

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Regional Water Management Group Meeting**

June 20, 2018

Moss Landing Marine Labs, Moss Landing, CA

RWMG Entity Attendees:

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Brian Frus – City of Salinas
Sarah Hardgrave – Big Sur Land Trust
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Victoria McClellan – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
Christina McGinnis – Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
Kevin O’Connor – Central Coast Wetlands Group
John Olson – California State University Monterey Bay
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Monterey County

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Mike Godwin – Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Heather Lukacs – Member of the Public
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director

Meeting Minutes

1. Brief Introductions. Susan introduced Victoria McClellan, EJCW’s new Outreach Coordinator.

2. Implementing the IRWM Implementation Grant Process: An Open Discussion. The Greater Monterey County IRWM region received Prop 84 Round 1 Implementation Grant funds for seven projects:

- **Project 1:** City of Soledad: “Soledad Water Recycling/Reclamation Project”
- **Project 2:** Castroville Community Services District: “Castroville CSD Well 2B Treatment Project”
- **Project 3:** San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.: “San Jerardo Wastewater Project: Water Quality Concerns in a Disadvantaged Farm-Worker Community in the Salinas Valley”
- **Project 4:** Elkhorn Slough Foundation: “Integrated Ecosystem Restoration in Elkhorn Slough”
- **Project 5:** Central Coast Wetlands Group at Moss Landing Marine Labs: “Water Quality Enhancement of the Tembladero Slough and Coastal Access for the Community of Castroville”
- **Project 6:** Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Central Coast Wetlands Group, and RCD of Monterey County: “Watershed Approach to Water Quality Solutions”
- **Project 7:** UC Davis Granite Canyon Marine Pollution Studies Laboratory: “Evaluation of Potential for Stormwater Toxicity Reduction by LID Treatment Systems”

Susan led a discussion about the experiences project proponents have had in implementing their projects through the Prop 84 Implementation Grant, along with lessons learned. She began by reading an email sent by Don Wilcox, Public Works Director for the City of Soledad, who was the Lead Applicant for the Round 1 grant. In terms of lessons learned, Don advised that in order to be able to pay project bills on time while waiting for reimbursement from the State, bridge financing needs to be in place, either internal or external, as project costs are typically due within 30 days whereas reimbursement can take many months (and sometimes more than a year). He also wished the State had given them more guidance on reporting.

Bridget Hoover talked about the Sanctuary's Santa Rita Creek project, with project partners RCD and the Central Coast Wetlands Group (CCWG). The intent of the project was to focus on the watershed as a whole, working with growers upstream to improve water quality in the creek. Creek restoration, implemented by CCWG, was successful; however, the outreach to growers was somewhat limited due to a variety of reasons. Bridget noted that the regular check-ins for project proponents during the early part of the grant was very helpful; but those check-ins ceased to occur later in the project period. A lesson learned: including seven projects in the grant was burdensome, administratively. For Prop 1 Round 1, we should include only a limited number of projects.

Monique Fountain commented that the Elkhorn Slough Foundation spent much more time on invoicing and reporting (with invoices needing to be submitted and resubmitted numerous times) than the 5% administrative cap covered. Paul Robins commented that the RCD experienced extreme delays in payment with this grant. (Monique concurred, noting that the Elkhorn Slough Foundation had not been reimbursed since October 2016.) Paul commented on the personnel changes at DWR over the course of the grant period, and wondered how much of the delay was due to it being a complicated grant administratively and how much was due to personnel. Monique also pointed out the prevailing wage and labor compliance plan requirements in Prop 84, adding that it cost the Elkhorn Slough Foundation \$10K - \$12K to put a prevailing wage program in place, which was not covered in their grant costs. (Sarah noted that Prop 1 includes prevailing wage requirements but does not include the labor compliance plan requirement.) Horacio Amezcua said that San Jerardo's wastewater project was covered by two grants – the IRWM grant (DWR) and a State Water Resources Control Board grant. They got paid every 30 days from the State Water Board grant, but payment was extremely slow from DWR.

Ross Clark said he valued the regional partnership that occurred with this first IRWM Implementation Grant. He commented on the “efficiency in the inefficiency” of all working together. Paul wondered about advanced payment for future grants. Susan said that DWR offers advanced payment with the current IRWM Disadvantaged Community Involvement grant, and so will likely offer that for the upcoming Prop 1 Round 1 Implementation Grant.

3. IRWM News Update. Susan gave a brief update on the Prop 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant process. She reminded everyone about the pre-application workshops that DWR will be requiring for each Funding Area, prior to submitting the Round 1 application. DWR has just announced a new timeframe for the workshops: they expect to offer workshops between February and July 2019 (as opposed to November 2018 and April 2019). So whereas previously the Central Coast IRWM regions were hoping for a February 2019 workshop date, currently they are planning to request an April 2019 workshop date. In addition, Susan noted that DWR had previously planned to release the draft Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) by early July 2018; however, they now expect to release the draft PSP in September 2018. Susan said this means she will be delaying the project solicitation for the IRWM Plan, since she will be basing the project application form on the draft PSP questions. Sarah commented that DWR has simplified the Implementation Grant application requirements compared with previous years.

4. Other Business. Susan said that she is in the process of wrapping up the Planning Grant now. She noted that the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) has reviewed, and has given their “thumbs up” approval, on almost all of the chapter revisions. Still to do is one additional minor revision to the Climate Change chapter, plus a short summary of the two RWMG meetings that featured discussions with land use planners for the Relation to Land Use Planning chapter. Susan will finalize those revisions shortly, and then will post all of the revised chapters online for RWMG and public review. She hopes to have the RWMG's final approval of the revised IRWM Plan by the September 2018 RWMG meeting at the latest. She thanked everyone for their help and participation in the chapter revisions.

Susan announced that the July RWMG meeting will be canceled, in the spirit of summer.

5. Elkhorn Slough Reserve Tour of Marsh Restoration Project: The “indoor” portion of the meeting then adjourned. RWMG members followed Monique to the Elkhorn Slough Reserve for a tour of a 65-acre marsh restoration site, conducted through the Elkhorn Slough Reserve's Tidal Wetland Program

(<http://www.elkhornslough.org/tidal-wetland-program/hester-marsh-restoration/>) and funded in part through the Prop 84 Round 1 Implementation Grant.

Susan's editorial comment: The tour was extremely informative and was an excellent opportunity for RWMG members to see first-hand the results of projects funded through the IRWM program. It was also a great opportunity for RWMG members to gain a more in-depth understanding of water resource management work being conducted by their RWMG colleagues.

The next RWMG meeting will be held on August 15, 2018, 1:30PM – 3:30PM, location TBD. (The July RWMG has been canceled.)