

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
October 16, 2017
Location: Moss Landing Marine Labs, Moss Landing, CA**

RWMG Attendees:

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Sarah Hardgrave – Big Sur Land Trust
Tom Harty – Monterey County Resource Management Agency
Alison Imamura – Monterey One Water
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Christina McGinnis – Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
Moises Moreno-Rivera – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)
John Olson – California State University Monterey Bay
Paul Robins – Monterey County Resource Conservation District

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Jeff Condit – Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program
John Mukhar – MNS Engineers
Karen Nilsen – Nilsen and Associates
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director

Meeting Minutes

1. Brief Introductions. Susan introduced Moi Moreno-Rivera as the new Central Coast Disadvantaged Community Outreach Coordinator for EJCW.

2. Climate Change Updates for IRWM Plan: Ross Clark presented the Central Coast Wetlands Group’s (CCWG) work to date on updating the Climate Change chapter of the IRWM Plan (supported through the Prop 1 IRWM Planning Grant). The update references the new State guidelines, uses new State climate vulnerability models and tools, integrates information from the Moss Landing Sea Level Rise Vulnerability report, and updates the list of vulnerable infrastructure in the plan.

For Table R-3 in the IRWM Plan, “Potential Impacts to Water Resources in the Greater Monterey County Region,” CCWG considered potential impacts specifically in light of sea level rise. They reviewed the current vulnerabilities listed in the plan, and while the list still appears relevant, they are working to make it more specific for the purpose of IRWMP project development. To that end, CCWG surveyed stakeholders to determine what kind of climate adaptation projects stakeholders are implementing to help adapt to sea level rise and climate changes. Results included, for example: public dialogue and education, water recycling/reuse, storage projects, desal projects, and habitat conservation and restoration.

CCWG chose three high-risk vulnerabilities to evaluate further:

1. *Sea level rise and higher groundwater extraction will lead to increased rates of saltwater intrusion (water supply challenge).* Ross showed a map of service wells and ag wells within the coastal flooding zone under three different timelines of climate change.
2. *Natural creeks and managed conveyance will see higher flow rates leading to increased erosion and flooding (river conveyance/flooding challenge).* Ross showed a map of creeks and managed conveyance waterways under three different timelines of climate change.
3. *Coastal levees and control structures will be undersized to manage the combined influences of higher river flows and sea level rise.* Ross showed tide gates and culverts that could be

compromised, and noted that the best protection against impacts of sea level rise is the natural dune system. CCWG has been working on dune restoration in the North Salinas State Beach area to eradicate ice plant and make the dune system stronger.

CCWG has also updated the prioritized vulnerabilities list for the IRWM Plan. Ross showed an example, which focused on coastal hazards (CCWG is still working on this list). He then briefly discussed some adaptation options (i.e., potential projects) for high risk vulnerabilities, including: dune restoration; upgrade the flood berm along Moss Landing Road; evaluate tide gate upgrades or overflow structure to improve flood release; establish managed retreat and state acquisition programs for vulnerable land uses; and reduce flooding of the Gabilan watershed (e.g., storage, reuse, infiltration, and resource restoration – which will be addressed in the Greater Monterey County Storm Water Resource Plan, currently under development). Ross noted that managed retreat efforts in the past have been largely unplanned and haphazard. He noted that some organizations, such as Big Sur Land Trust, have already acquired lands for conservation and restoration, and advised working with conservation organizations such as these on strategies to become more systematic, so as to minimize loss to farms and maximize infrastructure management.

Finally, Ross provided some examples of possible projects. These included:

- Support additional dune restoration activities between Salinas River mouth and the Moss Landing harbor entrance
- Draft and implement the Tide Gate Management Strategy (Moro Cojo Study began in Spring 2017, with Ocean Protection Council funding)
- Develop coordinated projects between Salinas Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) and the IRWM program
- Develop flood attenuation projects within the Gabilan Watershed
- LID/storm water management projects
- Stream, wetland, and riparian restoration
- Off channel flood capture and reuse
- Work with local stakeholder groups to develop flood accommodation strategies for agriculture and the communities of Castroville and Moss Landing within the 2030 hazard area.

John Mukhar asked how much time the current sand dune restoration would buy, in terms of protecting coastal areas against impacts of sea level rise. Ross responded, at least through 2030; however, if they can figure out a way to accommodate inland migration, then dune restoration could offer long-term protection. He emphasized that dune restoration promises much better long-term protection than infrastructure options.

Susan picked up on Ross's point about coordinating the GSA with the IRWM program, and asked if anyone had any suggestions for doing so. Sarah mentioned that there is already so much developed in the IRWM Plan, this should provide a great starting point for the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Someone asked whether the RWMG would want to invite the GSA to become a member. Susan said she didn't think it was a good idea since several agencies on the GSA (which is a JPA comprised of 11 board member seats) are already members of the RWMG, and including the GSA as a RWMG member would result in double representation – which wouldn't be fair to the other RWMG members. She asked what others thought about that, and there appeared to be agreement. Susan said she did think it was important, however, to figure out a means for regular coordination and dialogue between the two groups.

Ross asked Jeff Condit how the Monterey Peninsula storm water group has considered sea level rise with regard to storm water infrastructure. Jeff recommended that Ross check with Larry Hampson, who had a study conducted on climate change vulnerabilities. Sarah noted the Bureau of Reclamation Basin Studies, which will be used to update climate change for the Monterey Peninsula IRWM Plan. Alison added that this study is primarily related to water supply and probably won't be completed anytime soon (certainly not by February 2018). Ross said that the Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) team is in communication with the USGS team, and will be linking the Gabilan/lower Salinas modeling with the USGS modeling.

Ross asked if anyone had additional GIS layers to let him know.

Christina noted the importance of educating stakeholders who will be affected by sea level rise. She advised CCWG to bring their presentation to the Ag Advisory Committee, and show them projected climate change impacts for ag. Susan asked, how can the RWMG help to get this information out to stakeholders? Someone mentioned the Farm Bureau as another means. Ross stressed the importance of being a “problem solver” – providing different options for possible solutions – rather than simply being a bearer of bad news. Ross added that the message should come from the RWMG (or a subcommittee of the RWMG), rather than CCWG or just one individual. Susan agreed.

Sarah asked whether any of the suggested projects could be submitted for the IRWM Plan and IRWM funds. Ross responded yes, CCWG is already working with growers in this way. They can go to growers and say, “These are areas that we have identified for future impacts; this is what we can do now.” Susan suggested talking with landowners now to start figuring out how to allow dunes to migrate inland (to which Ross responded with a reality check). Ross agreed to write up next steps for integration of ag in the climate change impacts evaluation, and include it in the chapter.

3. Local Water Resource Plans – Update for IRWM Plan: Susan had sent the group a spreadsheet of local water resource management plans that she was updating for the IRWM Plan. She asked the group for input. Sarah mentioned the *Monterey County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* (Ross noted that plan is referenced extensively in the Climate Change chapter). Susan asked if anyone had any other suggestions for local plans to include in the IRWMP, particularly those that may address climate change impacts, to let her know.

4. Other Business: Jeff Condit announced that the first stakeholder meeting for the Monterey Peninsula Storm Water Resource Plan would be taking place the following day.

The next RWMG meeting will be held on November 8, 2017, 1:30PM – 3:30PM, location TBD.