

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program  
Regional Water Management Group Meeting  
December 16, 2015  
Location: Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Monterey, CA**

**RWMG Attendees:**

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.  
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Rich Guillen – Guillen & Associates (for the City of Soledad)  
Sarah Hardgrave – Big Sur Land Trust  
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Mike McCullough – Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency  
Kevin O’Connor – Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Gary Petersen – City of Salinas  
Michael Ricker – City of Salinas  
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District of Monterey County

**Non-RWMG Attendees:**

Jeff Condit – Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program  
Paul Greenway – MNS Engineers, Inc.  
John Hunt – UC Davis  
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Coordinator

**Meeting Minutes:**

**1. Brief Introductions.**

**2. Storm Water Resource Plan and Grant Program:** Susan provided a brief background on Storm Water Resource Plans (SWRPs), explaining that an entity cannot get State grant funds to fund a storm water or dry weather runoff capture project unless that project is included in a SWRP (or in a Functionally Equivalent Plan, FEP). The question for today’s meeting was: Did the group want to develop a SWRP for the IRWM region, and if so, who would write the plan, who would write the SWRP planning grant application, and who would pay for it? Susan pointed out that the match requirement is quite high for the planning grant – 50% non-State – so that might pose an obstacle.

Susan said that the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (MRWPCA) and the City of Salinas have decided to develop an FEP for the purpose of being able to pursue Round 1 Storm Water Implementation Grant funds. She said if the RWMG decides to write a SWRP, it will need to closely coordinate efforts with MRWPCA and the City on the FEP. At the previous RWMG meeting, someone had raised a concern that having an FEP would reduce the RWMG’s chances of receiving planning grant funds to develop an SWRP. Susan said that is not the case; there is no conflict. Mike confirmed MRWPCA’s plans to develop an FEP; the plan will most likely be based on the Gabilan and Natividad Creek subwatersheds in Salinas. Gary stated that anything they do would support the larger regional plan.

Regarding who would write a SWRP, Kevin noted that eligible applicants include nonprofits – but Susan wondered whether a SWRP would need to be developed on behalf of a public agency (as implied in the Guidelines); and if so, who would the “lead applicant” be? Kevin also said he had spoken with someone at the Department of Water Resources (DWR) about potential match reduction based on the presence of Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) within the region, and noted that we might qualify for reduced match. Susan will follow

up with the State Water Resources Control Board about that. A discussion ensued about matching funds; Gary and others felt that coming up with 50% match wouldn't pose a problem. The question will be – what is eligible for match, what isn't?

Gary noted that it might be possible to broaden the base of the FEP to the entire IRWM region, essentially using the FEP as the foundation for a SWRP. Everyone seemed to be in favor of that idea. Susan said perhaps all the (non-State) money spent developing the FEP could then be used as match. Bridget added that building a SWRP off of the FEP would also ensure compatibility between the two plans, and a cooperative planning effort. Elizabeth discussed the Monterey County Water Resources Agency's (MCWRA) long-term vision for the Salinas River, including channel maintenance, and storm water outside of the urban context, from Soledad down to the ocean. Susan brought up the distinction between "storm water management" and "flood management" for purposes of the SWRP and Storm Water Grant Program, emphasizing that projects needed to include a "storm water *capture*" component. Sarah added that projects must not only include "capture" but "reuse" (and furthermore, for *human* purposes; for example, it wouldn't be good enough for a storm water project to recharge an aquifer, unless there were wells extracting that groundwater for human use).

Bridget finally asked if anyone thought the RWMG *shouldn't* apply for a planning grant, noting that the group has been wanting to conduct this type of study for quite some time. All were in favor of developing a SWRP and applying for a planning grant.

Jeff stated that the Monterey Peninsula region also intends to pursue a SWRP planning grant, adding that they intend to include a chapter on "connectivity" between the two regions and their watersheds. Bridget noted that the link is an anthropogenic rather than a watershed link: it's about how we use the water, how we pump the water back and forth. Gary commented, in the context of the Sustainable Groundwater Agency effort, that "there's only one water"; *all* sources of water will need to be utilized (managed collectively) in order to ensure a sustainable groundwater basin in 50 years.

Susan raised the question: who will be the lead public agency for the SWRP, who will be involved in writing the application, and who will pay for it? Elizabeth offered the MCWRA as potential lead agency. Gary offered the City's technical assistance, and added he wasn't sure if the City would be the right one to act as lead public agency, but would consider that option. (The question was raised, Can there be multiple lead public agencies?) Bridget offered Susan as writing the application (and Susan said she would need significant technical assistance).

Bridget emphasized that a SWRP would benefit the entire Greater Monterey County region, and encouraged every RWMG member to contribute something – either funding or in-kind assistance. Ross offered Central Coast Wetlands Group's help in drafting the proposal and providing technical assistance, and would also contribute some money to help pay for Susan's time. Also, he said CCWG could administer the grant (low overhead). Sarah offered her staff time and a possible monetary contribution from Big Sur Land Trust. Gary offered a monetary contribution from the City of Salinas plus some of Michael's staff time to work on the application. Bridget said the Sanctuary could contribute some funding as well as staff time. Paul Robins (RCD) offered in-kind assistance on the application. John said he could also offer technical assistance with the application. Paul Greenway noted that MNS Engineers has a new grant writer on staff, if the group needed additional grant writing assistance. Bridget said the Sanctuary already has a fund in place for Susan's time, so RWMG members can contribute directly to that fund.

Susan suggested she call together a small subcommittee of those interested in contributing to the proposal process. The subcommittee will meet to review the application carefully and determine who might be best suited to assist with the different application components. They would then have a better sense of what the application process would involve and how much it would cost. Susan will create a Doodle poll soon to set up that meeting.

**3. Central Coast IRWM Funding Strategy:** Susan provided a brief overview of the Central Coast funding strategy, noting that the RWMG had voted to support "option #1" of the eight alternatives on the table, with a

caveat suggested by Colin Bailey (Environmental Justice Coalition for Water) that the Prop 1 funding set aside for disadvantaged communities (DACs) be scooped off the top and distributed instead according to DAC need. Susan reported, however, that at the previous week's meeting of the six Central Coast IRWM regions, the other regions were in favor of "option #1" but not with the DAC caveat. The reasoning was that each region has DAC needs that far exceed the amount of money available for DACs, so the IRWM DAC funds would essentially be a drop in the bucket. In addition, the DAC caveat adds a level of uncertainty to the funding agreement (i.e., how the DAC funds would be allocated, exactly), which would slow down the funding agreement process. In the interest of expediting that process (in order to get an MOA signed prior to the first round of IRWM funds), the other regions strongly favored option #1 without the DAC caveat. Susan asked the RWMG, would they go along with that?

Elizabeth said she thought it was fair. She recognized that Colin had a bigger vision for the entire Central Coast, but she said it's not like the Greater Monterey County region would be losing that money. Susan agreed that distributing the DAC funds according to DAC need did seem to make sense, but noted that the region would likely receive more DAC money by going with the straight "option #1." Someone asked if each region would be able to decide for themselves how to spend the DAC funds allocated to them if we went with the straight "option 1," and Susan responded that they would. Bridget said she was fine moving ahead with the funding agreement, claiming she was just amazed the Central Coast regions have finally gotten to this place. She asked if anyone was against it. Susan questioned whether a simple vote of the RWMG would suffice, or whether each RWMG member would need to be consulted. It was decided that a simple vote would suffice, since each RWMG member had already been consulted about the concept of moving forward with a Central Coast IRWM funding strategy, and all had approved.<sup>1</sup> Susan took a vote: a quorum was present, and all were in favor, none opposed. The RWMG officially supports moving ahead with "option #1."

Susan said the group will need to have legal counsel review the MOA. Gary offered to have the City's attorney review the document (by end of year, or early January), and Elizabeth offered to have the County's attorney review it as well. Susan will send an updated version of the MOA soon to Gary and Elizabeth for legal review. Monique wondered whether there was a place in the MOA for DWR to sign. Susan said no, but there *is* precedence for DWR supporting this type of agreement, and DWR staff have expressed a strong desire for these types of funding arrangements. Others confirmed that. Susan explained that each IRWM region would still need to submit an application in each funding round, and the proposal would still need to pass muster with DWR. If DWR decided not to fund a particular region (e.g., due to an unacceptable proposal), those funds would most likely get pushed forward to the next round.

There was some discussion about the logistics of signing the MOA, and the fact that an MOA is not legally enforceable or binding. Elizabeth asked, what would the worst case scenario be? One region could go rogue and apply for the entire pot in one round; then it would be up to DWR to decide – and that is what essentially happens now. It would be unfair, but consensus was that the group could live with that risk. Gary said he would consult with the City's attorney regarding MOA procedural matters, as well.

**4. Other business.** Susan announced that, contrary to what was stated in the meeting agenda, Rob Johnson will not be retiring just yet from MCWRA. Elizabeth explained that Rob had planned to retire, but circumstances have prompted him to "un-retire." Folks expressed relief at not losing Rob to Washington State.

**The next RWMG is scheduled for January 20, 2016, location TBA.**

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<sup>1</sup> Every RWMG entity approved with the exception of one, CalWater, which did not vote.