

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
October 17, 2012
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Moss Landing Marine Labs, Moss Landing, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Sierra Ryan, Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Labs
Bridget Hoover, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Rob Johnson, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Elizabeth Krafft, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Rachel Saunders, Big Sur Land Trust
Michael Ricker, City of Salinas
Dana Jacobson, Cal Water
Rich Guillen, City of Soledad
Dawn Mathes, Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Karen McBride, Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Eric Tynan, Castroville Community Services District
Horacio Amezcuita, San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Brad Hagemann, Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency
Ken Ekelund, Garrapata Creek Watershed Council
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
Brian True, Marina Coast Water District

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator
Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance
Louise Ramirez – Chairperson, Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation
Patricia Miranda – Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation

Meeting Minutes:

1. Brief Introductions. A special welcome to Rich Guillen, who is now representing the City of Soledad on the RWMG, and to Louise Ramirez and Patricia Miranda from the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation.

2. Ranked Project List. The ranked project list recommended by the Project Review Committee was emailed to RWMG members on October 4th. Susan invited discussion about the project list, the projects themselves, and the project ranking process. Michael had comments to make about the process, noting that there is an unintentional bias for applicants who score themselves highly (and a bias against those who don't). There had been some confusion, and perhaps some inconsistency, over the past two Project Reviews (2011 and 2012 projects) whereby some reviewers would lower a project's score for objectives if they thought the project proponent gave themselves too high a score in that category, but wouldn't *raise* a score for objectives, even if they felt the project proponent didn't score themselves highly enough; whereas other reviewers *would* raise a score for objectives if they felt the project proponent didn't score themselves highly enough. In the most recent Project Review, the Review Committee seemed to agree that the City of Salinas hadn't given themselves a high enough score for objectives, but they didn't add points. Michael suggested that perhaps the score for this project should be re-evaluated, as it didn't seem fair. Michael's second comment was that at times, with the current project ranking system, "we don't see the forest through the trees"; he wondered whether we could include a more qualitative approach, rather than just the numerical system we have now.

A great deal of discussion ensued. Sierra suggested (and others agreed) that in the future, we should ask project proponents not to give themselves a score on objectives, but to simply check which objectives they feel their project addresses and to show where, exactly, in the proposal their project addresses that objective. Susan asked the Project Review Committee (and the RWMG), did they feel comfortable that the scoring process was fair, and that no project – including the City of Salinas project – had gotten short shrift? Ken, who had participated on a former Project Review Committee, said he did feel the project review process has been consistent over the years, and others on the Project Review Committee agreed (though Michael did not agree).

Susan brought up the Pajaro/Sunny Mesa Water District project. The Project Review Committee had had some technical questions about that project. Horacio, Jeanette, and Karen said they met with Don Rosa last Friday to discuss the project. Horacio noted that the District has no money. Karen said the District had applied for Department of Public Health funding in 2008; the problem is, they can't afford to accept a loan – they need a grant. In answer to the question about seawater intrusion, the District plans to dig a well into the 400-Foot Aquifer rather than the 180-Foot Aquifer, which should avert the seawater intrusion problem.

Susan asked the Project Review Committee and the RWMG again: Do they feel the current ranked Project List is fair? Does the ranking fairly represent the projects for the purposes of the IRWM grant program? Bridget asked, should the Committee take another look at the Salinas project? Sierra commented that it wouldn't be fair to do that for just one project; Brian, Ken, and others agreed that they shouldn't go back and re-review the projects. Elizabeth said she thought that we *had* re-scored one project during the last Project Review process. Rob reminded everyone that we have always stressed that the project ranking is not “the” deciding factor for selecting projects for IRWM grant applications; and reiterating that fact, Ross said he thought the ranked Project List was fair “for our purposes.”

Susan asked, what do we do about planning projects? She mentioned the latest Central Coast Wetlands Group project proposal, which is essentially a planning proposal – but is a much-needed project to evaluate climate change factors in our region. Bridget agreed that there are several projects that aren't “implementation projects” per se but are greatly needed for implementing the objectives of our IRWM Plan. We need funding for these projects. Can we consider integrating those projects into implementation projects in order to get them funded?

Jeanette asked, what happens if the Pajaro/Sunny Mesa District project doesn't get chosen for Round 2? Susan said that just being in the IRWM Plan may help the project get funded through other funding sources, and there's always Round 3 (which will have more funding available than Round 2). Karen added that the advantages of having such a large and diverse RWMG is that we, as a group, can try to find them other funding if IRWM grant funds don't come though. Rob noted that yesterday the State Regional Board made available \$2 million for disadvantaged communities, and the Governor's Drinking Water panel has also made more money available.

Getting back to the ranked Project List, Michael informed the RWMG that he would vote against it; he noted that the Group had made some good points about how to improve the project ranking process for next time, but he still preferred that the Review Committee re-rank the City of Salinas's project. Ross said he thought the Committee had been generally consistent with its scoring in both (2011 and 2012) ranking processes, and that we need to be realistic about what this ranked Project List means (i.e., for Round 2). Bridget also pointed out that people who aren't on the RWMG don't have the opportunity to say, hey, I think my project should be scored higher, please re-evaluate it (implying that perhaps it wouldn't be fair to re-score a project based on a project proponent's request in this context).

Bridget made a motion to accept the ranked Project List as is; Ross seconded the motion, with the understanding that the ranked Project List carries only relative weight in deciding which projects to put forward for IRWM funding. There were 12 votes in favor, 1 vote opposed (Michael), and 3 abstentions (Rich, who is new to this process, Brian, and Eric). The ranked Project List was formally adopted by the RWMG. The will be the “final”

and official ranked Project List for the IRWM Plan until the next IRWM Plan project solicitation, which will generate a whole new ranked Project List.

3. Round 2 Implementation Grant Program: Susan asked, now that we have a final ranked Project List, how do we go about selecting projects for Round 2? Bridget noted that the first question is, who *wants* to put their projects forward for Round 2? After some discussion about the limited amount of funding available in Round 2 (\$7,569,000 for the entire Central Coast IRWM Funding Area), the expense of applying, and the need for a lead applicant, Susan suggested that she send an email to all project proponents to find out who *wants* to apply in Round 2. She will give the project proponents about two weeks to respond, and will then get back to the RWMG to figure out next steps.

4. IRWM Plan: Susan had made revisions to the IRWM Plan based on public comments and on Climate Change TAC revisions, and posted the "final" version of the IRWM Plan on DropBox on October 2nd for RWMG members to review. She asked if anyone had any comments on the final Plan, or questions. Bridget asked if one additional minor correction could be made, having to do with the extent of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary; Susan said "of course." Jeanette made a motion to accept this as the final version of the IRWM Plan, which the RWMG members will take to their governing boards for adoption. All voted in favor except for Brian and Rich, who abstained. Karen suggested that everyone keep in touch, and be available to attend each other's governing board meetings to show support for the IRWM Plan and help answer questions.

5. MOU: Susan had sent a revised MOU to the RWMG on September 21 with an addendum, removing the Coastal Commission from the RWMG. She asked, was everyone OK with that revision, as worded? They were.

6. Native American Tribal involvement in IRWM Planning: Jeanette introduced Louise Ramirez and Patricia Miranda. Susan welcomed them and opened up a discussion for how we might better include Native Americans in the IRWM planning process. She noted that there are no designated Native American "communities" in our region in the same way that there are "disadvantaged communities" that we can target for assistance. Louise said that there are a lot of indigenous burial sites in the region, and areas that are very important to Native people, such as Elkhorn Slough. She said that many of the IRWM projects may be located in sensitive areas, and she wonders, "How will these projects affect my ancestors?" Susan pointed out that she had tried to include local Native Americans in the project review process, both in 2010 and 2012, sending letters and making phone calls to several individuals whose names she had gotten from Monterey County's Native American Tribal Consultation List; she had asked if they would be willing to review our IRWM project lists to ensure that the projects weren't located on sacred burial sites or other Native American sensitive sites. However, no one responded to her request. In response to why no one probably responded, Louise commented, "We will always say, 'Don't disturb *anything*,' but we know you won't listen." So Susan asked, how would you like us to proceed? Louise said they are not federally recognized, and they have no money, so it is difficult to participate. Susan asked if Louise would like to be included on the regular email notices for the RWMG meetings, and she said she would. Bridget said, we invite you to be part of this process, and if you find it worthwhile, then please do participate; and feel free to talk more to Jeanette, Susan, or any one of the RWMG members about the IRWM planning process.

7. Water Resource Project Coordination Process: Sierra provided an overview and update on the WRPC process. Stakeholders in the Gabilan (Rec Ditch) subwatershed had been invited to attend a stakeholder meeting in January 2012, and many expressed interest in participating in the WRPC process. A facilitator, Katie Burdick, was hired (and has gotten high marks from both WRPC Subcommittee members and from stakeholders). Katie interviewed stakeholders, divided projects into general categories, and has come up with a two-pronged approach for moving forward: First, deal with the "less controversial" projects to find possible areas of integration, and then deal with the more controversial projects later. The WRPC Subcommittee plans to usurp the December RWMG to involve everyone in a mini-charrette session to discuss issues in the subwatershed region. There will be a kickoff meeting for stakeholders in January.

8. IRWM Website: Sierra demonstrated the new Greater Monterey County IRWM website to the RWMG. Everyone commended her on the great work. Sierra said she still could use some photos, needs help with the Spanish page, and noted that some of the information is outdated. Susan will revise and update the webpage text soon, and will announce the new website to stakeholders probably next week.

Next month's RWMG meeting is scheduled for November 28th (the fourth Wednesday of the month instead of the third, to avoid a conflict with Thanksgiving) from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, at the Big Sur Land Trust office in Monterey.