

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program  
Regional Water Management Group Meeting  
June 15, 2016  
Location: Monterey County Water Resources Agency in Salinas, CA**

**RWMG Attendees:**

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.  
Colin Bailey – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water  
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Ken Ekelund – Garrapata Creek Watershed Council  
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough Estuarine Research Reserve  
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
Rob Johnson – Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Heather Lukacs – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water  
Mike McCullough – Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency  
Kevin O’Connor – Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Michael Ricker – City of Salinas  
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District of Monterey County  
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust

**Non-RWMG Attendees:**

Jeff Condit – Monterey Regional Storm Water Management Program  
Andy Fisher – UC Santa Cruz  
John Hunt – UC Davis  
Sachi Itagaki – Kennedy/Jenks Consultants  
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Coordinator

**Meeting Minutes:**

**1. Brief Introductions.**

**2. DAC Plan Update:** Colin announced that the additional \$200,000 that the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water and the Regional Water Management Group had requested from the State to augment the budget for the “Integrated Drinking Water and Wastewater Plan for Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley” effort is in the final budget bill and will be voted on this afternoon.

**3. Vote to Approve New Projects for Inclusion in the IRWM Plan:** Susan explained why there had been a “special” solicitation for stormwater projects for inclusion in the IRWM Plan (that is, to enable agencies to be eligible to apply for Round 1 Prop 1 Storm Water Implementation Grant funds). She noted that five projects had been submitted for inclusion in the IRWM Plan. Those projects are:

- Monterey County Water Resources Agency: Salinas Valley Water Project Phase II
- Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency in partnership with the City of Salinas: Stormwater Return Facilities from the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Facility to the MRWPCA Salinas Pump Station
- Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency: Blanco Drain Diversion to MRWPCA Regional Treatment Plant
- City of Salinas in partnership with Big Sur Land Trust: Carr Lake Riparian Habitat Restoration Plan
- City of Soledad: Soledad Regional Recharge Project

Each of these projects was briefly described by the project proponents in the room. Rachel noted that Big Sur Land Trust will be acquiring 73 acres of Carr Lake, and that conversion of Carr Lake from conventional

agriculture will allow for habitat restoration, community recreation and open space, stormwater recharge and control, etc. Ross said that the Central Coast Wetlands Group has been working in the Gabilan watershed for a long time, and offered to bring the Big Sur Land Trust and City of Salinas into their ongoing stakeholder process to help with those activities. Ross also noted that Balance Hydrologics will be hired to study the hydrology of Carr Lake; this information should be incorporated into the Big Sur Land Trust/City's planning efforts.

Rob described MCWRA's project, using winter flows in the Salinas River to offset groundwater use in the Pressure and East Side subareas. Elizabeth noted that the MCWRA has no intent of applying for stormwater implementation grant funds at this time. Mike described the three projects that are being put forward by the MRWPCA: Salinas pond return (utilizing Salinas ponds as potential for capture), Rec Ditch dry weather and some wet weather capture (this project is already in the IRWM Plan), and Blanco Drain dry weather/wet weather capture. Bridget ask how much water can be diverted from the Rec Ditch and Blanco Drain, and Mike responded that there are prescriptions for summer vs. winter diversions for the Rec Ditch, but they are still working on those for Blanco Drain. Ross said that diverting water in the summer is a problem, and commented that the IRWM process is a good forum for the RWMG to figure out how to implement projects that are not in opposition to one another. Ken agreed, saying, "we need to think of it as a system." Bridget suggested the RWMG schedule a meeting to focus specifically on the Blanco Drain.

Jeff Condit said that the MRSWMP group is also going for Prop 1 Storm Water Planning Grant funds to develop a Storm Water Resource Plan. He said he hoped to be able to partner with the RWMG on projects.

Ken made a motion to include the five projects in the IRWM Plan (with minor changes to the Carr Lake proposal, which Rachel will be submitting shortly). Bridget seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed, none abstained.

**4. Presentation by Dr. Andy Fisher:** Dr. Andy Fisher, professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences at UC Santa Cruz, gave a presentation to the group entitled, "Linking stormwater collection to managed aquifer recharge: mapping, modeling, measurement, and monetization." Andy began by noting that the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County has done a lot of this work. The "mapping and modeling" includes spatial analysis and runoff analysis. "Measurement" includes assessing potential and active project sites, and measuring improvements to water quality during infiltration. "Monetization" refers to incentives for creating and maintaining projects.

With climate change, he said, there will be more frequent flooding, more erosion, less recharge because more runoff. Our infrastructure is not designed for current and future conditions. Andy noted that the team used historical records to show trends (a lot better than modeling). He discussed different scales of managed recharge (e.g., LID = 1-10 AFY vs. region-wide = 100,000 – 1 million AFY). He noted that projects that distributed stormwater collection can be done relatively cheaply for projects that generate 100-1,000 AFY. How do you place these projects, and how big should they be? He gave some examples, showing how high-quality datasets from many sources are combined, linked with soil infiltration capacity analysis and local groundwater modeling, enabling them to create maps that show composite suitability. The team combines the mapping with modeling, using a USGS modeling tool, and can examine what might happen under different climate scenarios.

Using Pajaro Valley as an example, the team found that "even in dry years, there's water!" The maps are the screening tool to help the team figure out where to collect the stormwater runoff, but then they need to figure out the logistics (landowners, field conditions, costs to take land out of agricultural production, maintenance of infiltration structures, etc.). How can participation be incentivized? He described Net Energy Metering as an example of an incentivizing program that might work for managed aquifer recharge. The team will be implementing a five-year pilot project beginning October 2016 to create and operate 8-10 managed aquifer recharge sites, each generating 100+ AFY infiltration benefit (with 100 AFY being the minimum-sized project).

Andy answered several questions from participants. He noted that an infiltration basin is just one approach; it all

depends on what works best for the site. It was also noted that the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) empowers Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to create a fee structure; people may tolerate paying for groundwater more if there was a rebate program set up at the same time. Ross mentioned floodplain enhancement, and Andy said yes, the model could be used to look at that. Andy noted that it had taken a team of five people two years to get to this point with this project, but they hope to be able to pass along their methods to other teams.

*The next RWMG meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2016, location TBD.*