

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
March 19, 2014
1:30 - 3:30 PM
Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Salinas, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Rob Johnson – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Pam Krone-Davis – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Julianne Rhodes – Watershed Institute, CSUMB
Ken Ekelund – Garrapata Creek Watershed Council
Sierra Ryan – Central Coast Wetlands Group, Moss Landing Marine Labs
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
Christina McGinnes – Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
Colin Bailey – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator
Sarah Reich – ECONorthwest
Louise Ramirez – Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation
Karen Nilsen – Nilsen & Associates
Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance
Kenia Acevedo – California Rural Legal Assistance
Pearl Kan – California Rural Legal Assistance
Jennifer Biringer – The Nature Conservancy
Monica Reis – California Department of Water Resources

Meeting Minutes:

1. Brief Introductions.

2. Update on Round 3 and the Project Solicitation Process: Susan provided a summary of the Roundtable of Regions meeting that was held the previous day, regarding the “expedited” IRWM grant funding round which is occurring in response to the drought. Governor Brown recently signed the \$687 million Emergency Drought Relief Bill. The funds will come from existing bonds, including Prop 84 IRWM grant funds. Details are still being worked out, but what we know at this point is that the Department of Water Resources will be holding an “expedited” round (in lieu of “Round 3”) to disperse \$200 million of the remaining \$450 million Prop 84 IRWM Implementation Grant funds, to fund projects that achieve the following:

1. Immediate “drought preparedness”
2. Water supply reliability, and delivery and safe drinking water
3. Water conservation programs and measures that are locally *not* cost effective (assuming that programs that *are* cost effective should already be in place... The example given was leak detection and repair projects, where leak detection may be cost-effective but the actual repair may not be)
4. Projects that resolve water quality or ecosystem conflicts that have occurred because of the drought.

The remaining \$250 million of IRWM Implementation Grant funds will be held back for one more round of funding, which will occur sometime in 2015 (we might think of the 2015 round as the “Round 3” we were originally expecting to occur this fall). DWR will be releasing a draft Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) for this expedited round in early April, with the final PSP expected in early June, and applications due in early August.

Monica emphasized that this round (as opposed to prior rounds) will focus on CASGEM eligibility. She pointed out that Monterey County, currently, is not listed as a CASGEM entity, which means that our region would not be eligible to apply in the expedited round. Rob responded that MCWRA staff are working with Dane Mathis at DWR to rectify this problem. He said that they are in the process of entering wells, but they've been told they need to add basins that MCWRA doesn't monitor. He noted, as an aside, that the CASGEM program is a voluntary program and MCWRA has no funds to do this work; MCWRA requested funds from the State in 2009 to help them implement the program, but they did not receive any. To make eligibility for IRWM grant funds based on CASGEM seems unfair, Rob said. Jeanette mentioned that this Friday is the deadline for public comments to DWR regarding the Solicitation Improvement Process, and maybe we should comment on that. Monica recommended that it would be better to wait until the draft PSP for the expedited round is released. Rob noted that MCWRA may have worked this problem out by then, anyway.

Susan said that DWR does not yet know whether the \$200 million will be apportioned by IRWM Funding Area or whether it will be available on a statewide basis; either way, between the "expedited" round and the 2015 round combined, our Funding Area (i.e., Central Coast) will still have about \$19.7 million available in IRWM grant funds (the amount we had expected to have available for "Round 3"). There was some discussion about this. Susan commented that the advantages vs. disadvantages of apportioning the \$200 million by Funding Area are not entirely clear; however, if it's not apportioned, it is conceivable (though probably not likely) that another region in our Funding Area could be awarded the full \$19.7 million in the expedited round, leaving nothing left for the 2015 IRWM round.

Susan said that given all of these recent changes in funding, our original timeline for "Round 3" is now moot. She will send an email to all stakeholders tomorrow to let them know about these critical changes. She asked the Group whether they thought we should hold another project solicitation before the 2015 "Round 3" funding solicitation. The RWMG was non-committal, and suggested that we simply don't mention a possible 2015 project solicitation in the letter to stakeholders. There was discussion about general logistics for this upcoming round, and how to select projects. Susan recommended that we devote next month's RWMG entirely to working out these logistics.

Karen said that there are several disadvantaged community projects that are possibilities for this round, but they were thinking of doing a "bigger picture" program, e.g., failed septic, tying into other systems, etc. She said it will be worth spending time looking at this strategically.

3. Economic Screening Tool: Sarah Reich from ECONorthwest provided an overview of the new economic screening tool, which will be used as part of the Project Review process to help the RWMG select projects for grant funds. She emphasized that this is not a benefit/cost analysis, but that it is a tool to give the RWMG a sense of the economic information available for projects and the likelihood that a project would score well in a full benefit/cost analysis. She briefly went over the categories of questions on the "Benefits" tab, pointing out that most of the questions are in a "yes/no" format, and are general in nature (not detailed, as in a benefit/cost analysis). The Benefits tab does include some questions that get at quantified values, if that information is available to project proponents. The last two sets of categories in the Benefits tab get at the order of magnitude of the benefits, including evidence of demand for the project effects, and distribution and equity considerations.

The Cost tab is much simpler, Sarah said, requesting basic project costs but also costs that go beyond the project budget, such as potential costs to society (impacts and external costs), and ongoing operation and maintenance costs. Jeanette asked if the questions on the economic screening tool came from DWR. Sarah responded that ECONorthwest based the questions on DWR's guidance but expanded upon them; essentially the questions capture the spirit of DWR's economic analysis guidance. Susan noted that Sierra had done a test run of the economic screening tool and asked what she thought of it. Sierra said it didn't take very long to complete the template, and the questions seemed reasonable. She said she thought it was a really great tool, very helpful, and that CCWG might use it for other grant applications (besides IRWM) as well.

Elizabeth asked about ongoing (O&M) costs and what would be the best time period to use for purposes of a benefit/cost analysis. Sarah responded that it's best to use a time period that corresponds with the lifespan of the

project (e.g., not “100 years”). In any case, just make sure the cost time period and benefits time period are consistent with each other. Bridget asked if the dollar amounts included on this screening tool would still be accurate in, say, a year. Sarah said yes, she wouldn’t expect the dollar amounts to change dramatically within a couple of years. Sarah emphasized one more time that this tool is not a replacement for a benefit/cost analysis. Susan thanked Sarah for her great work in developing this tool for the region, and others agreed.

4. Vote to Amend IRWM Plan: On March 7, Susan emailed the RWMG suggested changes to the Project Review chapter of the IRWM Plan, which included updates in three basic areas: changes to the Project Ranking system (which had been approved by the RWMG in January), inclusion of the economic screening tool, and a minor update to the climate change section to include information about a new greenhouse gas emissions tool. Susan ascertained that a quorum was present (Paul had left the meeting; Michael Ricker was not present but had given Susan his proxy to vote). A vote was held: no one voted against approving the changes, one person abstained (Elizabeth said she was abstaining for no other reason than she hadn’t read the amended chapter), and all others voted to approve the amendments. With the amendments to the IRWM Plan approved, Susan will now submit the plan to DWR for the formal plan review.

5. Presentation on Native American Tribes in the Greater Monterey County IRWM Region: Louise Ramirez, Tribal Chairwoman of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the history of Native American tribes in the Monterey County region. Louise began by discussing the legal name of the nation, noting the name that was given to them by the U.S. government and mentioning that “Costanoan” was derived from Spanish for “coastal dweller.” “But,” she said, “we have always known that we are Esselen.” She then gave an overview of tribal history and a sampling of tribal evidence that has been submitted to the U.S. government to obtain federal recognition. She began with their creation story, and illustrated their early way of life (including, for example, use of tule for river boats, skirts, baskets, and mats). The Spanish came to Monterey Bay in 1603, and then the Christian missions came in 1770. The Esselen people resisted the governmental taking of land and the domination of the missions. In 1871, the California government was offering \$2 for bringing in an Indian scalp; they were getting so many that they didn’t know whether they were Mexican or American Indians. So they upped the reward to \$5 to bring in the entire head of an Indian. It was not until 1924 that the Native Americans were made citizens.

Louise discussed a treaty that was signed with the U.S. government in 1851-52 which recognized the Esselen land, but the treaty was never ratified. And this is why the Esselen people have ended up with no land, and why the Esselen tribe has not been able to receive federal recognition. She mentioned that at one point, some anthropologists had claimed the Indians no longer existed in Monterey County. That statement was reversed in 1955, recognizing that the Indians are “still here”; however, because the Indians don’t live as they once did (off the land), there was no “value” anthropologically, it said, in this tribe. This decision has also hurt the Esselen people in their fight to gain federal recognition. Louise showed photos of Esselen Indians, including photos of her immediate family, and she talked about Isabel Meadows, a person of great importance to the tribe.

Christina asked Louise what stage in the process they were currently at. Louise responded that they had filed all the documents, but they received a letter claiming a denial of facts. She said the federal government only accepts information from Ph.D.’s, etc., and the tribe doesn’t have the money to pay them. She emphasized that none of the tribes on the coast have received federal recognition.

Colin asked Louise what the present-day aspirations of the Esselen people were. Louise explained that they would like to build a cultural center in the former Fort Ord. They have been promised some land on Fort Ord. She said County Supervisor Dave Potter, however, has voiced concern that if they are given land, they will build a casino. But Louise said they have clearly agreed there would be no gaming, and that they are willing to sign whatever legal documents to that effect. Their plan is to construct a cultural/interpretive center, an educational center, and a wellness center (to help their citizens with such issues as diabetes). She noted that since no one is likely to “give them these three buildings,” they propose to build a hotel (four stories) and conference center to help fund the cultural/educational/wellness centers. They would develop 20 acres, and at the center would be an amphitheater.

Jennifer asked how the IRWM process might best include the Esselen people. In response to the question of

whether Louise would review projects in the IRWM Plan in order to ensure that none of the projects would potentially impact sacred or archeological sites, Louise responded that all projects must undergo a similar review during CEQA. She added that if they need a monitor, Louise asks them to contact her. Bridget asked, “So review of the IRWM Plan projects would happen anyway during the CEQA review, and therefore you don’t feel you need to review our projects beforehand?” Louise responded that the CEQA process does take a long time, and someone noted that maybe it would be beneficial for the tribe to get this early opportunity for review. Susan explained to Louise what would be entailed in reviewing the projects in the IRWM Plan – essentially she would be looking at the project locations, and if a project was located in a sensitive area, she would look to see what type of project it was and if it might affect sacred or cultural sites. She wouldn’t need to review every project in detail, just the ones located in potentially sensitive areas. Louise said she would need to check with the Council. Susan said she would write a letter explaining the process, so Louise could bring it to the Council (by April 13).

Bridget asked Louise what she thought the IRWM process could do for the tribe. Louise said their new cultural center on the former Fort Ord will be requiring a water system, and she hopes that the IRWM process might be of help. Susan encouraged Louise to attend the monthly RWMG meetings, to become more familiar with the IRWM process so as to figure out how she could best plug into the process. Jeanette concurred that Louise would benefit by more inclusion than just a one-time review of projects in the IRWM Plan.

6. Other Business. The meeting went over time so there was no other business.

Next month’s RWMG meeting is scheduled for April 16th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM, location TBA.