

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program  
Regional Water Management Group Meeting  
May 17, 2017  
Location: Big Sur Land Trust, Monterey, CA**

**RWMG Attendees:**

Horacio Amezquita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.  
Melanie Beretti – Monterey County Resource Management Agency  
Brenda Granillo – California Water Service Company  
Sarah Hardgrave – Big Sur Land Trust  
Alison Imamura – Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency  
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Heather Lukacs – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water  
Mike McCullough – Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency  
Heidi Niggemeyer – City of Salinas  
John Olson – California State University Monterey Bay  
Gary Petersen – City of Salinas  
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District of Monterey County  
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust  
Brian True – Marina Coast Water District

**Non-RWMG Attendees:**

Amanda Fencl – UC Davis Policy Institute for Energy, Environment, and the Economy  
Norm Groot – Monterey County Farm Bureau  
Karen Nilsen – Nilsen & Associates  
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director

**Meeting Minutes**

**1. Brief Introductions.**

**2. RWMG Executive Committee:** Susan noted that the one-year term for three of the RWMG Executive Committee seats was ending this month: Disadvantaged Community (Colin Bailey with EJCW is the current rep), Water Supply/Management (Brenda Granillo with Cal Water is the current rep), and Agency (Gary Petersen with City of Salinas is the current rep). Executive Committee members have an option to serve an additional one-year term if approved by the RWMG; after that someone else must be elected to that seat. Susan said Colin had expressed a desire to serve an additional one-year term, and Gary had also expressed a desire to serve an additional term though he was willing to hand over the Agency seat if someone else was interested. For the Water Supply/Management seat, Elizabeth Krafft (Monterey County Water Resources Agency) had expressed an interest in serving, and Brenda had agreed to hand over that seat.

Susan asked if anyone else was interested in serving in any of those capacities; no one spoke up. Sarah made a motion to approve Colin and Gary for an additional one-year term, and to approve Elizabeth as a representative for the Water Supply/Management seat. All voted in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

**3. Groundwater Sustainability Agency Update:** Gary Petersen provided a brief update on the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) process for the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. Gary began with a disclaimer: “Not all realities are agreed upon” and said he would be presenting his version. He said the process began in 2014 with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) legislation. There were about 24 meetings over 15 months with a number of stakeholders, with very good representation. Gary emphasized that they started with a governance conversation, and went to work to

form a JPA. They now have an interim board of 11 members. Gary is currently the interim general manager of the interim board. There is an RFP out for the general manager position.

The group filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) for boundaries of the Salinas Valley GSA. There are two “hot spots”: 1) Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) filed to be a GSA, extending their boundaries beyond their actual jurisdictional boundaries to a service area boundary, including part of the Fort Ord area. In December the County filed a NOI to file a GSA on top of that MCWD service area, as a place marker for the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin JPA. 2) City of Greenfield filed to be a GSA with a boundary that extends from one side of the valley (Arroyo Seco) across into Greenfield, including an area outside of the City’s jurisdictional boundaries. There are attempts being made currently to resolve these issues (outside the context of attorneys). The Salinas Valley GSA contends that each can have the areas within their jurisdictions but not beyond. A cooperative agreement between neighboring GSAs is required by the legislation. There is a proposed budget of \$1.1 million to fund the Salinas Valley GSA.

Norm noted that he was a participant in the collaborative work group. He said the next step is to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (there is a deadline of January 2020). The budget includes hiring a consultant to help develop that plan. Funding will come in large part from agriculture. There is an advisory committee to the GSA board, essentially the same individuals who were on the collaborative work group.

Heather (with EJCW) said she is on the collaborative work group, representing small water systems and disadvantaged communities. She noted that once the planning process begins, there will be impacts – so it will be important to get the word out, inform people. She also emphasized the importance of keeping in mind the goal – to maintain water levels and water quality – noting how challenging that will be.

Sarah wondered whether there would be continued facilitation moving forward (Gina Bartlett was the facilitator for the GSA formation process). Gary said they have a line item budget to continue to fund Gina to support the process – primarily to work through the differences with the other GSAs and support ongoing work of the advisory group. Gary said the GSA formation process was a “triumph of collaborative processes.” Norm mentioned that DWR may be providing funding in the future to help support the GSA process.

**4. UC Davis Drought Resilience Workshop:** Amanda Fencl from the UC Davis Policy Institute for Energy, Environment, and the Economy provided an overview of a water utilities and regional drought resilience project that the Policy Institute recently conducted. Amanda began by describing the members of the research team (Julie Ekstrom, the PI, was unable to attend today’s meeting). She described the project context and goals, which included a focus on the impacts of drought, needs for future management, and lessons learned during the most recent drought. The project focused on small self-sufficient systems, with “small” being defined as having less than 2,000 connections, and “self-sufficiency” defined as not receiving State Project water.

Heather added that Amanda has been working with EJCW on small water systems in the Central Coast. The UC Davis team will be conducting interviews, surveys, and three workshops. EJCW will be helping to facilitate the three regional workshops. Through these workshops the team hopes to hear stories about drought impact, drought strategies, and drought resilience, in order to understand barriers and how to address those barriers. They were planning on conducting a workshop in the Salinas area during the last couple of weeks in June. Norm noted that the last week of June would not be good timing for the ag community on account of a summit. Gary said the City could provide a facility but are co-hosting the ag summit (so it would need to be after that). Amanda said they would look at the first week of July rather than June.

Amanda asked whether it was too early to consider how GSA/SGMA might be related to drought resiliency, and whether that should be discussed at the workshop. Gary said it may be too early, but

emphasized that it would be an important conversation to have at some point. Norm suggested the UC Davis team work on developing objectives or a policy statement about addressing drought and drought impacts that could be incorporated into the Groundwater Sustainability Plan at some point.

Mike asked whether wastewater would be considered as well. Amanda said yes, for example, direct/indirect reuse. Someone noted that the project team could learn lessons from Monterey and Santa Cruz counties in this regard. Gary mentioned “one water” – “it’s bigger than SGMA, it’s a broader based conversation.”

Heather asked for input: Who should they make sure to invite, and how can they make the workshop topics interesting to draw people in? People should email Heather or the UC Davis team if they have suggestions. Elizabeth said MCWRA would be able to spread the word, if they received the information by early June. Amanda offered to give a similar presentation to GSA.

**5. Project Review Process:** Susan presented her recommended changes to the project review process for the IRWM Plan (as part of the IRWM Plan update). She had sent out a summary of the suggested changes prior to the meeting, and walked through the document at the meeting.

Susan began by noting that, in order to be compliant with the 2016 IRWM Grant Program Guidelines, only minor changes to the project review process are required; however, she felt this was a good opportunity to re-assess the project review process. She iterated several reasons for doing so, including lack of consistency in scoring projects from one project solicitation to the next, and the amount of work involved for each project solicitation (i.e., cumbersome process). She then described a three-step process:

- 1) **Initial Review for IRWM Plan Eligibility:** Check projects to ensure basic eligibility for inclusion in the IRWM Plan (minimal criteria)
- 2) **Project Prioritization:** Review projects and score them to create a Ranked Project List for the IRWM Plan. This will be based on just three criteria:
  - a) how well a project addresses the plan’s goals/objectives;
  - b) how well a project helps diversify the region’s portfolio of resource management strategies;
  - c) how well a project contributes to climate change adaptation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- 3) **Selecting Projects for a Specific IRWM Implementation Grant Opportunity:** Whenever DWR announces an IRWM Implementation Grant solicitation, project proponents who would like their projects considered submit detailed project applications, and the Project Selection Committee uses certain criteria to evaluate which projects to put forward in the region’s application.

Brian disagreed with one of the “Game Rules” listed in the document: “*Project Selection Committee:* To avoid a conflict of interest, no project proponent can serve on the Project Selection Committee.” There was some discussion about this and it was decided that the Regional Water Management Group as a whole would serve as the Project Selection Committee (and project proponents who are RWMG members will not be able to vote on their own projects).

Susan asked whether the RWMG agreed with her recommended scoring outlined for Step 2. Norm expressed concern about scoring projects based on how well they help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, noting that it is difficult for ag projects to be able to substantiate reductions in advance. Susan said that the climate change and greenhouse gas scoring would be based on a qualitative response rather than a quantitative calculation, based on the following rationale: the GHG estimation is complicated and not an exact science, project types are so different, and she felt that neither project proponents nor the Project Selection Committee were expert enough to make a judgment based on quantitative calculations. Norm expressed satisfaction with the qualitative approach. Mike suggested that the points for climate change

and greenhouse gas reduction be reduced from a total of 8 to 4. No one disagreed.

Elizabeth suggested “starting over” with the IRWM Plan Project List, i.e., holding a project solicitation and building the project list again from scratch. This way all projects would get scored on the same foundation, and projects that were outdated or no longer relevant would be either updated or removed from the list. There was general consensus on that idea. Susan would need to let all existing project proponents know that unless they submit a new application with the new solicitation their projects will get removed from the IRWM Plan.

Susan then explained Step 3 in more detail. Sarah asked about the cost-benefit analysis. Susan said that either a cost-benefit analysis or a cost-effectiveness evaluation has been required for every IRWM Implementation Grant application. Susan said that the RWMG had hired a consultant to develop a cost-benefit analysis template (an “economic screening tool”), and project proponents in the last couple of solicitations have been required to fill out that template. The template is available on the website: <http://www.greatermontereyirwmp.org/documents/solicitation/>.

Elizabeth noted that in previous IRWM Implementation Grant rounds there has typically been a last-minute scramble. Some projects get approved for the Region’s application that never should have been approved; they wind up falling out because they weren’t actually ready, or didn’t have all of their documentation, or weren’t able to prove benefits, etc. She said there needs to be a bit more “tough love” on the part of the RWMG to screen projects better before they get put forward for an application.

Susan asked whether the criteria listed in Step 3 should be scored, or whether it should be left up to the RWMG/Project Selection Committee as to how to evaluate projects against those criteria. There was general consensus that the criteria shouldn’t be given points at this time, but the RWMG/Project Selection Committee should have the discretion to evaluate as they see fit at the time. Elizabeth suggested using the DWR evaluation as a starting point for project selection.

Susan brought up the Central Coast IRWM Region MOU, noting that future Implementation Grant rounds will be different from those in previous rounds: the competition will no longer (in theory at least) be *between* the Central Coast IRWM regions but will be *within* the Greater Monterey County IRWM region. She said this is all the more reason to establish a solid, fair, objective method for selecting which projects to put forward in future IRWM rounds in order to help avoid conflicts. Susan added that the MOU is new since the last Implementation Grant round; the MOU was brought to DWR for their review/approval and they did not object, but we can’t be certain of anything. Susan also noted that the RWMG will still be required to submit an application for Implementation Grant funds, and that the application will still need to meet with DWR’s approval. So it will be important for projects to score well against DWR’s evaluation criteria.

Elizabeth suggested adding “available match” to the Step 3 criteria, and Heather wondered whether there should be some preference added for projects that come out of a regional planning process, such as projects included in the Salinas Valley Disadvantaged Community Plan or the Storm Water Resource Plan. Elizabeth said she didn’t think that would be necessary, since those projects would likely score well on their own anyway, having gone through a rigorous planning process.

Susan said she would make revisions to the project review process and send it back to the RWMG for their feedback. Brian stressed that it should be made clear that a whole new Project List for the IRWM Plan will be created, and Paul recommended that public notice be given regarding this significant change, and that IRWM stakeholders (particularly existing project proponents) be notified well in advance of the next project solicitation.

**6. Other Business.** Susan said she has been trying to schedule a presentation from a UCLA team that has been working on a nitrate wellhead treatment project in the Salinas Valley, and has been having difficulty

finding a date that would accommodate the UCLA team. She asked the group whether it would be OK to move the June 21 RWMG meeting date to June 26 or 27 in order to accommodate the team. (Heather added that this presentation would be worthwhile, and may be of interest to stakeholders beyond the RWMG.) The group expressed general approval to schedule the meeting for June 26 or 27.

*The next RWMG meeting will occur on June 26, 2017, 1:30PM – 3:30PM, at the Monterey County Water Resources Agency's new office in Salinas. (NOTE: This meeting is not on the usual third-Wednesday-of-the-month.)*