

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan**  
**Regional Water Management Group Meeting**  
**March 20, 2013**  
**1:30 - 2:30 PM**  
*Conference Call*

**RWVG Attendees:**

Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
Sierra Ryan – Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Rob Johnson – Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Ken Ekelund – Garrapata Creek Watershed Council  
Karen McBride – Rural Community Assistance Corporation  
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust  
Rich Guillen – City of Soledad  
Julianne Rhodes – Watershed Institute, CSUMB  
Christina McGinnis – Agricultural Commissioner’s Office

**Non-RWVG Attendees:**

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator  
Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)  
Dawn Mathes – Monterey County Resource Management Agency

**Meeting Minutes:**

**1. Brief Introductions.** We have two new RWVG representatives: Julianne Rhodes (Watershed Institute) and Christina McGinnis (Ag Commissioner) – welcome!

**2. Round 2 Implementation Grant Update:** Susan gave a brief update on the application process for Round 2. She had sent out a proposal budget summary to the RWVG prior to the meeting. The application is due March 29<sup>th</sup>, and the project proponents have been working very hard to complete the proposal. Everything is on track!

**3. Water Resource Project Coordination Process Update:** Sierra gave a brief overview of the WRPC stakeholder meeting that was held at the Ag Commissioner’s office on January 30, 2013. The meeting had about 25 attendees and was facilitated by Katie Burdick and Barbara Rusmore. Sierra described the process. First, the participants were presented with the question, “What are the ten biggest challenges to getting anything done in the Gabilan watershed?” Participants wrote down their responses on Post-It notes, then broke out into “affinity groups” to discuss. The groups each drew responses on a large piece of paper to the question, “What do you want the future of the watershed to look like?” One person from each group stayed with the drawing while others walked around the room to identify areas of agreement as well as areas of potential challenge, and to begin to identify what steps might be taken.

After lunch, a few members of the group presented the projects and efforts that are already underway in the watershed. The group then turned to a discussion of opportunities for next steps: what can be achieved through the WRPC process specifically? With grant funds available for information gathering through the Planning Grant, they went on to identify four potential uses for those funds:

1. Landscape-scale management strategies: This is a catch-all category for information gathering, addressing data gaps, etc.
2. Corporate/Social Responsibility Roundtable: The purpose is to bring watershed concerns to primarily mid-level food buyers.
3. Agency coordination: To help navigate through permitting, etc.
4. Public outreach and education.

The WRPC Subcommittee will refine and finalize these four areas, and will then begin implementing.

**4. AB1 Update:** Jeanette provided a brief update on AB1, a bill sponsored by Assemblyman Alejo. AB1 would allocate funds (up to \$2 million) to the Greater Monterey County IRWM region for a pilot study to assess and address the problem of access to safe drinking water for DACs in the Salinas Valley. There was a hearing on February 12 at which Jeanette and others testified. Jeanette said she was amazed at the overwhelming support for the bill. The bill was passed unanimously and is now going to appropriations. We should get word in June or July. Jeanette recommended that the RWMG begin thinking about how we should carry out this work. Susan suggested we form a subcommittee, and she asked for volunteers. The following people volunteered:

- Jeanette
- Karen McBride
- Rob (or someone else at MCWRA)
- Christina

Susan said she would ask Colin and Horacio (who weren't at the meeting) if they would like to participate, and put a notice out to the other RWMG members as well.

**5. Meeting with Senator Bill Monning:** Ken noted that the RWMG has a unique opportunity to discuss IRWM concerns and needs with Senator Bill Monning, who sits on the Senate Environmental Committee and is working on the Water Bill for November 2014. Ken suggests that the RWMG give this some serious thought and develop a letter to send to Senator Monning with points for him to consider. Susan suggested she could begin this process by brainstorming some ideas with a small sub-group (Ken, Rob, and Sierra volunteered; Donna Meyers was also volunteered - if she's willing). They will then bring the draft letter to the rest of the RWMG for input.

**6. MCWRA Water Right:** Rob provided a brief overview of a situation that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency is currently involved in. The MCWRA has had a water right since 1957 that the State Water Resources Control Board is now attempting to revoke (based on a "use it or lose it" policy). The water right is for about 168,000 AFY. The MCWRA has been able to utilize other water rights in place of this water right, and has been planning on using that water (they have projects lined up). A Regional Advisory Committee has been convened to develop plans/projects for how the water could be used. Ken noted that there has been significant amount of pushback from the community, primarily from water users who are concerned that they may be held back from conducting their projects if MCWRA retains the water right. He emphasized that the MCWRA needs *broad* support from the community to retain this water right. Rob noted that they need to show the community the numerous projects that the MCWRA is planning to implement, which would use this water. There is a hearing scheduled for August 28-30, 2013. Perhaps the RWMG can provide support?

**7. Other News:** Karen McBride reminded everyone that the IRWM Annual Conference will be taking place on April 4 and 5 in Sacramento. She will be speaking at the conference on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and encouraged others to attend. Also, the annual Funding Fair, sponsored by the State, will be held this year in various locations around the state. She said the Funding Fairs can be very useful for finding sources of grant funds for various types of projects, with representatives from different agencies present to discuss funding opportunities one-on-one with attendees. Susan forwarded the Funding Fair flyer to the RWMG. Karen also commented that RCAC has been extremely busy lately conducting income surveys for communities in the Monterey County region; Susan asked her to keep the RWMG posted if they identify any new DACs in the region.

Susan asked Rich for an update on the Round 1 Implementation Grant (the City of Soledad is the lead applicant for that grant). Rich said that he has successfully set up an account on the Bond Management System (BMS) for the Round 1 Grant, and they are now just waiting to hear back from Monica regarding the contract. He thinks they are very close to getting the contract approved.

Finally, Susan noted that the RWMG will be voting to formally approve the IRWM Plan at next month's RWMG meeting. She emphasized that "this is a big deal!" and asked if anyone had any ideas on how we can properly acknowledge and celebrate the completion of the Plan. She added she was planning on holding the meeting at MCWRA, since that is where the Plan was first developed. Suggestions were for cake and perhaps a bit of a social hour at the end of the meeting. Jeanette asked if the Central Coast Wetlands Group could host the meeting at Moss Landing Marine Labs, where they could then hold the social hour outside on their back deck by the Monterey Bay. Sierra said she'd check into it.

**Next month's RWMG meeting is scheduled for April 17th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, location TBD.**