

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
April 19, 2017
Location: Moss Landing Marine Labs, Moss Landing, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough Reserve
Brenda Granillo – California Water Service Company
Tom Harty – Monterey County Resource Management Agency
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Christina McGinnis – Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
Heidi Niggemeyer – City of Salinas (for Gary Petersen)
John Olson – California State University Monterey Bay
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District Monterey County
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust
Sarah Stoner-Duncan – Central Coast Wetlands Group

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Jeff Condit – Monterey Regional Storm Water Management Program
John Hunt – UC Davis
Karen Nilsen – Nilsen & Associates
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director

Meeting Minutes

1. Brief Introductions.

2. IRWM Plan Update — Climate Change: The Central Coast Wetlands Group (CCWG) are in the process of updating the Climate Change chapter of the IRWM Plan with funding support from the IRWM Planning Grant, in order to bring the IRWM Plan up to 2016 IRWM Program standards. Ross presented an overview of their plans for the chapter update.

Ross noted that the current Climate Change chapter is robust but there is more information that can be included. He said the purpose of this meeting is to find an efficient way to collect additional information, particularly in the area of water supply and demand. They would like to figure out how vulnerabilities can be mitigated via the IRWM process. There will be changes in water dynamics within the region as we get drier conditions in summer, more variable rainfall in winter – what will that mean for agriculture, what will that do to our water supply? How will a 2-foot sea level rise impact our groundwater management objectives? Droughts will become more severe; does the IRWM Plan provide strategies that are robust enough?

Ross said that CCWG has a good handle on water quality implications. With regard to flooding, he said much of this should be addressed through the Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) process in terms of understanding where the vulnerabilities are and how to mitigate them. Regarding hydropower and reservoir releases, Ross said this is an area that CCWG will be looking for input from the RWMG. Elizabeth noted that the Bureau of Reclamation will be partnering with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) through the Salinas and Carmel River Basin Study to look at climate change and water use patterns. This process should be beginning soon. The Bureau of Rec will be hiring USGS to do the modeling work. Elizabeth offered to send the study to the RWMG.

Ross briefly discussed the existing Risk Assessment analysis in the IRWM Plan, which shows various vulnerabilities ranked according to risk assessment (provided by the State's guidelines). CCWG has done further work in investigating sea level rise and changes in rainfall patterns through another grant. CCWG also did an Environmental Risk Assessment in the Climate Change chapter, which showed the greatest risks to be: 1) agricultural water use is expected to increase (to offset higher temperatures and evapotranspiration), and 2) sea level rise and increased groundwater extraction will lead to increased rates of seawater intrusion. He said he hopes to update this assessment through the Plan update process, and figure out how to address the low- and medium-likelihood risks through the IRWM process.

Elizabeth noted prior concern by the Department of Fish and Wildlife about the quantity (vs. quality) of water being pulled from the Salinas River with regard to two waste streams from the City of Salinas that had plans for removal. Ross said that's something that will be evaluated through the SWRP.

Ross showed an example of Adaptive Capacity analysis that was done for the IRWM Plan. He said he hoped to bring this back to the RWMG to expand the analysis and to engage the RWMG in a larger discussion, since the original analysis was done with a small tech team. The analysis helps us in guiding project identification and supporting grant applications.

Regarding Adaptation Strategies, Ross explained that the first step is to identify key climate-sensitive parameters in the IRWM process to guide subsequent steps. CCWG is currently identifying technical experts and will be developing survey questions next week.

The next meeting with the RWMG to discuss climate change will be in two months. CCWG will be able to incorporate a lot more information – including coastal sea level rise and alluvial impacts, the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, and a recent human health report that further reviews predicted changes in rainfall, etc. There is not as much information out there, however, on how we currently manage our resources.

Ross said social equity with regard to climate change wasn't discussed in the IRWM Plan. CCWG would like to include that discussion in the updated chapter. Susan suggested they talk with Horacio, Heather, Karen Nilsen, and Karen McBride.

3. Greater Monterey County Storm Water Resource Plan: At last month's RWMG meeting, John Hunt led a discussion regarding the goals/objectives for the SWRP. The SWRP Project Team incorporated the RWMG and stakeholder input and, after much deliberation, further revised the draft goals/objectives. At this meeting, John presented the revised goals and objectives.

John sent out the revised objectives prior to the meeting. He explained that the planning team had revised objectives based on comments from last month's meeting, and then added objectives for the plan itself. John noted the five benefit areas in the Storm Water Program Guidelines. Elizabeth asked whether "beneficial uses" was meant as defined by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Sarah noted that the Basin Plan has just been updated; is there any reason not to use the beneficial uses listed in the Basin Plan? Elizabeth said that it may be limiting to do so; there may be additional beneficial uses than those listed in the Basin Plan. John noted that the beneficial uses are linked with water quality, so it warrants another review. Ross said it helps the project team from a modeling standpoint to be able to have *quantitative* objectives (i.e., as outlined in the Basin Plan). Sarah commented that the Basin Plan applies to surface waters, but this plan will be looking at groundwater and drinking water, too.

John discussed the goals/objectives for the plan itself. He said they are trying to set this plan up to produce the benefits that they hope to achieve, but the plan is also a terrific opportunity to map out the IRWM region: Where source water originates, what the volume is, what the quality is, how flashy it is (peak flow, flood risk). This information will help evaluate projects but will also help with long-term

IRWM planning. So first, study storm water. Look for management opportunities. Then solicit projects, and evaluate where they are looking at gathering storm water – and compare the solutions being proposed with the objectives/opportunities identified by the plan. This will satisfy the two goals of better understanding storm water, and doing an evaluation of projects.

John emphasized that they want to keep the door open for adaptive management after the projects get funded. The State asks for a monitoring component. He raised the question, how can projects be designed to be flexible enough to adapt to what we learn through monitoring?

John said they will run the goals/objectives past a stakeholder group (including everyone present today) and will continue to put the word out to others (e.g., AWQA). They want to make sure no one misses the boat in getting their project into the plan.

Jeff mentioned a project in Elkhorn Slough area that should be considered. There's an area south of the Santa Cruz county line that's not covered by a SWRP, and he wondered whether the Greater Monterey County SWRP could cover that region. John suggested that the project team query stakeholders to see if they have projects to propose (John will discuss this with Andy Fisher). Susan suggested the project team ask Pajaro IRWM region if they are planning to conduct a SWRP, and if not, enter into an agreement to include that geographic region within the scope of work for the Greater Monterey County SWRP.

John asked the group to send him comments and said he would finalize the goals/objectives before the stakeholder meeting next week.

4. Big Sur Land Trust Acquisition in Carr Lake: Rachel reported on the Big Sur Land Trust's (BSLT) recent purchase of a 73-acre parcel within Carr Lake. She showed two maps, one showing the relationship of Carr Lake to the rest of the City of Salinas, the other showing the property boundaries. She provided an overview of how the BSLT is approaching this project because, she noted, it's different from their other projects.

Carr Lake basin totals 480 acres, and was one of seven shallow marshy lakes that extended from the Gabilan Mountains out to the ocean. The basin was owned since the 1920s by three Japanese American families. It is now owned by two Japanese American families and BSLT. BSLT first reached out to all of the property owners in 2008. They finally closed in January 2017 on a 73-acre parcel. BSLT worked on this acquisition in partnership with the City of Salinas, County Department of Environmental Health, CSUMB Return of the Natives, Building Healthy Communities Initiative, and several of BSLT board members.

Recognizing the deep relationship that the families have had with this land, BSLT has been trying to manage the acquisition very carefully, with great consideration, and with humility. Typically BSLT will purchase a property and immediately transfer it to another entity (such as the County), but in this case they have a longer term commitment. They want to make sure that the vision for use of the land "has legs," and they are working very closely with the City, before they will consider any transfer of ownership.

The BSLT sees this as a multi-benefit project, including social justice. The approach is to create a path whereby, working with the City and others, they can engage residents in envisioning what will happen on that property, within the parameters that have been set by the funding they received (Coastal Conservancy, State River Parkways, plus private funds). The funding includes floodplain restoration, flood management, wetlands, ponds, habitat restoration, storm water management, seasonal trails, maybe other recreational elements. She said the community will have an opportunity to provide real input into use of the buildings – how to repurpose those buildings to community purposes.

Part of the challenge and opportunity is to bring everyone to greater understanding as to how Carr Lake

functions. Rachel emphasized that the people who live there need to feel invested in how the property is managed. She discussed the uses surrounding the property. Of the 73 acres, 63 acres are in farmland. BSLT will renew the ag lease probably for three years. There are huge storage buildings that can be repurposed into, e.g., community spaces, art labs, classrooms. BSLT will be repairing the two residences and renting them (all proceeds will go directly back into the property).

There are several pieces to this: Community engagement, water management, potential restoration. BSLT has been working with a core group, and would like to expand the discussion. Next focus: how to conduct resident engagement.

BSLT has hired Balance Hydrologics to pull together existing information into a report that lays out constraints and opportunities, and to identify additional analyses needed to help inform what can be done on the property. She noted that this can fit very nicely into the SWRP. Secondly, they will have Balance Hydrologics provide a presentation about how the property functions, and help BSLT develop talking points (in English and Spanish). Timing: earliest late May.

Ross noted, in context of storm water: Earlier they had worked on Gabilan restoration with the idea that one day Carr Lake would be part of that plan. RDIPAC (the Reclamation Ditch Management process) got a planning document out of that process, including how the flood infrastructure of the Gabilan watershed can be managed, which Carr Lake is a component of. With Carr Lake there is a major opportunity to provide attenuation and management of upper watershed flows, and meter out to minimize flooding downstream. He noted that this will become more and more important with climate change and sea level rise. Stakeholders down to the harbor will be impacted. Modeling through the SWRP process will show how the system currently works and how projects can help improve flood management, storm water, etc. – and will also provide a wish list of projects. He said it would be great if the Carr Lake discussions and analyses could take into account the needs downstream. The SWRP process will be a great place to find support in terms of implementation of designs.

John asked whether all three parcels would be needed to do storm water management. Rachel responded that they could do storm water management on the one parcel, but it would be small scale. She commented, “This is a long-distance relay race. We hope it leads to expanded opportunities.” Ross said he just wanted to make sure they took into account the people who held the baton before BSLT. Rachel agreed. Heidi added that they can utilize the Salinas TELR model to determine what impact Carr Lake projects will have on pollutant load reduction (Ross said they will take them up on that offer for the SWRP modeling portion). Ross added that objectives of the SWRP include habitat and community – the Carr Lake project supports, and builds off of, the Natividad Park project.

John asked about the community benefit: has any thought been given to increases in real estate for surrounding properties? Rachel said the concern is more the displacement of the very people they are trying to serve, with increased property values. So they are considering that issue carefully (City Planning is at the table to look at this with them).

Rachel said she’s thought about setting up some sort of Technical Advisory Committee for the project, and maybe the RWMG could be it. Susan said it is good timing, given the SWRP planning process. Rachel noted there are two water bonds (that have stalled), and some conversation for a potential ballot measure in 2018 for water/parks – there may be other funding opportunities beyond Prop 1.

5. Other Business.

a) Executive Committee: Susan noted that the one-year term for three of the Executive Committee members is up in May (Gary, Colin, and Brenda). There is an option to extend one more year, but she said if anyone else would like an opportunity to serve on the Executive Committee to let her know. At next month’s meeting the RWMG will vote again for Executive Committee representatives for Disadvantaged

Community (DAC), Agency, and Water Supply/Management. The eligible entities under each of these three categories are:

DAC:

EJCW (*Colin is the current rep*)

RCAC

San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.

Agency:

City of Salinas (*Gary is the current rep*)

Monterey County Ag Commissioner's Office

Monterey County Resource Management Agency

Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency

City of Soledad

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Water Supply/Management

Cal Water (*Brenda is the current rep*)

Castroville Community Services District

Marina Coast Water District

Monterey County Water Resources Agency

b) Project Review Process Committee: Susan asked for volunteers to act as a sounding board as she figures out a more efficient Project Review process, as part of the IRWM Plan update. Jeff suggested she look at the ranking process in the Monterey Peninsula IRWM Plan. The following individuals volunteered:

Elizabeth

John Hunt

Ross

Heidi

Monique

c) RCD – Stewardship and Leadership Scholarship Barbeque: Paul announced this fundraising event, on Friday April 28th.

d) SWRP Stakeholder Meeting: Susan announced the SWRP stakeholder meeting, on Tuesday April 25th. Elizabeth asked who was on the stakeholder list, to make sure the people at last month's meeting were invited. Bridget will check to make sure John gets those email addresses.

e) Funding for the IRWM Program Director: Bridget announced that the Executive Committee had recommended funding to support Susan's role for this coming year. She said a request to RWMG members for funds would be coming out soon.

f) Cal Water is Hiring: Brenda announced that Cal Water is hiring for a General Superintendent. She also announced the availability of the 2017 scholarship of \$10,000 for Juniors in High School (eligible to individuals within the service area).

The next RWMG meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2017, 1:30PM – 3:30PM, at the Big Sur Land Trust office in Monterey.