



Regional Advisory Committee

Meeting #31 Notes

April 6, 2011, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

San Diego Zoo Safari Park

15500 San Pasqual Valley Road, Escondido, CA 92027

Attendance

RAC Members

Kathleen Flannery, County of San Diego (chair)
Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association
Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District
Craig Adams, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy
Dave Harvey, Rural Communities Assistance Corporation
Denise Landstedt, Rancho California Water District
Greg Krzys, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Iovanka Todt, Floodplain Management Association
Jeremy Jungreis, U.S. Marine Corps Camp Pendleton
Beth Principe, Mission Resources Conservation District
Kirk Ammerman, City of Chula Vista
Linda Flournoy, Planning and Engineering for Sustainability
Megan Cooper, California Coastal Conservancy
Mike Thornton, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority
Marsi Steirer, City of San Diego
Peggy Strand, Sweetwater Authority
Richard Walker, City of Escondido
Rob Roy, La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians
Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority

RWVG Staff

Cathy Pieroni, City of San Diego
Jeffery Pasek, City of San Diego
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority
Sheri McPherson, County of San Diego

Interested Parties

Anna Aljabiry, Department of Water Resources
Carlos Michelon, San Diego County Water Authority
Cor Shaffer, Santa Fe Irrigation District
Cid Tesoro, County of San Diego
Crystal Mohr, RMC Water and Environment

Dave Gibson, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Diane Kilwein, Valley Center Municipal Water District
Eddie Pech, Department of Water Resources
Erica Ryan, City of San Marcos
Heather Parkison, RMC Water and Environment
Jack Simes, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Judy Mitchell, Mission Resources Conservation District
Kurt Tellefsen, Project X
Maria Mariscal, San Diego County Water Authority
Melissa Estes, Campo Band of Mission Indians
Michael Garrod, Sweetwater Authority
Mike Hastings, Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation
Niki McGinnis, City of San Diego
Roger Bailey, City of San Diego
Rosalyn Prickett, RMC Water and Environment
Sheri Miller, Rural Communities Assistance Corporation

Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project

Mr. Bob McClure, Director of the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, welcomed everyone to the grand opening of the *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project*. Mr. McClure explained that this project is the first step in a long range master plan regarding water use in the Safari Park. The Safari Park has been working to reduce its dependence on imported water. The Park has been working since the early 1980s to inspect wells, and after working with the San Diego County Water Authority on several reservoir and pressurized irrigation projects, the Park is happy to announce that 65-75% of irrigation in the Park is provided by groundwater. Mr. McClure concluded by thanking the San Diego IRWM program, Proposition 50, Department of Water Resources (DWR), the Institute Museum Library, the County Board of Supervisors, and others for contributing funding to the project.

Mr. Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority, gave a brief history of the formation of the San Diego IRWM program, the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), and how the *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project* came to be funded. In 2005, the City of San Diego, the County of San Diego, and the SDCWA formed the RWMG to start the IRWM Program. In 2006, the RAC emerged to ensure input from stakeholders from environmental organizations, academics, businesses, water supply, and other water related areas. This advisory group guides the planning and funding decisions for the IRWM program. In 2007, the first San Diego IRWM Plan was adopted. In 2008, the San Diego region was awarded \$25 million which helped to bring 19 projects to reality and today's ribbon cutting marks completion of the first project!

Mr. Stadler went on to explain that the *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project* represents IRWM in a 'nut shell' and it is therefore fitting that it should be the first project to reach completion. Water-related management activities should be conducted in harmony. This project provides primary water quality benefits, but also integrates recycled water, habitat enhancement, water conservation, and public outreach and education.

Mr. Bob McClure then introduced and commended Ms. Robyn Badger as the lead architect of the San Diego Zoological Society. She helps manage the Park's water resources and keeps the Park on track to be independent of imported water.

Ms. Badger gave an overview of the project background, including review of the Park's water supplies. They include groundwater wells, imported water, runoff, and wastewater treatment plant output that unfortunately cannot be used because of regulatory limitations. Improving the wastewater treatment process will be addressed in Safari Park's next project. Of 25 potential projects identified, Park managers reduced the list to 8-10 projects which were then introduced into the grant process where they were ranked. Ideally, the *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project* would be central to two collection lakes, where water could be brought into the wetland and refined, then reused in two exhibit areas. This project is key for the Park managers to learn to monitor and recycle water using wetlands.

The *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project* implements three water systems in the wetland process. Surface water goes through the Heart of Africa pond, then down through the wetlands and into a second pond. Liners were installed to retain the water and drains allow each wetland to be drained individually. Plants were introduced in the winter and are flourishing. With \$1.2 million from three different grants and value engineering, the Park was able to keep everything important to the wetlands project and is happy to report that the project is on budget. In the future, the Park will experiment with the flow rate, which can range from six to fifty gallons per minute, in order to see what flow rate is the most beneficial for wetlands. Park managers will also change out plants in the wetlands to find the most effective balance.

Mr. Andy Schucker, Education Specialist at the Safari Park, discussed the Park's goals to use the *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project* as a tool to educate the public. Mr. Schucker discussed the wetland's "Outdoor Classroom," a program for 3rd and 4th graders which teaches young students the importance of wetlands, student participation in water quality sampling and testing, and the fact that the Park speaks to visitors on the tram ride about water conservation efforts.

Finally, the group traveled down to the *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project* site, met several Animal Ambassadors, and observed the ribbon cutting for the *Biofiltration Wetlands Outreach and Education Project*. Speakers at the ribbon-cutting ceremony included:

- Kathy Flannery, County of San Diego, RAC Chair
- Dave Gibson, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Roger Bailey, City of San Diego
- Anna Aljabiry, Department of Water Resources

Next RAC Meeting

The next RAC meeting will be held on Wednesday June 1, 2011 from 9:00am to 11:30am at San Diego County Water Authority's Board Room.