively involved in the IRWM planning process. She said she would. There was discussion as to the logistics of amending the MOU. Susan will add an amendment at the end of the MOU and send it to the Group.
- **Overview of the "Strategic Plan for the Future of IRWM in California" Session:** Paola gave an overview of this session that was held at the California Water Plan Plenary on 9/13. DWR staff gave a presentation, outlining three phases: 1) scoping (going out to stakeholders, workshops); 2) development of the plan; 3) implementation and monitoring. She said DWR talked a lot about aligning State and Federal programs to support the IRWM process. She was especially pleased that the vast majority of participants voiced strong support for DAC and Native Tribe outreach, and noted that our region was recognized as being a model region for DAC outreach and cooperation/collaboration. Susan asked if there had been much discussion about future funds to support the continued IRWM effort. Paola said, not specifically. DWR’s website for IRWM Strategic Planning is: [www.water.ca.gov/irwm/stratplan](http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/stratplan)
- **Overview of Central Coast IRWM Regions Meeting:** Bridget gave an overview of the conference call meeting that was held on 9/14. She provided the minutes of that meeting (which are incorporated into these meetings by reference!).
- **IRWM Services Webpage:** Susan initiated a discussion about creating some sort of mechanism for allowing stakeholders in the region who provide IRWM-related “services” to advertise those services to other stakeholders throughout the region. She used EcoLayers, a company that provides data management services, as an example. Sierra mentioned that our new website has a page for “Local Resources” which is currently unpopulated. We would need a subcommittee to vet information. Bridget, who is on the IRWM Finance Committee, explored whether we could somehow charge businesses for advertising to help support the ongoing IRWM effort...

- **IRWM Leadership and Learning Exchange:** DWR recently sent out an email inviting RWMGs to attend one of four workshops. Susan asked Monica whether she knew anything about this (she didn't), and if anyone might be interested in attending. Karen McBride offered (in an email) to attend the workshop in the Sacramento area on November 7. Susan said if anyone is interested, please let her know.

**4. Round 2 Implementation Grant Program:** Susan reminded everyone that the Final Round 2 RFP is expected to be released in October, and that we should also have our final Ranked Project List in October. So we should start thinking about the "preliminaries": timing, economic analysis, who will be the fiscal sponsor. (This agenda item was intended primarily as a reminder to start thinking about Round 2.)

**5. Other Business:** Ken announced that they had just had a kick-off meeting for the Big Sur River Management Plan. The plan will cover the entire watershed. The Monterey County RCD has been awarded a grant for about \$190K from the Department of Fish and Game to develop the plan. The process is expected to take about 18 months, and will be stakeholder driven.

**Next month's RWMG meeting is scheduled for October 17<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 – 3:30 PM at Moss Landing Marine Labs.**