

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
November 28, 2012
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Big Sur Land Trust, Monterey, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Michael Ricker – City of Salinas
Sierra Ryan – Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Labs
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Labs
Dawn Mathes – Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
Rob Johnson – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Brian True – Marina Coast Water District
Rich Guillen – City of Soledad
Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Paola Ramos – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)
Colin Bailey – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)
Brad Hagemann – Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency
Ken Ekelund – Garrapata Creek Watershed Council

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator
Oga Carranza – Monterey County
Paul Greenway – Monterey County
Patricia Lopez – Monterey County
Mark Nielsen – Nacimiento Water Management Advisory Committee
Karen Nilsen – Nilsen & Associates
Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)
Louise Ramirez – Chairperson, Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation
Brad Hunt – Save Our Shores
Sherry Bryan – Ecology Action
Sarah Newkirk – The Nature Conservancy

Meeting Minutes:

1. Brief Introductions. Wonderful to see some new faces at today’s meeting! A special welcome to Colin Bailey, who is EJCW’s new Executive Director and who will be representing EJCW (along with Paola) on the RWMG.

2. IRWM Plan Adoption: Susan noted that four RWMG entities have formally adopted the IRWM Plan: the RCD, Central Coast Wetlands Group (adopted by San Jose State University Research Foundation), Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and Castroville Community Services District. She asked the other RWMG members at the meeting to give the status of Plan adoption for their organization. All of them responded that the adoption process was proceeding as anticipated, without complications. It looks like all of the RWMG entities will have adopted the IRWM Plan by January 2013. There was a question about whether the project proponents in Round 1 are required to adopt the IRWM Plan (as must project proponents in subsequent Rounds). Susan said it was unclear but she assumed so. The only project proponent in Round 1 who wasn’t a RWMG entity was UC Davis; Rich (with the City of Soledad, who is managing the Round 1 Implementation Grant contract) offered to ask Katie

Siegler at UC Davis to get a signed resolution adopting the Plan.

There was a question about whether the County of Monterey is adopting the IRWM Plan (Susan said they must, if they want to receive IRWM grant funds), and that led to a question about whether the County should be a RWMG member. Paola asked about the process for entities joining the RWMG. Susan explained that in general, no new entity can join the RWMG unless there is a clear “need” for representation by that type of entity (e.g., interest group or geographic representation that is not already covered by another RWMG entity). In the case of Monterey County, Susan commented that they are such a significant entity for the Greater Monterey County region – and as a major land-use management agency, they would present an opportunity for this RWMG to integrate land-use and water management – and so she thinks they should be welcome to join the Group. (She noted that discussion about the County joining the Group has occurred several times in the past.) Paola then asked about Native American tribal representation on the RWMG. Susan said that Native American representation falls under the purview of those entities on our RWMG that represent disadvantaged communities (DACs) – San Jerardo, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), and EJCW, with significant support from CRLA. These entities are supposed to be doing outreach to both DACs and Native Americans in the region. Bridget asked if tribal communities *wanted* to join? Susan said she would make this an agenda item for another meeting.

3. Round 2 IRWM Implementation Grant Proposal: A group of RWMG members who had projects up for consideration for Round 2 met last week to take a first stab at selecting projects for our region’s application package. Susan described the process. At the start of that meeting, Susan presented the group with a “baseline scenario.” She had made a list of all projects “on the table,” and checked to make sure that all of the projects were ready to go and that there were no red flags regarding landowner support. Then for project proponents that had more than one project on the table, she selected just one of those projects, based on the project ranking score. Of the resulting projects, she then grouped them according to primary benefit type (water supply, environmental/ water quality, flood protection), and noted each project’s geographic coverage. Then she reviewed the budgets: for projects with very large budgets, she reduced the budgets to include just the initial phases. The resulting list, which she presented as the “baseline scenario” to the group, were 12 projects totaling about \$4.7 million.

The group then reviewed the list and made some minor changes (e.g., Kevin and Sierra opted to change the CCWG project on the list, due to lack of match for the original project; and Bridget said the MBNMS project could get integrated into the CCWG project). They reviewed each project in turn, discussing the Pajaro/Sunny Mesa project first (our only DAC project – with a \$3 million budget). They agreed to the suggested budget reductions for the various projects, including the Pajaro/Sunny Mesa project. The group then discussed the budget request of approximately \$4.7 million and whether that request was too high (given the Round 2 funding allocation of about \$7.6 million for the entire Central Coast Funding Area). They decided for various reasons that the request amount was acceptable. They noted that all of the projects offered positive and strong benefits for the region, as well as good geographic coverage.

The group then discussed the need for a lead applicant. Each project proponent agreed to “donate” their 5% project administration cost to the lead applicant, whoever that turns out to be, in order for there to be sufficient funds to support that task. Susan then asked each project proponent at that meeting to take another look at their budgets, reduce where possible (eliminating project administration costs), and increasing match amount if possible. Susan then presented the resulting list of projects to the RWMG for discussion.

Each project proponent, if they were present at the meeting, gave a very brief overview of the project (and Susan provided a brief description if the project proponent was not present). Susan noted where budgets had been reduced, and where only “Phase I” would be funded. She discussed the San Lucas project; San Lucas is an impoverished community but is not considered a DAC according to US Census Bureau data. San Lucas Water District cannot afford match for this project, and if they are determined to be a DAC, then they won’t need match (however, if they are not a DAC, Elkhorn Slough’s additional match would cover the San Lucas match requirement regardless). Susan asked the RWMG whether they would be OK with using Planning Grant funds to

hire RCAC to conduct an income survey, to determine whether San Lucas is in fact a DAC. Paola said that would be fine, but it may not be necessary; the Department of Health has recognized San Lucas as a DAC, and in addition, this project may be getting support via another funding source. Susan will check into this.

Susan also recommended that if, after conducting a cost-benefit analysis for each project selected for the application package, any one project scores poorly, that project should get dropped from the application package. Otherwise, that project may bring down the overall score for our application. She reminded the Group that our IRWM Plan includes this provision (in the Project Review Process chapter). The RWMG agreed, though Elizabeth suggested that if a project's cost-benefit analysis is weak, that project proponent should have the opportunity to revise the project in order to improve the cost-benefit ratio. Everyone agreed.

The RWMG discussed the proposal grant request, and decided that the approximately \$5 million request was acceptable. The decision was based partly on the recognition that DWR may award the grant but at a reduced amount, so we might as well ask for what we truly need – and then make the decision on how to reduce the budget later, if necessary.

The group agreed to submit the resulting list of 11 projects, totaling approximately \$5 million, for Round 2 (while recognizing that the budget will still undergo some changes). Later in the meeting, Susan realized that they had neglected to take a formal vote on the issue, so: Ken made a motion to submit the recommended list of projects for the Round 2 Implementation Grant solicitation, Michael seconded. All voted in favor, with no one opposed and no one abstaining. Susan will set up a kickoff meeting for the project proponents.

4. AB 403: Paola informed the RWMG about the legislative hearing that she and Jeanette testified at on November 14 regarding the problem of access to safe drinking water for disadvantaged communities in California. The purpose of the hearing was to provide information to the legislature; the Salinas Valley was just one of several areas of the state that were discussed. Assemblyman Alejo plans to re-introduce his proposed bill, AB 403, in December. AB 403 would allocate funds (up to \$2 million) for a pilot study to assess and address the problem of access to safe drinking water for DACs in the Salinas Valley. Susan asked if there is anything we should be doing to support this bill now. Jeanette responded that we need to wait until the bill has been re-introduced, but it would be great if each entity of the RWMG – as well as the RWMG itself – were to submit an individual support letter.

5. Prop 84 Monterey Regional LID Planning Grant: Sherry Lee Bryan described to the RWMG a planning grant that Ecology Action recently received from the State Water Resources Control Board. The grant will fund the first permitted rainwater harvesting systems for indoor, non-potable use (three in Monterey County), as well as fund designs for LID infiltration projects in areas of Monterey County identified to have high groundwater recharge potential. There is money in the grant – \$10,000/project – for projects such as rainwater harvesting and low-flush toilets, including new projects or retrofits. Funds need to be expended by March 2013. Ecology Action would like to streamline existing permit processes to pave the way for LID project implementation. Bridget asked if they are looking for projects on commercial or public properties rather than residential. Sherry responded that they are seeking “publicly visible” locations for the projects.

In the Salinas Valley, Ecology Action is currently lack agency partners to identify and prioritize urban areas overlying groundwater recharge zones. They are looking to solicit members to participate in an advisory committee that would choose which Salinas Valley sites are selected for design funds. Sherry asked if anyone in the RWMG was interested in participating on this advisory committee.

6. Other Business: Sierra gave an update on the Water Resource Project Coordination (WRPC) process. The WRPC Subcommittee met with Katie Burdick (facilitator consultant) and her associate Barbara Rusmore earlier that day. They have set a January date for the next stakeholder meeting for Gabilan watershed projects. During the next RWMG meeting on December 19th, the Subcommittee would like to involve the RWMG in the WRPC

process and gain their input on the January stakeholder meeting. Sierra emphasized the importance of attending the December RWMG meeting, noting that the WRPC process is bringing this region to the next level of water management planning and is vital to the IRWM planning process. Elizabeth added that the WRPC Subcommittee is trying to build a process that can be extrapolated out to the larger region, beyond the Gabilan watershed. Dawn added that the WRPC process is also intended to help refine the *project solicitation process*, to solicit projects that are already well integrated and have no major conflicts with other projects. Bridget talked about short-term and long-term goals, with the intention of getting everyone “on the same page” in terms of desired outcomes for the watershed (short-term goals) and then subsequently, developing projects to implement those desired outcomes (long-term goals).

Sierra noted that they will be making attendance at the meeting “mandatory” for project proponents; in other words, if a project proponent wants to receive IRWM grant funds, he/she must attend the January stakeholder meeting. Susan asked, is it fair to require project proponents who have projects in the Gabilan watershed area to attend this meeting without requiring other project proponents to attend any meetings? Susan said she was worried about the fairness of this requirement, and about requiring project proponents to jump through any more hoops. Sarah Newkirk wondered about the legality of it. Sierra said she would check with Katie Burdick on that (as Katie has worked with other IRWM regions that have done similar things). Bridget suggested that we don’t make attendance mandatory for the January meeting. Sierra responded, how about if we say the RWMG “strongly encourages you to attend...” Everyone liked that.

Dawn added that for the next RWMG meeting in December, Katie Burdick would like each RWMG member to think about his/her “vision” for the Gabilan watershed (i.e., desired outcomes for the watershed).

Next month’s RWMG meeting is scheduled for December 19th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, location TBD.