



Regional Advisory Committee

Meeting #20 Notes

February 11, 2009, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

San Diego County Water Authority

4677 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123

Attendance – RAC Members

Kathleen Flannery, County of San Diego (chair)
Craig Adams, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy
Eric Larson, Farm Bureau of San Diego County
Karen Franz, San Diego Coastkeeper
Katherine Weldon, City of Encinitas
Keith Lewinger, Fallbrook Public Utilities District
Linda Flournoy, Planning and Engineering for Sustainability
Mark Stadler for Ken Weinberg, San Diego County Water Authority
Mark Weston, Helix Water District
Marsi Steirer, City of San Diego
Neal Brown, Padre Dam Municipal Water District
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Susan Varty, Olivenhain Municipal Water District

Attendance – RWMG Staff

Cathy Pieroni, City of San Diego
Jeff Pasek, City of San Diego
Sheri McPherson, County of San Diego

Attendance – Interested Parties to the RAC

Alex Chavez, Port of San Diego
Heather Parkison, RMC Water and Environment
Jack Simes, U.S. Department of Interior—Bureau of Reclamation
Kelly Craig, San Diego Zoo
Lawrence O’Leary, OGC Resources
Rosalyn Stewart, RMC Water and Environment
Stephanie Bracci, City of San Diego
Tina Pierce, Port of San Diego
Tom West, RMC Water and Environment
Warren Bacon, Unknown

Introductions

Ms. Kathleen Flannery (chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

San Diego IRWM Updates

DWR Update

Ms. Flannery notified everyone that travel for DWR employees has been suspended due to the current fiscal issues at the State. For this reason, Ms. Anna Aljabiry will not be in attendance.

Update on Proposition 50

Ms. Flannery announced that DWR has encouraged the RWMG to move forward on execution of the Prop 50 IRWM Contract. She urged the RAC to complete all possible administrative actions so that when the bond funds are released, project proponents will be ready to begin project work. Subcontracts with RWMG governing bodies will be developed in the March to April timeframe, and the grant reimbursements should be distributed sometime after that.

Update on Proposition 84

Ms. Flannery reported that as soon as DWR indicates availability of 'expedited' bond funds for Proposition 84, the project solicitation process will begin. To prepare, the RAC and Workgroup should move forward with development of a project application and solicitation process. The Workgroup is initiating preparation of a guidance document to encourage integration of planned projects. An update of the IRWM Plan will be included in later phases of the Proposition 84 grant process.

Region Acceptance Process

Ms. Cathy Pieroni reviewed the ongoing collaboration amongst the stakeholders in the San Diego Funding Area – San Diego, South Orange, and Upper Santa Margarita. The three planning regions have informally named the group the Tri-County Funding Area Coordinating Committee (FACC) and have drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at formalizing the partnership parameters. She noted that the proposed MOU includes a provision for members from the other two regions to attend RAC meetings as non-voting members and for San Diego to similarly attend the meetings of the other stakeholder groups as a non-voting member. This participation would perpetuate a "cross-pollenization of ideas, ownership, and processes" amongst the three coordinating regions.

Ms. Pieroni gave an overview of five alternatives considered for dividing the San Diego Funding Area into inter-cooperative IRWM regions. She elaborated on each alternative and explained why the Tri-County FACC and member RWMGs view Alternative 2A as the preferable alternative. She highlighted that Alternative 2A would continue the coordination established by the Tri-County FACC, while maintaining the scalability and autonomy of each of the three regions. Ms. Pieroni explained that the draft MOU also contains agreement on an equitable split of Proposition 84 funds amongst the regions. This agreement assures local policymakers that each region will receive an equitable share of the bond money and reduces potential conflict. The funding split agreement identifies approximately \$71 million for the San Diego planning region of the \$91 million allocated to the Funding Area in Proposition 84.

The Tri-County FACC sent a delegation to meet with DWR on February 4, 2009 and begin a dialogue on why our Funding Area prefers the Alternative 2A model. The delegation highlighted the differences between our respective regions and the importance of maintaining local oversight of stakeholder involvement, planning, and project implementation that would be compromised by an umbrella organization. The delegation emphasized their commitment to

fully coordinate on planning and projects in the Overlay Areas to meet the spirit of IRWM planning. Each region's IRWM Plan update would highlight those aspects that are common to the other regions and any grant requests would be free of conflict. Ms. Pieroni reported that DWR staff provided positive feedback and seemed impressed with the collaboration of the Tri-County FACC partners to date and the collegiality and commitment to partnership engendered by all. However, DWR staff continued to express reservations with the proposed Alternative 2A model in a subsequent conversation.

Ms. Pieroni then informed the RAC that the Tri-County FACC would still like to proceed with the execution of the MOU and submission of Alternative 2A for region acceptance. She asked if RAC members feel Alternative 2A should be pursued, with the knowledge that some DWR staff may recommend rejection from DWR's approval process. She stressed that DWR does not want three regional plans with one staple, nor does DWR want two of the regions submitting the same project.

RAC Member Comments and Responses

- Concern about splitting the Santa Margarita River watershed and leaving out the disadvantaged communities that tend to be at the top of watersheds. Concern that bond funding may be jeopardized if the region pursues an approach that divides a watershed. *Alternative 2A addresses DWR's concerns through coordinated planning and project identification in the affected watersheds.*
- Inquiry about what happened in the DWR meeting, specifically? *We thought the meeting went great! The acting DPLA chief, who directs the IRWM program, said it seems like we should all be singing 'Kumbaya.'* However, DWR is concerned about workload and would prefer one plan (not three coordinated plans with one staple). Also, if the Funding Area is successful, it may set a precedent for splitting watersheds in other regions. *DWR has clearly instructed the Funding Areas to get together and decide what is best for us. We think we're doing it...and doing it well. With the MOU in place, our preferred alternative for defining our region has a stronger chance of being accepted by DWR. However, there is a risk that they could still reject our RAP application. If our RAP proposal is rejected, then the San Diego Funding Area will be asked to resubmit our proposed region definition and we may not be eligible for expedited drought funding. The \$91 million would not be given to another region if our RAP proposal is rejected this time.*
- Who are the stakeholders for the other two regions? *Upper Santa Margarita includes County of Riverside, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and Rancho California Water District—working together with these agencies is making important new allegiances. South Orange County includes County of Orange, Municipal Water District of Orange County, and South Orange County Wastewater Authority. The MOU would be executed by all 9 RWMG agencies.*
- Clarification on the Overlay Area to be addressed by the Tri-County FACC? *The stippled Overlay Area is where the Santa Margarita and San Mateo watersheds cross region boundaries.*
- Are there benefits to joining regions and have we explored them? *Alternative 2A makes us all three partners. Joining into one region would be difficult because the additional workload would likely necessitate the establishment of an executive director and*

administrative staff—for which the San Diego region would contribute a pro rata share of the expense. It would also require an additional level of governance.

- How can we keep three separate IRWM regions for planning purposes, but reduce DWR workload burden? Is there an outside the box solution? *In the RAP Guidelines, DWR establishes a template for the submittal materials. In the three RAP applications, the three regions can explicitly identify the parts that are different and the parts that are the same to reduce DWR workload.*
- Agree that the proposed Alternative 2A is best for our region. However, concern that execution of an MOU would be a showdown. We may want to consider a Plan B.
- Would more face-time with DWR staff help them to understand why Alternative 2A is best for our region? *Face-time is a problem since DWR can't travel due to budget constraints. Our Funding Area delegation already made the journey to initiate conversation with DWR staff at multiple levels.*
- *We have developed a strong regional IRWM process. If we fail to receive approval for this RAP cycle, the \$91million will still be available to our Funding Area in the next cycle.*
- **Motion to endorse Alternative 2A and execute the Tri-County FACC MOU.**
- Have funding commitments been made in the Overlay Areas? *No, we have committed to identifying inter-regional projects and common programs to rank within our individual prioritization processes. The distribution of Proposition 84 funds among the three planning regions has been identified, however.*
- Suggestion to co-develop outreach efforts and/or common database of projects to coordinate partnerships with the other regions.
- Conflicted about whether or not to support Alternative 2A and MOU.
- Clarification about why FPUD (the RAC member most affected) supports Alternative 2A:
 - All three parties agreed to a solution.
 - It would be way too difficult to merge—we are not a good model for merging.
 - We have three flood agencies, three water wholesalers, three counties, etc. We function in separate spheres.
 - We will work together in the Overlay Area so if projects overlap, we're coordinated.
 - We all support the MOU.
- The Tri-County FACC is a solution to watershed planning and funding distribution! The MOU shows there won't be three plans with one staple (that we will integrate similarities in our Plans and indicate the areas where we differ).
- The MOU made big impression with DWR. Having no MOU takes us back to Alternative 1: Status Quo.
- The whole IRWM and RAP process is a stakeholder process at the State level. It is incumbent upon us to continue to support this stakeholder effort—we did what they wanted us to do (regional planning). We should use the MOU to show strength; “We did what you said. We stand behind it.”

- What is the exact language of the MOU? Can we add a clause to reduce DWR's workload?
Yes, a copy of the Draft MOU will be distributed to all RAC members and a clause will be inserted regarding coordination of all Plans and submittals to DWR.
- **MOTION CARRIED: Motion to endorse Alternative 2A and execute the Tri-County FACC MOU.**

Ms. Rosalyn Stewart reminded the RAC that the MOU copy is still a draft. RWMG staffs have seen it but councils haven't, so it could change slightly.

Watershed Planning and Outreach Workgroup

Ms. Sheri McPherson presented highlights from the first Watershed Planning and Outreach Workgroup meeting (held February 2nd). The Workgroup was asked to develop a memo for stakeholders with guidance on how to identify multi-benefit projects and develop effective watershed partnerships. Outreach to watershed groups and stakeholders will emphasize engaging disadvantaged communities (DACs). The Workgroup brainstormed a watershed outreach strategy, which may include a Road Show on the IRWM project guidance focusing on Proposition 84 projects; coordination with RCAC to help serve DACs in need of small system upgrades; and using a banner and Project Clean Water website as online sources of outreach.

Ms. Karen Franz mentioned the use of events to meet members of the DAC community (flyer for a March 7th Chollas Creek Walk will be distributed via email). Mr. Rob Hutsel announced the San Diego River Watershed Forum on April 24th (flyer will be distributed via email).

Water Supply for Agricultural Resources

Mr. Eric Larson presented an overview of the effect of water supply issues on San Diego's agricultural industry. Water supply cuts and increased prices are causing early exits from the Interruptible Ag Water Program (IAWP), halting new entry into farming, deterring new investment, stressing the groundwater supply, shutting down smaller farms, and ultimately causing production shrinkage. In addition, farms and nurseries have been mandated to participate in runoff monitoring, either individually or as part of a collective. Notification of the mandate was insufficient, thereby creating barriers to enrolling farms in monitoring collectives. Due to the increasing pressures on farmers, several water use reduction and runoff projects—including educational programs and purchase of necessary devices—are in need of Proposition 84 funding consideration.

Other Updates

Ms. Flannery announced that one RAC member (Shirley Innecken) cannot be reached since the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project was suspended due to the State budget crisis. She told RAC members that their positions will be held even if they are having economic issues and asked that if anyone has a problem attending RAC meetings, please let her know.

Next RAC Meeting

The next RAC meeting will be held on April 15, 2009 from 9:00 am to 11:30 am at SDCWA.

Public Comments

Mr. Jack Simes from the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation introduced himself and indicated his support for the IRWM program.