

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
February 15, 2017
Location: Moss Landing Marine Labs**

RWMG Attendees:

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Brenda Granillo – California Water Service Company
Sarah Hardgrave – Big Sur Land Trust (for Rachel Saunders)
Tom Harty – Monterey County Resource Management Agency
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Frank Lopez – Harris & Associates, for City of Soledad
Heather Lukacs – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)
Mike McCullough – Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency
Christina McGinnis – Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
Kevin O’Connor – Central Coast Wetlands Group
John Olson – California State University Monterey Bay
Gary Petersen – City of Salinas

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Jeff Condit – Monterey Regional Storm Water Management Program
Gary Conley – 2NDNATURE Consulting
Sachi Itagaki – Kennedy/Jenks Consultants
Robin Lee – Member of the public
Karen Nilsen – Nilsen & Associates
Colby Pereira – Costa Farms
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director

Meeting Minutes

1. Brief Introductions. Susan introduced John Olson as being the new representative (replacing Laura Lee Lienk) for CSUMB on the Regional Water Management Group. John is an assistant professor of aquatic ecology in the School of Natural Sciences. His research focuses on bioassessment of streams and rivers, and water quality monitoring.

2. Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Involvement Proposal: Bridget, as a member of the RWMG Subcommittee responsible for the development of the DAC Involvement proposal, presented an overview of the final scope of work and budget. The Greater Monterey County region has a total of \$829,828 available in grant funds through Round 1 of the Proposition 1 DAC Grant Funds. The proposal consists of the following tasks, organized according to the DAC Involvement Program Guidelines:

1. Needs Assessment (Nilsen & Associates \$13,000; EJCW \$30,828)
2. Educational Activities (EJCW \$37,500)
3. Community Outreach (EJCW \$108,500)
4. DAC Regional Engagement Coordinator (an RFP will be issued for this position, \$120,000)
5. IRWM Engagement (EJCW \$18,500)
6. Technical Assistance (RCAC \$50,000 for median household surveys, and \$14,760 for TA)
7. Site Assessments (Nilsen & Associates \$9,420)
8. Project Development Activities (Nilsen & Associates \$427,320)

Several questions were raised. Jeff Condit asked about EJCW; Heather described the organization. Someone asked about the definition of a “DAC.” Susan explained (a community having less than 80% of the statewide median household income), and Heather added that the Department of Water Resources also includes “economically distressed areas” (EDAs) and “underrepresented areas” as potential targets for the DAC grant funds. Someone asked about RCAC, and how communities get chosen for median household income (MHI) surveys. Susan described RCAC. Bridget explained that a project team (consisting of EJCW, RCAC, Nilsen & Associates, San Jerardo Cooperative, plus Susan) has been working for the past two+ years on a Salinas Valley DAC Plan; the team has a good understanding of the “suspected DACs” in the region and which communities would stand most to benefit by MHI surveys. Heather explained further about the list of “high priority” DACs resulting from the Salinas Valley DAC planning effort. Jeff brought up Prop 1 TA grants. Heather noted that the DAC Plan project team is aware of the Prop 1 TA grants, and has been working to determine which communities will be ready for construction projects and would therefore be good candidates for Prop 1 TA funds.

Bridget noted that this round of DAC grant funds is for “engagement.” The next round will be for implementation. Since the Greater Monterey County IRWM region has spent considerable time already on DAC engagement (initially through an IRWM Round 1 Planning Grant effort, and more recently through grants of \$700,000 from the state to conduct the Salinas Valley DAC planning effort), the Subcommittee felt strongly that most of the DAC Involvement grant funds should go toward making projects ready for implementation (and for Round 2). Hence, the majority of the funds (\$427,320) have been allocated toward project development activities. Karen Nilsen explained that the Salinas Valley DAC Plan project team meets monthly to discuss the communities and potential projects, and has a good sense of which communities will likely be needing construction. Robin asked whether there would be an opportunity for new DACs to be included for funding. Susan responded yes, new US Census data (American Community Survey) is released each year, and the team will identify new DACs.

Bridget briefly described next steps. Susan said the Central Coast Funding Area IRWM region representatives are aiming to submit the application to the state by mid-March. Karen said if anyone was aware of a DAC, or suspected DAC, in need of assistance, to bring it to the attention of the project team. There was some confusion about the “project team” and the Subcommittee, and Bridget explained the difference (the Subcommittee being made up of five RWMG members, which does not include any organizations that will be receiving DAC Involvement grant funds).

Gary P. made a motion to approve the scope of work and budget for submission to the state for DAC Involvement grant funds; Kevin seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed and one person abstaining (John Olson abstained since this was his first day as a RWMG member). Christina thanked Bridget for doing the lion’s share of the work on the proposal.

3. Greater Salinas Area Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP): Sachi briefly reviewed the changes to the Greater Salinas Area SWRP since the group last met. The changes were minor, involving strengthening and updating content (“non-mandatory” elements). Ross thanked Sachi and her team for their work, and noted that adopting the Greater Salinas SWRP was the first step in a larger SWRP planning process. The *Greater Monterey County* SWRP planning process is beginning this month and will incorporate aspects of the Greater Salinas Area SWRP. The new plan will have a new project list, and will cover the broader geographic region (including the Greater Salinas Area planning region).

Mike McCullough made a motion to approve the SWRP for incorporation into the Greater Monterey County IRWM Plan; Bridget seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed, and one person (John Olson) abstaining. (Note that Christina McGinnis was not present for the vote.)

4. IRWM Plan Updates: Susan reminded everyone that the Greater Monterey County IRWM region has recently been awarded about \$76,000 in Planning Grant funds to update the IRWM Plan. She noted that the planned updates are the minimum needed to make the IRWM Plan consistent with the new 2016 IRWM Program Guidelines; without these updates, projects in the plan will not be eligible for the next round of Implementation Grants. In other words, she noted, this is not a comprehensive Plan update; that will happen at a later date.

Prior to the meeting, Susan had sent the group draft revisions of two chapters: Objectives, and Resource Management Strategies. She briefly reviewed the draft revisions, and asked the group to send her any written comments by Wednesday, February 22nd.

5. Central Coast Wetlands Group IRWM Implementation Grant: In 2011, CCWG received \$436,340 in grant funds through Round 1 Prop 84 IRWM Implementation Grant Program for a project entitled, "Water Quality Enhancement of the Tembladero Slough and Public Access for the Community of Castroville." The project had three main components: 1) wetland project design and permitting around Castroville and Moss Landing; 2) wetlands restoration outreach; and 3) development of an agricultural cooperative.

The first component involved expansion of an existing restoration project that was implemented in 1996 on land owned by PG&E. The restoration took place on an 18-acre wetland. The treatment wetland, in the eastern portion of the parcel, consists of woodchip bioreactors in 12 parallel chambers set 3' deep. Plans are to fully vegetate the wetland. CCWG has also restored wetland habitat on six acres through a grant provided by PG&E. While the IRWM grant was essentially a planning grant, the actual implementation has just been completed through an Irrigation and Nutrient Management (INM) grant from the State Water Resources Control Board.

Colby said she is always aware of food safety concerns, and was impressed that CCWG was able to implement this project adjacent to agricultural fields. Kevin said they worked closely with Dale Huss (Ocean Mist Farms) to ensure a safe buffer from his artichoke fields.

Ross described nutrient data resulting from the project. The residence time for water to flow through the wetlands was estimated to be seven days. Data indicates that nutrients are being reduced by 60% -- and that's even before dense vegetation has been planted. CCWG expects to get those numbers down to 0% once the vegetation has been planted. This project constitutes treatment wetlands for 700-800 acres of row crops that drain into Castroville Ditch. The treatment component of the project is 12 acres; the rest is habitat.

Someone asked if sustainment funds had been secured. Kevin replied that CCWG has obtained a 3-year grant from USDA NRCS to plant vegetation throughout the whole area and develop an ag cooperative of all the growers.

Kevin explained the bioreactors (bacteria living on the woodchips break down nutrients), and described a California Department of Food and Agriculture-funded project that looks at three different types of bioreactors (woodchips; heated woodchips; and treated woodchips). A question was asked about the percentage of flow that is bypassed. Kevin said they get 200 gpm from three pumps. In the rainy season, any flow exceeding that amount bypasses their system. In the summer low-flow season, they get 100% of the flow.

Kevin said CCWG is working with Dale Huss to restore a 35-acre parcel and return it to the Moro Cojo Slough system. They are also working on treatment wetlands along the Old Salinas River Channel and Blanco Drain (the latter project with RCD). The initial stages of that project were covered by the IRWM

Implementation Grant. They will be looking at other areas, too, including Carr Lake, as part of the Storm Water Planning Grant.

CCWG also conducted outreach in Castroville; they held meetings to identify what the community wants, and did survey work with high school students about the environment surrounding Castroville.

Ross explained the “ag cooperative” part of the grant: CCWG has been working with the growers and with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to see if there are benefits that the growers can take advantage of by participating in wetlands restoration projects such as this (an example: developing a type of general permit to reduce administrative costs on the part of individual growers). The Regional Board has expressed interest. Ross said that if they can make this program attractive to growers, and the Regional Board approves it, then CCWG can have a model to bring to other drainages. Robin suggested contacting ALBA.

Gary C. asked if what CCWG was bringing to the Regional Board was a standardized way to verify which practices were in place, and a way to quantify the benefits, and Ross responded that it was. The project includes rigorous monitoring to document the success of the project, on-farm and off-farm. The idea is to enable growers to make INM decisions based on their specific locality; so the project is individual-scale, but also uses that input to create larger, regional models.

6. Other Business. Bridget announced that public meetings were being held that night and the next for the Cal Am desalination project.

The next RWMG meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2017, 1:30PM – 3:30PM, location TBD.