

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
December 19, 2012
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Salinas, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Rob Johnson – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Colin Bailey – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)
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
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Mike Jones – Cal Water
Jim Luongo – Cal Water
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust
Ken Ekelund – Garrapata Creek Watershed Council
Paul Robins – Monterey County RCD
Dawn Mathes – Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
Brad Hagemann – Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator
Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)
Katie Burdick – Burdick and Company
Barbara Rusmore – Burdick and Company
Monica Reis – Department of Water Resources
Donna Meyers
Sarah Newkirk – The Nature Conservancy

Meeting Minutes:

1. Brief Introductions.

2. IRWM Plan Adoption: Susan noted that six RWMG entities have now formally adopted the IRWM Plan. 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 (or February 2013 at the latest).

3. Round 2 IRWM Implementation Grant Proposal: Susan noted that the project list for Round 2, which the RWMG had approved during last month’s RWMG meeting, has undergone some changes. Some projects have dropped out, and since the proposal budget is now considerably reduced, there is the option of adding in an additional project. She discussed some possibilities (including projects by ESNERR, the RCD, and CCWG). There is also the possibility that the Nacimiento-San Antonio Interlake Tunnel project will come back into the project mix. Mark Nielsen (project proponent) is currently working with an engineer to see whether they can come up with a reduced budget that includes construction (not just “phase I,” which made the project ineligible for Round 2) and that includes “meaningful” project benefits. If so, then that project will be included back in the proposal package. The Interlake Tunnel project will have strong water supply benefits for both our region and the San Luis Obispo region.

Susan asked: Was the RWMG willing to approve a higher proposal budget than what was approved at the last RWMG meeting (which was around \$5 million) – even as high as \$7.5 million (i.e., the Round 2 funding amount for the entire Central Coast Funding Area)? There was some discussion, but the consensus was that yes, the RWMG would approve that amount as long as it *was necessary* for the proposal package to be “the best, strongest, and most competitive” proposal package for our region. Ken motioned, and Rob seconded, for the RWMG to approve a proposal budget for up to \$7.5 million, with the aforementioned caveat. All voted in favor, except for Monique and Paul, who were “unsure.”

Ross raised a concern: What happens if DWR awards only a partial amount of our requested funds? We need to decide on a strategy. All agreed. Susan suggested that the project proponents discuss this at their next meeting in early January. The Group briefly discussed economists and the process for hiring an economist. Susan will work on the RFP.

4. Water Resource Project Coordination (WRPC) Process: Preparing for the January 2013 Stakeholder Meeting: Susan turned the meeting over to Katie Burdick and Barbara Rusmore, consultants with Burdick and Company, and the WRPC Subcommittee, who have been busy preparing for a stakeholder meeting scheduled for January 30, 2013. The purpose of this agenda item was to engage the RWMG in the WRPC process, to gain their input for the January stakeholder meeting, and to ensure that the RWMG is on board with the process thus far.

Katie and Barbara introduced themselves. Katie provided the “agenda” for this part of the RWMG meeting, and Barbara gave an overview of what has gone on with the WRPC process so far. She explained that there will be important prep work to do between now and the January stakeholder meeting (2-3 meetings with WRPC subcommittee and anyone else who is interested). The major outcomes from the January stakeholder meeting will be work groups that will be developed at that meeting: ongoing, task-oriented small groups of people working around a similar topic to help flesh out projects for the IRWMP in the Gabilan watershed, and to help flesh out “future options” for the watershed (a vision statement, or clear picture of what the goals are that fit the common good of the Gabilan watershed). So the process will envelop both on-the-ground projects and the “big picture” of the watershed. These work groups are intended to persist beyond the January stakeholder meeting; they will continue on until June or so *with facilitation*, which will come from mostly the WRPC subcommittee members. There will probably be meetings between work group leaders, then in June 2013 the WRPC subcommittee plans to conduct another stakeholder meeting.

The work groups will report on what they’ve come up with in terms of integrated projects for the watershed (e.g., “this is how we see all of our infrastructure projects working together toward our vision of infrastructure for the watershed”); there may also be some recommendations for stand-alone projects. Through this process, Barbara said, we will also get a much better picture of “where are the gaps?” in relation to the region’s IRWMP goals and objectives and the desired future vision for the watershed.

Katie noted: There is a concern that the outcome isn’t just a list of projects, but is a meaningful contribution to re-thinking and re-organizing how water decision-making occurs, in terms of how it impacts this watershed. What tends to happen with IRWM regions is that the first IRWMP includes a “laundry list” of projects. There may be some partnerships and collaborative projects, but by and large it is just a list of individual projects. As an alternative, Katie gave an example of one IRWM region’s work to integrate projects related to infrastructure and leak detection and repair: out of two projects being done in two different towns came a region-wide leak detection and repair program. The aim is to try to get as few projects as possible in the IRWMP, stitched together so that it reads to DWR as a cohesive package. For example, do all of the projects in the aggregate along one creek make a contribution to the goals for that watershed?

Regarding the January stakeholder meeting, the constituencies can speak to what they are grappling with, what they want for the watershed. The problem in the watershed will get described from different stakeholder perspectives, along with what they want to see in the long-term. She said, we want to be able to display that (“the

preferred future”) throughout the room in words and pictures. Ross added: Then we figure out where these different visions overlap... and what’s keeping us (regulatory or otherwise) from getting there.

Katie discussed the agenda for the January 30, 2013 stakeholder meeting. After the facilitators (she and Barbara) explain the process, they will then let the room break itself up into affinity groups: ag, natural resources... They will be constructing—using words, pictures—what they want to see (desired future state) for the Gabilan watershed. Katie went through examples of extremes. In the end, she said, we’ll get x number of visions with x degree of commonality. Some groups will focus on commonality, in other cases it may be an exercise in understanding the divergences.

Someone commented: “By starting with affinity groups, it looks like you’re looking to identify divergences *between* groups.” Barbara emphasized that the beauty of affinity groups is that the “stereotype” of those groups becomes clear, and helps people to realize that they may have made lots of assumptions about each other that aren’t necessarily true. After some discussion, Bridget suggested that maybe we stick with the affinity groups but we prompt them with social, economic, and environmental questions.

Ross said, as long as we always bring it back to the watershed. What are your needs? What is your vision? What is keeping you from meeting your vision? Then problem solving: how can we create solutions to meet our vision of the watershed that take into account the others’ needs?

Katie summed up the process: We create the affinity groups. Step. 1. What’s your vision? What’s working and what’s not working? 2. How can it work better? Then we do a gallery tour, where everyone’s visions and needs are presented to the whole group. 3. Finally, what are the options to accommodate yours *and others’* needs within your concept? Each affinity group will be asked the social-economic-environmental questions. Bridget added: Maybe where we bring in the “carrot” is at, “what are the options, and what can we do about it?” – i.e., generating new projects to address these needs.

There was discussion about “what are the existing efforts happening right now?” (“the sandbox”). Barbara suggested that they let people come up with options before they present what’s occurring right now. Dawn noted that one of the ways they were able to get ag folks to come to the stakeholder meeting was that they told them there would be an opportunity to present to everyone what they’re doing and how they’re contributing. What are you doing *already* to make things better? She added: I think one of the problems is that people are doing their own thing, everyone’s working on their big thing separately – so giving people sufficient time to talk about their existing efforts may help integrate some of these efforts, start a dialog.

Ken noted: It needs to be a *system* integration. The upper watershed may get restored, but now there’s more water flowing to ag fields in lower watershed, and farmers don’t want that. It’s got to be a *system fix*. All agreed. Paul added: We’re talking about a watershed systems approach... there were scientific studies done by Fred Watson, et al.; do we need a presentation of the scientific information – or is that where we’re ultimately getting to, because we disagree about it?

Katie asked: What is the relationship between this process and the ongoing work of the IRWMP? Rob explained that the initial idea was to get integrated projects for Round 3 (well, originally, for Round 2...). Bridget added, the idea was also to develop a *process* for the larger region. Katie: So it’s serving as a model for future project development within watersheds; and ultimately because of timing, is likely to inform project selection process for Round 3. Dawn added: We wanted this process to be not just for IRWMP but broader – for other funding sources as well.

Getting back to the January stakeholder meeting, Barbara asked, so then what happens in the afternoon? The response: they will create work groups (different from affinity groups), which will come from the ideas generated in the morning. The work of the work groups should directly relate to projects in the IRWMP.

At this point the meeting had run over time so was called to a close; however, several WRPC subcommittee members remained to continue discussing next steps for the January stakeholder meeting.

Next month's RWMG meeting is scheduled for January 16th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, location TBD.