

**Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Program
Regional Water Management Group Meeting**

**April 21, 2021
Google Meet Conference Call**

RWMG Entity Attendees:

Horacio Amezcuita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Ross Clark – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Beth Febus – Big Sur Land Trust
Brian Frus – City of Salinas
Emily Gardner – Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Alison Imamura – Monterey One Water
Donna Meyers – Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Kevin O’Connor – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Mike McCullough – Monterey One Water
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust
Eric Tynan – Castroville Community Services District

Non-RWMG Attendees:

Adam French – Amah Mutsun Land Trust
Rebecca Berg – CivicSpark Fellow
Seema Chavan – Carollo Engineers
Doug Dowden – City of Marina
Sarah Hardgrave – Supervisor Mary Adams Office – District 5
John Hunt – UC Davis
Kelli McCune – Sustainable Conservation
Maddi Rasmus – Carollo Engineers
Susan Robinson – Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director

Meeting Minutes

1. Brief Introductions.

2. Amah Mutsun: Dr. Adam French, a Lecturer in Environmental Studies at UC Santa Cruz and Program Coordinator for Tribal Involvement in IRWM at the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, provided an introduction to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band (AMTB) on behalf of the Land Trust and Chairman Val Lopez (who was unable to attend the meeting). Adam noted that he himself is not a Tribal member, but has been a friend of the Amah Mutsun for over a decade.

The AMTB are descendants of Mutsun-speaking Native peoples taken to the Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista Missions during the first wave of colonization by the Spanish. Adam emphasized that the Amah Mutsun are not just an historic Tribe but are living, active members of our communities working to return to their ancestral territory and traditions. The Tribe has State but not federal recognition. The Tribe has no land. Most Tribal members were displaced from ancestral territory during colonization and live in the Central Valley now.

Adam described the Tribe's ancestral territory, which stretches roughly from the northern side of the Pajaro River watershed northeastward to the hills east of Morgan Hill, and southward to encompass parts of the San Benito watershed and west to the Salinas River. AMTB ancestral territory cuts across portions of four IRWM regions: San Francisco Bay Area, Santa Cruz, Pajaro, and Greater Monterey County. Adam shared a map and described the broader stewardship area of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, which extends beyond the AMTB territory. This includes project activities such as a multi-year habitat restoration project in collaboration with California State Parks at the Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve, adjacent to Año Nuevo State Park; cultural surveys and resource planning work at the new BLM-administered Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument near Davenport (Awaswas Tribe's ancestral territory); and cultural resource stewardship at Pinnacles National Park (Chalon Tribe's ancestral territory).

The Amah Mutsun Land Trust was established in 2013 as a vehicle by which Tribal members could re-engage to steward their ancestral lands and its inhabitants, and regain their cultural knowledge and identity. The Native Stewardship Corps is an important Land Trust program that supports cultural relearning and implementation of traditional stewardship methods, and employs Tribal members and youth in meaningful, paid work. The Land Trust currently does not own land but rather achieves land and resource access through collaboration with a wide range of public and private landowners and resource managers including, in Monterey County, the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, where the Native Stewardship Corps will soon begin a project to conduct oyster restoration work. Adam said the Land Trust would be interested in learning about stewardship activities that Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) members may be engaged in.

Part of the work that the Amah Mutsun Land Trust has done with the San Francisco Bay Area IRWM region (with support from the California Indian Environmental Alliance, or CIEA), is a water-related Needs Assessment. The Amah Mutsun Land Trust has the support this year of Rebecca Berg, CivicSpark Fellow, to help with outreach and relationship building. Rebecca provided a brief description of the CivicSpark program, which is an AmeriCorps program for recent college graduates, with the goal of helping local governments build capacity. Rebecca is working with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to build capacity for Tribes through the IRWM Disadvantaged Community Involvement Grant. Rebecca invited those attending the meeting to contact her if they see the potential for a beneficial partnership.

John Hunt commented that project proponents often need to quantify project benefits when putting together grant applications. In this situation where a project may benefit the AMTB, yet Tribal members do not actually live in the project area, does Adam have an approach for that? Adam responded that the AMTB – a displaced community – typically partners via the Land Trust with groups conducting restoration and other stewardship activities in their traditional territory. Horacio Amezcuita asked about problems with water contamination identified during the Needs Assessment, and informed Adam that there will be workshops within the next two weeks to help Tribal members address water quality issues.

Paul Robins commented that State grants often require the engagement of the California Conservation Corps (CCC). Could the Native Stewardship Corps obtain authorization to act in that capacity? Adam responded that they are in the process of obtaining that status. Kevin O'Connor agreed this would be helpful for the Central Coast Wetland Group's work as well. Paul also commented that the RCD is in the process of preparing a strategic plan and will soon need to initiate engagement of Tribes. He asked for guidance in reaching out; Adam provided some suggestions.

3. SAFER Phase 2 Project: The City of Salinas was recently awarded grant funds through Round 2 of the Proposition 1 Storm Water Implementation Grant for the project, "SAFER Phase 2 – Salinas Project to Enhance Regional Stormwater Supply (SPERSS)." SPERSS is a continuation of improvements to the City of Salinas's existing Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility (IWTF), Treatment Plant No. 1 (TP1) site, and storm water infrastructure. Brian Frus with the City of Salinas described the SPERSS project.

As background, Brian noted that Monterey One Water (M1W) was awarded \$10 million (the maximum grant amount) through Round 1 of the Prop 1 Storm Water Implementation Grant for the project, "Salinas Area Flood Enhancements and Reuse Project (SAFER)." The City of Salinas has been awarded \$8.8 million for SPERSS in Round 2. These projects represent a collaboration between the City of Salinas and M1W to share costs for diversion of industrial wastewater to M1W's Regional Treatment Plant using existing infrastructure.

SAFER Phase I consisted of modifications to existing City and M1W facilities to move storm water to the City's IWTF. The project included the following components:

- Phase 1A - Dry Weather Flow Diversion Project: Installed diversion structure to divert storm water into the industrial waste line. Phase I was operational in December 2020.
- Phase 1B - Salinas Treatment Facility Storage and Recovery Project (Pond 3 Pump Station): The storm water and industrial wastewater is co-mingled at the IWTF and then pumped over to the main interceptor at the Regional Treatment Plant.

The project enables diversion, storage, treatment, and reuse of storm water and dry weather urban runoff flows, while providing benefits for the City's NPDES program (reduction in pollutant loads).

In parallel with SAFER Phase I is the project recently awarded grant funds in Round 1 of the Prop 1 IRWM Implementation Grant, entitled "Salinas Storm Water Management: Increase Capture, Improve Treatment, Reduce Energy Use." This project investigates an opportunity to segregate storm water from industrial wastewater via re-use of an abandoned 33" pipeline, which runs from TP1 to the IWTF. The purpose is to increase capacity to capture storm water flows and to segregate storm water along that pipe. The project includes a collaboration with Central Coast Wetlands Group to install treatment wetlands at the IWTF for passive nitrate and phosphate removal, and reduces flood risk at the IWTF.

The IRWM Implementation Grant project dovetails into SAFER Phase 2 (SPERSS). SPERSS is a continuation of SAFER Phase 1 improvements, and includes local cost match from the M1W Pure Water Monterey Advance Water Purification Facility. The project goals are increased resiliency in local storm water infrastructure, and increased water supply reliability to the Pure Water Monterey program. The project has two phases:

- Phase 2A: TP1 Site - This phase consists of trash capture using cyclonic technology, and increased/segregated storm water diversion by rehabilitating the 33" pipeline.
- Phase 2B: IWTF - This phase consists of upgrades to the existing influent pump station, addition of a new influent pump station to increase conveyance of storm water, and segregated storm water storage.

Because the storm water will be segregated from wastewater, that storm water can be directly diverted to Pond 1, bypassing aeration and thereby providing energy savings. An additional component, with future grant funds, will include IWTF automation and back-up power.

Paul Robins asked why SAFER Phase 2 wasn't included originally in the Storm Water Resource Plan. Brian responded that the only component that *wasn't* included was the trash capture, and automation of the pump station and backup power. The City and M1W made the decision, rather than amend the original SAFER project, to just add SAFER Phase 2 as a complete project.

Eric Tynan wondered how much of the additionally captured storm water will go to the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP), and how much to Pure Water Monterey. Mike McCullough responded that the additional water will become part of the wastewater treatment flow; M1W is currently working on a model of how to utilize this additional water. Alison Imamura added that the Pure Water Monterey program was developed with goals to: 1) provide water for groundwater replenishment for the Seaside Basin, 2) provide water for CSIP, and 3) decrease pollutant loads to the Salinas River and Monterey Bay. The SAFER project was evaluated within that context. Obstacles ahead include funding: M1W doesn't have a "buyer" yet for these additional flows. Treating the water and operating the Pond 3 Pump Station is costly.

Horacio wondered how much of the water at Cesar Chavez Park and Carr Lake goes to the Regional Treatment Plant. Brian responded that most of the water in that part of Salinas flows to the Rec Ditch, and Rec Ditch water gets reclaimed. The storm water collected in Carr Lake, however, probably goes mostly to infiltration. He noted that Chavez Park is also a detention basin.

4. Vote to Incorporate SAFER Phase 2 Project (SPERSS) into the Greater Monterey County Storm Water Resource Plan: Susan Robinson reminded everyone that in order to be eligible for Prop 1 grant funds, all storm water and/or dry weather runoff projects must be included in an approved Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP). While the City of Salinas was recently awarded grant funds for its SPERSS project, receipt of those funds is conditional on the project being included in an approved SWRP. Prior to the meeting Susan had sent the RWMG revisions to chapters 7 and 9 for review, which add this project to the plan.

Susan noted that email votes had been submitted (prior to the meeting) from the following RWMG representatives, all in favor of adding the project to the SWRP:

- Monique Fountain for Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (4/13/21)
- Alex Henson for Monterey County Water Resources Agency (4/16/21)
- John Olson for California State University Monterey Bay (4/21/21)
- Brian True for Marina Coast Water District (4/21/21)

Paul Robins motioned to approve accepting the SPERSS project into the Greater Monterey County SWRP. Mike McCullough seconded. All voted in favor, with none opposed and none abstaining. In total, 13 RWMG entity representatives voted in favor; six entities did not participate in the vote.

Thanks to the team at Carollo Engineers (Seema Chavan, Maddi Rasmus, Lydia Holmes) and to John Hunt for drafting the revisions to Chapters 7 and 9 to incorporate SPERSS into the SWRP.

5. Round Robin (and Other Business)

Paul asked about the status of the Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant contract. Susan said Alex Henson (MCWRA) sent her an email recently, stating that the pre-agreement tasks between MCWRA and DWR have been completed. DWR is working on the first revision of the agreement which is anticipated back to MCWRA soon. Most of the sub-agreements are in place; the MCWRA-City of Salinas sub-agreement is approved by the City of Salinas, awaiting signatures from all subs.

Emily Gardner reported that the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency has been busy producing GSP chapters and will be releasing the comprehensive GSP – which will include all five plans – in July. Emily offered to provide a presentation to the RWMG in August. Sarah Hardgrave noted that the District 5 Office was involved with the GSP process for the Corral de Tierra Subbasin.

Mike McCullough announced that Pure Water Monterey just passed its first anniversary. They have been injecting water into the ground since February (2800 AF). M1W is in the process of digging two more injection wells, which will be completed by end of the year. M1W is in midst of a 218 process in preparation for a five-year rate increase (the treatment plant is 30 years old...). Horacio asked Mike whether the Regional Treatment Plant is able to process 100% of the water, or whether some is going out to the ocean. Mike responded that the only water going out to the ocean is reject water from the Advanced Water Treatment system.

Beth Febus reported progress on the Carr Lake project. CEQA (Mitigated Neg Dec) will hopefully be released to the public May/June, with City Council approval hopefully July/August. Big Sur Land Trust recently submitted a grant application to State Parks for \$8.5 million for Prop 68 funds. The grant would support construction of the traditional park portion of Carr Lake, covering six acres (with an additional 67 acres in restoration). The project would fund kids' play area, skate park, amphitheater, restrooms, parking lots, and other park amenities.

Eric Tynan reported that Castroville Community Services District recently signed the subcontract agreement for Well #3, for IRWM Implementation Grant funds. CCSD has received funds for a wastewater project and is also still using funds from the first IRWM Implementation grant.

Bridget Hoover announced that the annual Snapshot Day event will be held on May 1st. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary is in the process of recruiting for a Superintendent, and is also looking for an alternative agriculture representative for the Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

Ross Clark announced that Jenny Balmagia has just started working as the Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Watershed Coordinator for the Gabilan and lower Salinas watersheds, with a primary goal to implement projects in the SWRP and IRWM Plan.

Horacio announced a Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Advisory Committee meeting this Thursday. He noted that the SAFER Advisory Committee performed a cost assessment of all contaminated water systems on their Needs Assessment list and determined the costs to total nearly \$10 billion. There are still a lot of small water systems and private wells not accounted for. One major problem is identifying project sponsors to apply for grant funds for these water systems.

The next RWMG meeting will be held on June 16, 2021, 1:30PM – 3:30PM.