

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program  
Regional Water Management Group Meeting  
November 16, 2015  
Location: Big Sur Land Trust, Monterey, CA**

**RWMG Attendees:**

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.  
Colin Bailey – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water  
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Sarah Hardgrave – Big Sur Land Trust  
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Christina McGinnis – Monterey County Ag Commissioner’s Office  
Kevin O’Connor – Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust

**Non-RWMG Attendees:**

Megan Beckman – City of Monterey  
Jeff Condit – Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program  
Rich Guillen – Guillen & Associates  
Larry Hampson – Monterey Peninsula Water Management District  
Thomas Korman – City of Monterey  
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Coordinator

**Meeting Minutes:**

**1. Brief Introductions.**

**2. Storm Water Resource Plan and Grant Program:** Susan announced the expected schedule for the Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) planning grant application process: the final PSP is expected to be released in early January, with applications due six weeks later. She said the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (MRWPCA) is intending to apply for Storm Water Implementation Grant funds with a Functionally Equivalent Plan (FEP). She brought up a rumor she had heard that regions that have an FEP will be given lower priority for planning grant funds than regions that do not have an FEP, and Jeff confirmed that, based on a State Water Board workshop he recently attended. This led to a lengthy discussion regarding the FEP and how the Regional Water Management Group should proceed, with Ross remarking that pushing ahead with the FEP/Implementation Grant – if it would hurt the IRWM group’s chances of being awarded SWRP planning grant funds – would undermine the collaborative spirit this group has worked so hard to achieve over the past several years. Susan noted that if we were to miss out on planning grant funds, it would really be too bad as developing an SWRP would offer the region a great opportunity to do some meaningful watershed planning. She added that perhaps MRWPCA doesn’t *realize* that pushing forward with an FEP might affect the region’s chances of getting planning grant funds, and noted we should discuss it with them.

Larry raised the possibility of writing one SWRP for both the Greater Monterey County and Monterey Peninsula regions. Though the regions rely on separate groundwater basins, and there is a clear watershed divide, the regions are connected through storm water *use* in the proposed Pure Water Monterey (groundwater replenishment) project and other developments. Larry and Susan had discussed the possibility of writing a single plan previously, and had decided it probably made more sense to write two separate plans with an agreement to cooperate on overlapping interests. Larry remarked that the maximum planning grant award of \$500,000 might not be enough to fully cover both IRWM regions for developing a single plan.

The discussion went back to the FEP. Susan wondered what watershed(s) the FEP might be based on, and whether it would cover the same watershed regions as covered by the IRWM region. She assumed the FEP would focus on the Rec Ditch watershed, but Elizabeth pointed out that if a portion of Salinas storm water discharges to the Salinas River (which it does), then the FEP would have to cover the Salinas River watershed as well. Ross expressed concern about the FEP potentially not taking into account the other IRWM partners, projects, and efforts. It was decided that Susan would talk with the State Water Resources Control Board to confirm whether one entity putting forward an FEP could indeed hurt the greater region's chances of being awarded planning grant funds, and if so, she and Bridget will have a discussion with MRWPCA and the City of Salinas. Susan also said she would talk with Mike McCullough about the FEP anticipated coverage area. Larry mentioned that there is a \$1 million grant from Bureau of Reclamation to conduct a basin plan for the Salinas River and Carmel River basins; it'll be a three-year effort. Possibly that work could contribute information to a SWRP, and could potentially be used for match.

**3. Central Coast IRWM Funding Strategy:** Susan continued the discussion from the previous RWMG meeting regarding whether or not the RWMG should endorse a Central Coast IRWM funding strategy for future IRWM grant funding rounds. Since Elizabeth and Rob had reported at the last meeting that the MCWRA Planning Committee had expressed reservations about supporting a funding strategy, Susan asked Elizabeth whether the Planning Committee had come to any further decisions. Elizabeth said she sensed the Planning Committee, at this point, was neither strongly opposed nor strongly in favor.

Prior to the meeting, Susan had sent the group a memo from the San Luis Obispo IRWM region, which proposed a solution for determining how to allocate IRWM grant funds amongst the six different IRWM regions using game theory. Larry explained that the original funding strategy proposal consisted of eight different methods of allocating funds between the regions (based on variations of splitting the money evenly between the regions, geographic size, and/or population). By applying game theory, the "least preferred" option for each region was eliminated, and then the next "least preferred" option eliminated, until only one option remained. The remaining option was no region's worst outcome, but not the best outcome for any one region, either. Susan asked everyone's opinion of this method, and of the outcome (the Greater Monterey County region would receive \$8.4 million in Prop 1 IRWM grant funds using this method). After some discussion, everyone appeared to be in favor of the game theory method and of the outcome.

Bridget asked about the logistics of entering into an agreement between the regions. Larry explained there would be an MOU or MOA between the regions, which the RWMG's themselves would have to enforce (DWR does not want to be in the role of policing the agreement). Larry also noted that currently the IRWM Implementation Grant funds are expected to be awarded in two rounds, 2017 and 2019. But there is the possibility that all of the funds could be awarded in one round (say, 2018). It's possible that under a funding agreement, each region could decide for itself whether to obtain the funds in one round or two.

Susan brought up a concern voiced at the last RWMG meeting about a lack of assurance that DWR would honor a funding agreement between IRWM regions; from everything Tracie Billington has said, though, Susan felt that DWR was very much in favor of supporting such agreements. Larry noted that the IRWM regions in the San Diego Funding Area signed an MOU for a funding agreement, and DWR honored it. Susan pointed to that as a good precedent. Larry added that we would still need to submit grant applications, and the applications would still need to meet DWR's standards. Someone asked whether any of the Central Coast regions appeared to be *opposed* to a funding agreement, and Larry said he didn't think so.

Susan asked if anyone had any further concerns or comments. Colin responded he would add one caveat: since there will be two funding rounds devoted entirely to disadvantaged community (DAC) funding that will occur prior to the Implementation Grant rounds, he asked that the funding allocated to the DAC rounds be skimmed off the top before applying the game theory allocation method; and that the DAC Implementation funds be distributed based on *DAC need* following a needs assessment (rather than distributed according to the allocation method).

The group was not opposed to that, and appeared to favor moving forward both with a Central Coast funding strategy in general and with the specific funding allocation that resulted from the game theory method, with Colin's caveat. Rather than take a vote in the room, Susan said she thought the issue was important enough that every RWMG member should weigh in and vote. She said she would send an email to the entire group, including Colin's caveat. There was some discussion about the logistics of signing an MOU/MOA, and whether each RWMG entity would need to sign the document.

**4. Ongoing Funding for the IRWM Process:** Susan announced, as an FYI, that there had been a recommendation through the IRWM Strategic Plan for DWR to provide baseline funding for each Regional Water Management Group to support the IRWM planning effort. Colin said that he and Elizabeth Betancourt had developed the idea. Susan asked where the funding would come from. Colin responded potentially from some set-aside from Prop 1 (they would have to ask the legislature to amend Prop 1 to make that possible), or from the General Fund (less likely, very competitive). At this point it is still a concept. Everyone agreed, a very good concept.

**5. IRWM Planning Grant:** Susan reminded everyone that the RWMG will be applying for an IRWM planning grant in order to meet requirements for AB 1249 (a regional plan for arsenic, perchlorate, chromium VI, and nitrates). The final Guidelines and PSP will probably be released in the spring, with applications due in the summer.

**6. Other business.** There was no new business.

**The next RWMG is scheduled for December 16, 2015, location TBA.**