

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
January 16, 2013
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Monterey, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Dawn Mathes – Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Rob Johnson – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Colin Bailey – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)
Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Michael Ricker – City of Salinas
Brian True – Marina Coast Water District
Sierra Ryan – Central Coast Wetlands Group (CCWG) at Moss Landing Marine Labs
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Ken Ekelund – Garrapata Creek Watershed Council
Paul Robins – Monterey County RCD

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator
Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)
Sarah Newkirk – The Nature Conservancy

Meeting Minutes:

1. Brief Introductions.

2. Water Resource Project Coordination Process Update: Sierra gave a brief overview of the agenda for the WRPC stakeholder meeting that is planned for January 30, 2013. The meeting will take place at the Ag Commissioner's office in Salinas from 9:00AM – 3:30PM. She urged all RWMG members to attend this meeting if they have any interests whatsoever in the Gabilan watershed, particularly as we hope to export the WRPC process to other sub-watersheds of the Greater Monterey County region in the future.

3. RWMG News: Susan announced that the Coastlands Mutual Water Company has submitted a letter stating their resignation from the RWMG. Butch Kronlund explained that he is simply too busy to participate. Ken commented that Butch's resignation is entirely understandable, noting that Butch is the president of Coastlands, is heavily involved in other issues in Big Sur (such as FireScape Monterey), and owns his own construction company. Susan said though she was very sorry to see Coastlands leave the group, she also understood Butch's reasons and would make an amendment to the MOU to remove Coastlands from the RWMG.

4. IRWM Plan Adoption: Susan noted that 12 RWMG entities have now formally adopted the IRWM Plan. At this point it looks like all of the RWMG entities will have adopted the IRWM Plan by end of February. We will plan for the RWMG, as an entity, to formally adopt the IRWM Plan at the March 20, 2013 RWMG meeting. Michael pointed out the redundancy in the RWMG representatives adopting the Plan after each of their governing boards have already adopted the Plan, and Susan asked the Group for suggestions on the logistics. The Group decided that at the March meeting there should be a "confirmation" of adoption: "Has each RWMG member's governing board adopted the IRWM Plan?" It will take the format of a formal vote. We will need a quorum. Ken suggested that email confirmation should count as a proxy for this meeting, and all agreed.

5. 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 yet more changes. Since some projects had dropped out and the proposal budget was considerably reduced, the project proponents decided to add in new projects and project elements—including a long-term RCD project to eliminate non-native invasive plant species in the Salinas River watershed, and 13 acres of additional marsh restoration in the Elkhorn Slough. In addition, since the last RWMG meeting, San Lucas was officially designated a “disadvantaged community” and therefore the San Lucas water supply planning project is now eligible for inclusion in the application.

Susan opened the floor up for discussion, and asked: Would the RWMG like to approve this project list as is, with a total grant request of about \$5.6 million, or should there be changes? She said she learned at the Central Coast IRWM Regions meeting on January 11th that two of the regions will be requesting the full amount of about \$7.5 million (San Luis Obispo and Pajaro), Santa Barbara will be requesting about \$6.5 million, Santa Cruz will be requesting less than \$3 million, and Monterey Peninsula region will not be applying in Round 2. Given that information, the Group noted that this round will be “all or nothing” (probably only one region will be awarded grant funds) and therefore there seems to be no reason to limit the budget request at this point.

Michael emphasized, however, that after speaking with Rolf at DWR earlier that day, he realizes how important it is that *all* of the projects in our proposal package are strong (since DWR won't “cherry pick” projects, but rather will award an entire proposal or won't – and the strength of our overall application stands on the strength of each individual project). He had some concerns about the new RCD project. He wondered, if this is a 10-year project and the RCD is unable to guarantee funding after the first three years (of IRWM funding), will that hurt our chances of getting funded? Paul responded that this is always a challenge with long-term projects, but that the RCD is appealing to multiple sources of funds and that they already have funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board. Ken said that the State recognizes the importance of the ongoing fight against invasive species, and he didn't think this would be a problem for our application. Michael seemed satisfied with that response. But he did wonder if we could make the projects in the application package more *integrated*. Monique suggested we take a regional approach, show how we are solving our resource problems regionally.

Rob brought up the San Lucas water supply project and asked: What would it take to add construction to this project (which is now entirely planning)? Could they add construction for another \$1.5 million? Susan said that would indeed make our overall application more competitive. Jeanette will check with Nick Nichols about this.

Rob made a motion, and Colin seconded, that the RWMG approve the project list as is, unless San Lucas is able to add construction to their project for about \$1.5 million, in which case that they approve the project list with that addendum. All voted in favor, none opposed.

6. Data Management and Monitoring: Bridget gave an overview of the data management and monitoring task that she and several others have been working on for the Planning Grant. She had emailed everyone a copy of “Greater Monterey County IRWM Assessment of Water Quality Monitoring Programs and Data Gaps” that summarizes the results of this task, and went through that document briefly.

Bridget explained that a data assessment report released in 2008 as part of the Central Coast Water Quality Data Synthesis, Analysis and Management (SAM) project revealed certain data gaps on the Central Coast, including the lack of a centralized data management system, and lack of coordination between data collecting groups. She noted that since the release of that report, the State has made great progress toward developing a central data system, namely, the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN). As part of the data management system in our IRWM Plan, all surface water monitoring data is required to be entered into CEDEN. Regarding the second data gap (coordination), Bridget noted that CEDEN helps fill that gap as well, providing a clearinghouse for data users. Also, she noted that the RWMG has been working with the RCDs on the Central Coast and CCWG on the “Central Coast Action Tracker,” which will track land use monitoring data on the Central Coast. Bridget said that they will hopefully have a beta version of the Tracker ready within a month or so. Bridget drew everyone's attention to the 16 data monitoring programs that are listed in the document, and asked if

anyone knew of any additional data monitoring programs to please let her know.

7. Life after Completion of the IRWM Plan: Susan asked, now that the IRWM Plan is completed, how should we focus our energies? She had some suggestions to start:

- IRWM Plan Amendments: For Round 3, DWR will be evaluating IRWM Plans to ensure that they meet the 2012 IRWM Grant Program Guidelines. The evaluation will either be a pass/fail, or some type of scoring based on quality of the Plan (they haven't decided yet). Susan said she has carefully reviewed our Plan and there are a few areas that are questionable in terms of meeting the criteria, particularly: the RWMG's decision to *not* require preliminary economic analyses for projects as part of the project review process, and an analysis of project greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as part of the project review process. Susan said she fully understands why the RWMG voted to not require preliminary economic analyses for inclusion in the IRWM Plan; however, she pointed out that these preliminary analyses would have been extremely helpful in selecting projects for Round 2, as the economic analysis section of the application will count for 30% of our score. Rob added that if the cost-benefit analysis counts for that much of the application score, it does seem like something we should do. Susan said we are currently working with an economist (funded through the Round 1 Planning Grant) to develop tools to help project proponents with cost-benefit analyses. Regarding the GHG emissions analysis, Susan noted that Ross et al. have been making great progress on developing a GHG emissions tool for project proponents (also funded through the Round 1 Planning Grant). Susan said the results of both of these efforts (economic analysis tool and GHG emissions tool) that are currently being funded through the Planning Grant can be brought into the IRWM Plan; however, she stressed, we really do need to address these criteria head on and make doubly sure that our IRWM Plan will meet all 2012 criteria prior to Round 3. All agreed. Bridget asked if it would be possible to have our IRWM Plan evaluated by DWR soon. Susan will check with Monica.
- Climate Change: CCWG is continuing to work with the Climate Task Force to assess potential climate change impacts in the region. The RWMG can begin looking more closely at how climate change may impact the "water system" in the region (holistically), and what changes should be made to the water system to respond to those impacts.
- Integration: The RWMG can work to better integrate projects in the region. Some RWMG members pointed out that we *are* doing this through the WRPC process. We should continue to focus on that effort and should then work to import that process to other sub-watersheds of the region. There are other ways of integrating projects, as well. This is an area that can be further explored – now that we recognize how truly important "integration" is as part of the IRWM planning process.

Susan asked if anyone had anything else that they would like the Group to work on. Ken said that there seems to be some institutional barriers to success of our IRWM planning effort. He suggested we consider meeting once again with John Laird. He also noted that our Senator, Bill Monning, is on the water committee at the State Senate. Ken added that he has found the "coordination" that occurs through these monthly RWMG meetings to be very valuable; he would like to see that aspect of the meetings increase, i.e., a greater exchange of information between organizations.

Someone asked if there was enough funding to continue supporting the IRWM Plan Coordinator (Susan). Bridget said that they had extended funding for Susan through the Planning Grant contract but generally – no, there is not much funding remaining. Rob, Ken, and Bridget – the Funding Committee – agreed that they should set up some meetings to review continued funding for the IRWM planning effort. Someone suggested we need some external revenue streams. Ken said his dream has been to create a capacity-building program to make sure these programs (i.e., IRWM planning process and projects in the IRWM Plan) are sustainable. Susan noted that again, this will depend on finding other sources of funding.

Next month's RWMG meeting is scheduled for February 20th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, location TBD.