

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Regional Water Management Group Meeting
Storm Water Resource Plan – Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #4**

February 20, 2019

Location: Moss Landing Marine Labs, Moss Landing, CA

RWMG Entity Attendees:

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
May Nguyen – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)
Kevin O'Connor – Central Coast Wetlands Group
John Olson – California State University Monterey Bay
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Jeff Condit – Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program (MRSWMP)
John Hunt – UC Davis
Mike Godwin – Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director

Meeting Minutes

1. Brief Introductions.

2. Greater Monterey County Storm Water Resource Plan - Administrative Draft Review: John Hunt, on behalf of the Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) planning team, led the RWMG/TAC in a discussion of the Greater Monterey County SWRP Administrative Draft, focusing primarily on Chapter 9, the Implementation Strategy and Schedule. John first asked if anyone had any general comments on the Draft. No one did. Jeff Condit noted that the Monterey Peninsula SWRP has been finalized.

The Implementation Strategy chapter was based largely on the Greater Salinas Area SWRP. Essentially it says that everyone who has a project will come up with match, and operations and maintenance (O&M) will be supported through all the usual means. However, the SWRP planning team sees the SWRP as a good opportunity to explore a larger implementation strategy to fund not only SWRP projects but other projects being put forward in the region in plans such as the IRWMP, Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan, Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), etc. Considerations for an implementation strategy include: partner authorities and capabilities, funding and financing options, and organizational (administrative) capacity. He briefly talked about each of these.

With regard to funding and financing, John talked about linking projects and project components together to take advantage of economies of scale, permit streamlining, etc., and potentially hooking in watershed projects with the city agency and Monterey One Water projects. There are many options for funding and financing, including local bonds, impact donors, ESG (environment, social, government) investors, blending investors and donors, entrepreneurial (build for perceived needs, get compensated later), or escrow funds. John referred to EPA's Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center.

With regard to organizational capacity, John discussed the possibilities of forming a JPA to concentrate all of the regional authorities in one place, or alternatively ask an existing agency to act as the fiscal agent and administrative/organizational hub. Funders want to see: a Master Plan, and a coordination/administrative center. He noted that there are a lot of coordinated efforts in Monterey County – such as IRWMs (Greater Monterey County, Pajaro, and Monterey Peninsula), GSAs, Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan, the SWRP, and USGS Basin Plan for Carmel and Salinas Basins. How do we unify these efforts, in terms of projects, schedules, budgets? It would be great to have one fiscal administrative center, along with financing expertise (e.g., with ability to implement local bond initiatives, etc.). A regional monitoring program would also be beneficial, with accumulative analyses (such as was attempted in the SWRP). John noted that we have a multitude of rich tools (including USGS Salinas Valley Integrated Hydrologic Model, SWRP Water Balance Tool, SWRP Flood Model, TELR, SWAT). He asked, “Can we master plan the watershed?”

John opened the floor for discussion. Using the Santa Cruz Regional Water Management Foundation as a model, Bridget Hoover suggested the Monterey County Community Foundation as a potential fiscal and administrative lead. We would need to build the infrastructure, just as Santa Cruz did – maybe a “supercommittee” with a representative from each IRWM group, GSAs, etc. Elizabeth Krafft suggested perhaps we approach Community Foundation board members with the idea first. Paul Robins emphasized importance of moving away from State bonds to fund local/regional projects.

John then went through some of the SWRP checklist questions, asking the RWMG for input. Susan Robinson requested that Jeff Condit send John the comments that MRSWMP received on the Monterey Peninsula’s SWRP from the State Water Board (Jeff agreed to send John those comments).

The Public Draft should be posted on the Greater Monterey County IRWM website by March 1. RWMG members can provide comments during the public comment period. Comments thus far have been received from the State Water Board (Rachid Ait-Lasri) and from the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program. Ross noted that he has improved some of the images in Chapter 6 of the Administrative Draft in the Google Drive.

3. Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan: Elizabeth Krafft provided a presentation on the Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP) for the Salinas River. The Salinas River supports a huge agricultural industry and important environmental goals – lots of issues to address, including flooding, streamflow, invasive species, poor water quality, riparian vegetation loss, stream channel encroachment, ad-hoc bank stabilization. She described Monterey County Water Resources Agency’s (MCWRA) role in Salinas River management. MCWRA is the prime local agency managing water and minimizing flood risk along the Salinas River. Their mission is to balance water supply, flood protection, and environmental sensitivity.

Elizabeth discussed the purpose of the LTMP: It provides a multi-benefit comprehensive management program with an understanding of how the various pieces fit together. The LTMP addresses related issues (flood, water supply, water quality, habitat, listed species, etc.) and addresses the needs of MCWRA facilities and operations. The LTMP represents the first phase of development of a habitat conservation plan (HCP – Section 10 permit under the Endangered Species Act that would cover the MCWRA for take of species during operations), and offers guidance and reference to inform future management activities. Elizabeth noted the many planning efforts taking place along the Salinas River – IRWM, stream maintenance program, arundo control, SWRP, GSPs, Biological Opinion from NOAA Fisheries (that will morph into the HCP), and the LTMP.

What are the drivers that identify goals of the plan? These include (among others): protecting species and habitats, funding, timing for collaboration, regulatory compliance, shared costs and benefits. The LTMP

goals include: long-term solutions for Salinas River management, build upon private/public partnerships, reduce flooding and improve habitat, describe existing conditions, document historical conditions, improve steelhead migration, multi-benefit management goals, and inform HCP development. Elizabeth then provided several examples of objectives and actions (including those for lagoon management, water resource management – sustainable groundwater management, stream maintenance, ecosystem health, and steelhead).

Next steps for MCWRA include continuing development of the HCP. The difference between the LTMP and HCP: HCP is regulatory (i.e., is a permit, requires secure funding, needs to be approved by the federal agencies, is a 30-year plan), and will be implemented by MCWRA; LTMP is not regulatory, and will be implemented by a variety of entities. The LTMP is also a living document.

Next steps for LTMP implementation: How can it be funded (this is the question of the day)? How to continue to build partnerships and support? Elizabeth commented on the number and the variety of people engaged in this effort. She said that folks prefer a local group – and not a new entity – to organize the effort. Bridget suggested we take this to the Community Foundation!

4. Other Business. Bridget reminded RWMG members to please contribute to support Susan’s IRWM coordination efforts.

The next RWMG meeting will be held on March 20, 2019, 1:30PM – 4:30PM, at Moss Landing Marine Labs.