



Regional Advisory Committee

Meeting #21 Notes

April 15, 2009, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

San Diego County Water Authority

4677 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123

Attendance – RAC Members

Kathleen Flannery, County of San Diego (chair)
Cathy Pieroni for Marsi Steirer, City of San Diego
Eric Larson, Farm Bureau of San Diego County
Jack Simes for Greg Krzys, United States Bureau of Reclamation
Jim Peugh for Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Judy Mitchell, Mission Resources Conservation District
Karen Franz, San Diego CoastKeeper
Kathy Viatella, The Nature Conservancy
Kirk Ammerman, City of Chula Vista
Linda Flournoy, Planning and Engineering for Sustainability
Mark Umphres, Helix Water District
Neal Brown, Padre Dam Municipal Water District
Rick Alexander, Sweetwater Authority
Shelby Tucker & Keith Greer, San Diego Association of Governments
Susan Varty, Olivenhain Municipal Water District
Toby Roy for Ken Weinberg, San Diego County Water Authority

Attendance – RWMG Staff

John Van Rhyn, County of San Diego
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority
Sheri McPherson, County of San Diego

Attendance – Interested Parties to the RAC

David Harvey, Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Heather Parkison, RMC Water and Environment
Kelly Craig, San Diego Zoological Society
Kimberly O'Connell, UC San Diego
Laura Carpenter, unknown
Laurie Walsh, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Lawrence O'Leary, OGC Resources
Robert Pierce, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Rosalyne Stewart, RMC Water and Environment
Roshan Sirimanne, unknown
Stephanie Bracci, City of San Diego
Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego

Tom West, RMC Water and Environment
Valerie Fanning, UC San Diego

Introductions

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

San Diego IRWM Updates

Update on Proposition 50

Mr. Mark Stadler explained that DWR is expected to send a final version of the Proposition 50 grant contract within the next few days. Mr. Stadler reminded the group that having the contract in place will help position the San Diego Region to begin receiving its \$25 million as the State sells more bonds. The RWMG will begin working on sub-contracts between SDCWA, RWMG governing bodies, and project proponents so that SDCWA is ready to administer funds once the grant money is received. Mr. Stadler noted that certain specifics, such as labor compliance, need to be resolved before these contracts can be finalized.

Update on Proposition 84

Mr. Stadler explained that DWR has indicated that the State is preparing to move forward on the next grant cycle, which involves Proposition 84 funds. The funds are expected to become available in fall 2009. In anticipation of this cycle, the San Diego Region needs to begin outreach to solicit multi-benefit projects. Previous solicitations will be kept in mind, but a large outreach campaign will begin after the new guidelines are released.

Project Database

To facilitate the Proposition 84 grant cycle, the RWMG will develop a project database to assist in the identification of projects that could be combined and/or integrated to form multi-benefit projects. The database should be online and ready for the next grant cycle, and Ms. Flannery announced that the RWMG will solicit the RAC members for input on fields for the database. Mr. Tom West explained that a similar database for the Los Angeles IRWM has been very useful for integration, and also affords the public access to information for other purposes.

Ms. Linda Flournoy proposed a pre-connecting step, such as a blog, to take place before the development and launch of the database, to establish what is known and what information is needed. Ms. Flannery responded that the website vendor would be consulted on this issue.

Outreach to Disadvantaged Communities

Mr. Stadler went on to discuss current outreach efforts to engage disadvantaged communities (DACs). The RWMG met with Ms. Karen Franz of San Diego CoastKeeper, Mr. Dave Harvey of the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), and California Rural Water Association (CRWA). Through these meetings, the RWMG gained tools for bidirectional outreach to DACs. The CRWA has provided an opportunity to place articles in regular publications, as well as provided useful information about very small communities that cannot afford to initiate projects. The RCWA is willing to work with the RWMG and DACs for technical advisory on grant applications. Mr. Harvey explained that RCAC and CRWA help with technical and training, grant and loan applications, and letters of conditions.

Watershed Planning and Outreach Workgroup

Ms. Sheri McPherson explained that the Watershed Workgroup focused on how to define and target watershed groups, as well as how to engage groups at different organizational levels. She listed critical issues on which the Workgroup was seeking information: small water systems, groundwater contamination, conservation education, water quality issues, floodplain management and construction, and leaking septic systems. The Workgroup is hopeful that it can serve to filter projects and enable integration of projects at the watershed level.

Water Supply Allocation

Mr. Mark Stadler explained that the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) Board voted to reduce water supply to agencies due to the unique combination of physical water shortages and regulatory restrictions on water supplies. Because of these restrictions, MWD's reserve has been depleted by 60% and the agency faces significant replenishment issues. As a result, SDCWA's supply from MWD will be cut by 13%. An 8%-10% reduction impact will be passed on to SDCWA customers. SDCWA's Board will implement the supply cuts and declare a Level 2 drought on April 23, 2009.

Ms. Linda Flournoy announced that there is a meeting tonight regarding irrigation cutbacks at the City of San Diego.

Region Acceptance Process

Ms. Rosalyn Stewart presented on San Diego's Region Acceptance Process (RAP) Application. She explained that DWR established the process to pre-approve regions before they distribute funding, and announced that the preliminary draft would be submitted on April 28, 2009. Ms. Stewart followed with a breakdown of the RAP Application's sections. The RAP Application includes highlighted key messages to DWR, in line with the State's published guidelines, as well as sections on stakeholders in which the RAC's processes and outreach efforts were explained detail. The Tri-County FACC was also described in a section explaining the coordination amongst the Funding Area's three separate planning regions.

RAC Comments and Suggestions

- Suggestion to clarify between policy recommendations the RAC makes that apply to its members vs. formal policy decisions made by the RWMG governing bodies (i.e., adoption of the IRWM Plan).
- Suggestion that ongoing efforts to identify DACs be clarified.
- Suggestion to include discussion of desalination in Section 6.2.
- Statement that Section 6 is the most important information, since DWR has been concerned that the San Diego Region is bound by the county line.
- Clarification that SANDAG encompasses the entire regional area, where as land use rights and planning agencies do not.
- Statement that the State Watershed Program bill (AB 1520) is divided by hydraulic unit. What will happen if the Funding Area splits up the Santa Margarita watershed?
 - The Tri-County FACC subcommittee would work together to address watershed planning and project implementation.
 - Several watersheds in the State are divided on jurisdictional lines, so DWR will have to find a way to accommodate and include the areas.

- Encouraged the RAC to get involved in forming the language in AB 1520.
- In Section 8, one geographic hole identified north of Pendleton was annexed into the Upper Santa Margarita IRWM region.
- Inquiry about Borrego Springs' involvement in IRWM planning.
 - Borrego Springs is part of a different Funding Area (the Colorado River area) and is still working on its own approval.
- How will the RAC deal with projects that cross boundaries? While these projects will be flagged for the Tri-County FACC, which planning region will have the bulk of the responsibilities?
 - The Tri-County FACC would make a recommendation to the RAC on implementation of cross-boundary projects.
- Concern that the Tri-County FACC has been anticipated as a problem in terms of governance/institutional structures.
 - Adoption of the Tri-County FACC MOU has changed the tune of the DWR response. With an MOU and formal structure, DWR recognizes the validity of this approach.
 - All three RAP Applications will include upfront language about common structure and sections that describe the Tri-County agreements.
- Request for description of next steps after the RAP Application is submitted.
 - All comments should be sent by the Monday April 20th so that they could be incorporated in the document shipped to the State on April 28th.
 - An individual interview with DWR is expected in June or July, as well as a combined interview with the other regions in the Tri-County FACC.
 - Draft recommendations will be out in August with a 15-day comment period, then final RAC approvals will be released.
- RAC members were encouraged to sign a letter of support to be included in the appendices of the submittal (by the following Friday April 24th).

Chair Ms. Kathleen Flannery asked for a motion addressing the San Diego RAP Application for submittal to DWR. Motion to endorse submittal of RAP Application to DWR. MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Rosalyn Stewart will distribute the final RAP Application via email following submittal.

SWRCB Policy on Recycled Water

Mr. Robert Peirce of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board presented on the State's new policy to address municipal recycled water use. Mr. Pierce explained that the policy's purpose is to: provide direction to regulators, producers, and users; implement state and federal water quality laws; streamline permitting; and increase consistency of regulation. Mr. Peirce encouraged the audience to use the assumption that recycled water use has a beneficial impact, by definition, when evaluating impacts under CEQA. He explained the policy includes a mandate to increase the use of recycled water, by making it available at a reasonable price and stressing that it is a waste to not use recycled water when available.

Mr. Peirce explained the roles of agencies in this policy including DWR, DPH, and the California Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Peirce explained that Salt/Nutrient Management Plans will include: source identification with fate and transport; antidegradation analysis; and monitoring especially near supply wells and recycling or recharge projects. He also explained that landscape irrigation projects must control incidental runoff and will experience streamlined 'waste discharge requirements.' The Regional Board is working with DPH to develop priority permitting for groundwater recharge projects that use both spreading basins and reverse osmosis treatment. Emerging contaminants will be addressed by the Statewide Advisory Panel. Finally, he described incentives including funding, TMDLs, and less stringent storm water monitoring, as well as touched on funding sources and policies and tools regarding recycled water use.

RAC Comments and Suggestions

- Suggestion to include 'Grade 5' recycled water operator on Statewide Advisory Panel.
- Suggestion to include use of recycled water for environmental water demands (i.e., stream flows). Why isn't CDFG on the Advisory Panel?
- Regional Board may need to amend the Basin Plan to address lower monitoring requirements as established by the policy's streamlining efforts. Regional Board should also check consistency between 303(d) listing and the recycled water policy.
- Inquiry about how brine disposal is addressed?
 - Brine likely addressed in the Salt/Nutrient Management Plans.
- How are capital expenses for recycled water treatment and distribution addressed? What about release to surface waters?
 - Basin Plan allows release of recycled water to ephemeral streams only.
- Support for larger water reuse goals (AFY), but note that recycling is expensive and permitting process is time consuming.
- Statement that much of the region's groundwater is brackish due to natural sources, and the recycled water policy should not negatively affect its treatment and use.

Ms. Toby Roy explained that regional implementation of the policy is a joint effort between the Region Board, DPH, County DEH, and SDCWA. The regional effort is emphasizing indirect potable reuse and has prioritized development of the Salt/Nutrient Management Plans. SDCWA has requested that the Regional Board adopt a resolution outlining regional agreements related to key issues (e.g., brine, collaboration w/DPH, etc). Ms. Roy will update the RAC on progress of the regional implementation effort at future meetings.

Ms. Rosalyn Stewart will distribute copies of the presentation and State policy via email.

Quality of Life Initiative

Ms. Shelby Tucker and Mr. Keith Greer provided background from SANDAG on the Quality of Life Initiative. The issues of concern include: infrastructure needs across the region, who is taking care of those needs, how is the approach funded, and lack of funding sources. These were cross-referenced with priorities including shoreline preservation, water quality, and habitat preservation. For instance, Transnet half cent sales tax for habitat preservation only covered some of the habitat so it was decided more money would be sought. SANDAG acknowledged

that it does not have the expertise to address water quality and so the County of San Diego was brought in to partner on the effort.

Ms. Stephanie Gaines explained that the County of San Diego wants to work closely with the IRWM program to address water quality issues through the Quality of Life Initiative. Water quality monitoring, as well as education and outreach, would inform the public on projects' results on water quality. The County of San Diego is working on the Initiative with a funnel approach, attempting to narrow down which issues will go to ballot in 2010 and/or 2012. From there, stakeholder lists, project selection, and goals and objectives will be developed.

RAC Comments and Suggestions

- Will the program be enacted through SANDAG and the County of San Diego, or will it come down through the local agencies?
 - The answer is still unknown but the hope is to take a load off the local entities. Right now, SANDAG and the County need stakeholder involvement to develop the program.
- Inquiry about why this issue should be taken to voters in 2010/2012?
 - SANDAG and the County of San Diego are looking at implementing a funding initiative (i.e., half cent sales tax) similar to Transnet.
 - The Transnet program is an important legacy program in answering key questions: funding mechanisms and timing vs. voter response.
- There is an Ad Hoc committee with SANDAG employees regarding infrastructure items, however no decisions on the measure have been made. Currently, SANDAG and the County of San Diego are looking to see what voters want.
- SANDAG and the County of San Diego were encouraged to use non-profits to leverage expertise in cost efficiency.
- Suggestion to support LID and groundwater recharge in measure.

Other Updates

Ms. Cathy Pieroni discussed the issue of RAC member participation and attendance. After considering a formal attendance policy (no more than 3 unexcused absences in a 12-month period), the RAC discussed a procedure in which absent members should be asked if they wish to continue. If yes, the attendance rules will be reiterated and an alternate identified. If no, the resigning member will be asked for a replacement to be considered by the RAC. Attendance issues will be discussed in an Ad Hoc workgroup, for which the following volunteered: Mr. Rick Alexander, Ms. Susan Varty, Mr. Kirk Ammerman, Mr. Jack Simes and Ms. Cathy Pieroni.

Ms. Kathy Flannery mentioned the Progress Toward Achieving IRWM Plan Targets table at the back of the RAC packet would be discussed in the next meeting.

Next RAC Meeting

The next RAC meeting will be held on June 17, 2009 from 9:00am to 11:30am at SDCWA.

Public Comments

None