



## **Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #66**

February 1, 2017

9:00 am – 11:30 pm

San Diego County Water Authority Board Room  
4677 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123

### **NOTES**

#### **Attendance**

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##### **RAC Members**

Ramin Abidi, County of San Diego (chair)

Al Lau, Padre Dam Municipal Water District (and alternate Arne Sandvik)

Ann Van Leer, Escondido Creek Conservancy

Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District

Brian Olney, Helix Water District

Chris Helmer, City of Imperial Beach

Greg Thomas, Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District

Jack Simes, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Janice DuVall, San Diego County Office of Education

Justin Gamble, City of Oceanside (and alternate Alicia Appel, City of Escondido)

Jennifer Hazard for Olga Morales, RCAC

Joseph Randall for Kimberly Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District

John Flores, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians (and alternate Rob Roy, La Jolla Band of Indians)

Kimberly O'Connell, University of California – San Diego Clean Water Utility

Lan Wiborg, City of San Diego

Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association (and alternate Alex Yescas)

Mark Stadler for Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority

Meredith Meyers, San Diego Coastkeeper

Oscar Romo, Alter Terra

Phil Pryde, San Diego River Park Foundation (and alternate Rob Hutsel)

Roberto Yano, City of Chula Vista

Robin Rierdan, Lakeside River Park Conservancy

Robyn Badger, San Diego Zoo Global

Ron Mosher, Sweetwater Authority

Sandra Jacobson, California Trout

Sarah Pierce, San Diego Association of Governments

**RWMG Staff and Consultants**

Andrew Funk, City of San Diego  
Jen Sajor, RMC a Woodard & Curran Company  
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority  
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego  
Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego  
Roselyn Prickett, RMC a Woodard & Curran Company

**Interested Parties to the RAC**

Anne Bamford, IEA  
Brian Hojnacki, City of San Diego  
Cat Rom, City of San Diego  
Jeff Stephenson, San Diego County Water Authority  
Jennifer Carroll, City of San Diego  
Joel Kramer, San Diego State University, Geography Department  
Lisa Wu, City of San Diego  
Martha Davis, City of San Diego  
Rich Thesing, Tierrasanta Community Council

**Welcome and Introductions**

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Mr. Ramin Abidi, County of San Diego, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room. New RAC members for the 2017-2020 term were introduced.

**Project Completion Report**

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Mr. Carlos Michelin, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), presented on the completion of SDCWA's Proposition 50, Project 1 – Implementation of Integrated Landscape and Agricultural Efficiency Program. Mr. Michelin acknowledged the many funding agencies and collaborators of the project. There was a large number of project participants because the project itself was so diverse with multiple components. In particular, Mission Resource Conservation District implemented agriculture audits, while AECOM conducted GIS data analyses and WaterWise implemented the conservation program. Project contract execution occurred in July 2010 and the project was completed in February 2016. The total project cost was \$5.38 million, with about \$2 million received in grant funding. The project aimed to increase water use efficiency and water quality, while reducing reliance on imported water supplies. This was done by targeting agricultural and landscape irrigation water use efficiency and through outreach and education to the public about water use efficiency. The program participants extended the majority of SDCWA's service area. The project had six components:

*1. Agricultural Water Use Efficiency Audits, Assessment, and Research*

The project completed a total of 500 audits, including 336 full audits, and was able to increase irrigation efficiency by 13%. The project also assessed 56,840 acres of agriculture land and found that 41% of the assessed land was used for avocado production. Research into agricultural water use efficiency explored the potential for alternative crops such as blueberries and the feasibility of using recycled water for irrigation. The research showed that recycled water was safe for avocados with proper irrigation management.

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## *2. Web-Driven Water Budget Implementation Assistance*

This component included a Water Budget Intern Program and a pilot to implement incentives to reduce water use. Fourteen water budget interns were trained who generated 2,900 water budget and landscape measurements. A total of 250 residential audits and retrofits were performed, with an estimated water savings of 1,447 AF.

## *3. CII and Residential Landscape Retrofits*

This project component included the Enhanced Conservation Programs (ECP) Retrofit Pilot Program and a turf rebate program. The first program performed holistic retrofits for three residential and 5 commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) customer sites, 5,505 square feet (ft<sup>2</sup>) and 17,754 ft<sup>2</sup> respectively. These retrofits were designed to adhere to the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo). Twenty member agencies participated in the turf rebate program, garnering 479 residential projects and 50 CII projects, for a total of 756,564 ft<sup>2</sup> of converted turf. The estimated water savings for the CII and residential landscape retrofits component was, on average, 13.7% water savings per site.

## *4. Branding Outreach and Education*

A WaterSmart Branding Study was done in order to develop a brand identity for the water use efficiency programs. The effort resulted in determining effective water conservation messages, program material and website content, and outreach to potential participants. The goal was to make it as easy as possible for the public to access information about project. The project successfully launched the “WaterSmart” brand, which hosted the third Water Conservation Summit in 2009, held annual exhibits at the San Diego County Fair, and implemented a demonstration site at SDCWA headquarters.

## *5. Regional Landscape Model Ordinance Report*

The project developed a regional MWELo that was tailored for jurisdictions throughout San Diego County. It was successfully adopted by 18 cities and the County. The County’s MWELo was the backbone of the SDCWA’s template. Estimated water savings over five years is 30 AF.

## *6. Landscape Conservation Research and Development*

The project conducted program evaluation on 312 sites (235 residential and 77 CII) to understand the return on investment and whether there were significant improvements in efficiency. The evaluation results showed that irrigation hardware upgrades were cost effective for water savings, providing an estimated 10.8% water use reduction for multi-family sites and 20.5% water use reduction for CII sites. A Water Budget Pilot Evaluation evaluated 246 participants; the results of this evaluation suggested that improved customer targeting would be more cost effective. Water savings were not as high as initially projected.

### Questions/Comments:

- Was marijuana considered during the alternative crop investigation?
  - The program took place over a long period of time, meaning there was lots of turnover in staff over the course of the project. Mr. Michelon did not have first-hand knowledge of this and was happy to refer the RAC members to the report. He did indicate there was a good possibility that marijuana was not considered.

- Did you look regionally at the biggest water users and try to target those users specifically?
  - The strength of the program is its diversity. The components focused on agricultural and residential users. However, the programs were tailored to the market, meaning it had incentives-based participation. Users participated if doing so would result in the highest potential return on investment.
- I thought this was a great presentation. I like how the project did not focus on one sector, and was broad. From a water retail seller perspective, these are the tools we can use to encourage conservation. This is what IRWM is for – to provide boots on the ground work.

### **Update on Water Supply Conditions – Tim Bombardier, San Diego County Water Authority**

Mr. Tim Bombardier, SDCWA, presented on the update on water supply conditions in California. Mr. Bombardier explained that the record setting precipitation in January was the result of atmospheric river events. He proceeded to present on various graphs comparing Water Year (WY) 2017 to 1) normal conditions, 2) WY 1983, which was the wettest year on record, and 3) WY 2016. As of January 30, 2017, accumulated precipitation in the Northern Sierra was 213% of normal conditions, or an increase of 27 inches. The snowpack in the Northern Sierra was 148% of normal conditions. State-wide, California is at 100% of the normal snowpack for the April 1st peak, which is considered to be the maximum snowpack for a year. Mr. Bombardier then presented water storage updates. On January 30, 2017, Lake Oroville was at 124% of average capacity for this time in the year, and is currently at 81% of its 3.5 million acre-feet (AF) capacity. Water elevation in Lake Oroville is 120 feet, and will need to release flows for flood control purposes. San Luis Reservoir, which is used by both the State Water Project (SWP) and the Central Valley Project (CVP), is at 83% of its 2 million AF capacity. It is at 105% of average capacity for this time of year.

Mr. Bombardier also noted that the SWP Table A allocation is 60% for Calendar Year 2017 – this has not happened since 2012. Metropolitan Water District has been allocated 1.1 million AF, which means SDCWA will receive 300,000 AF. This may increase if current conditions continue.

The Upper Colorado River Basin is at 160% of the seasonal median snow water as of January 31, 2017. Precipitation is at 138% of the average. Lake Mead is just under 50% capacity, or 20 million AF. Lake Powell is at 47% capacity.

Mr. Bombardier then presented on local precipitation patterns for WY 2017. For the month of January, the Lindbergh Field station received 3.01 inches or 152% of normal conditions. Since October 1, 2016, the station has accumulated 7.91 inches or 155% of normal. The Ramona Airport station received 7.34 inches in January, 221% of normal conditions. Since October 1, 2016, the station has accumulated 14.36 inches, which is 192% of normal.

Mr. Bombardier explained the Climate Prediction Center's three-month precipitation outlook as of January 19. Areas in the northern U.S. is predicted to be wetter than usual, and parts of the south and southwest are predicted to be drier. California's outlook is uncertain and may have no changes in precipitation. These results were based on models reflecting neutral conditions rather than El Nino Southern Oscillation conditions, which were previously used. The three-month temperature outlook predicts most of the eastern and southern U.S., from Arizona to Maine will be warmer than usual. California is no longer projected to be hot and dry.

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Questions/Comments:

- There is concern that climate change models will change, in which California will experience multiple years of drought with splashes of years like this. Will you remain vigilant about conservation?
  - Yes, we do see changes. For example, precipitation will come more in the form of rainfall rather than snow. SDCWA will still remain vigilant about conservation efforts.
- We are no longer in a drought; how will you remain vigilant?
  - We will continue to promote long-term efforts. To be clear, we are out of an emergency, but we still need to continue conserving and using water efficiently.
- Can you explain what the Stress Test was?
  - We took a dry year demand, 2013-14, and had to show that we had adequate supply over three consecutive years.
- Will there be additional storage projects in Northern California?
  - We will have to wait and see. Especially with changes in the new Administration.
- Can we get the source files for the Lake Oroville pictures?
  - Yes, we can share the sources files. Please coordinate with Rosalyn and the RMC team.
  - SF Gate did a piece on this and will also have these pictures. So you can also look there.

**State Proposed Framework: “Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life, Implementing Executive Order B-37-16” – Jeff Stephenson, San Diego County Water Authority**

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Mr. Jeff Stephenson, SDCWA, presented on how to implement Executive Order (EO) B-37-16. Mr. Stephenson first reminded the RAC of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)’s Drought Emergency Regulation’s basic elements. This included conservation standards for urban water suppliers (i.e. statewide reduction mandates), prohibitions on wasteful water practices, and monthly water use reporting. Prohibition on wasteful water practices will likely be permanent. The monthly water use reporting is used to promote transparency with the public. Mr. Stephenson then went through a timeline of state actions in regards to the drought emergency regulation. On January 17, 2014, the Governor declared a drought state of emergency. On May 9, 2016, the Governor issued EO B-37-16 directing SWRCB to adjust emergency regulation in recognition of differing supply conditions around the state. On May 18, 2016, SWRCB enacted a revised version of emergency regulation allowing for self-certification of supply reliability. This regulation expires on February 28, 2017. On February 8, 2017, SWRCB will consider readopting the drought emergency regulation.

On January 26, 2017, SDCWA passed a board resolution declaring that the San Diego region is no longer experiencing drought conditions. The resolution also calls on SWRCB to rescind the statewide emergency regulation for areas not in drought. This board action was intended to maintain credibility with residents and businesses. This will ensure effectiveness of communication during actual water supply emergencies. Additionally, this will help the region continue to attract, retain, and expand businesses. The focus now will be on long-term permanent water use efficiency.

Mr. Stephenson also highlighted continued customer commitment to water use efficiency. Even without state reduction mandates, regional potable water use from June 2016 – December 2016 was

17% below 2013 levels. San Diego region has decreased its gallons per capita demand (GPCD) by 40% between 1990 and 2015.

Mr. Stephenson went on to describe the overview of directives for Governor's 2016 EO B-37-16. As a response to EO B-37-16, the "Making Conservation a Way of Life" Draft Framework Proposal was created. A draft was released on November 30, 2016 and comments were due by December 19, 2016. A final draft is expected in February 2017 and will go through a legislation and rulemaking process. The Draft Framework Proposal establishes a new water use target to replace current 2020 water use targets, established in 2009 under SBX7-7. The proposed new water target is based on efficiency standards for indoor residential (initially set at 55 GPCD), outdoor irrigation (set at current MWEL requirements), and system water lost through leaks. There are also proposed CII performance measures. There is no volumetric standard, but requires water suppliers to 1) install separate irrigation meters for CII landscapes over a specific size, 2) classify all CII accounts, and 3) conduct audits or require water management plans for CII accounts that meet certain criteria. Mr. Stephenson also discussed primary issues and concerns of the new water use target. Concerns include whether setting water use standards take drought resilient supplies into account, if there will be unintended consequences to establishing these standards, and to ensure CII performance measures do not negatively impact the economy.

Mr. Stephenson concluded his presentation with an announcement about the Citizens Water Academy. Spring 2017 class begins March 2nd. This is open to future and emerging leaders in the water field. RAC members and the public were encouraged to nominate someone or apply at: [www.sdcwa.org/citizens-water-academy](http://www.sdcwa.org/citizens-water-academy).

Questions/Comments:

- What can you attribute the 40% decline to?
  - There were a lot of hardware retrofits (i.e. toilets) in the 1990's. Over time, efficiency has increased and now we are focused on outdoor landscape water use efficiencies.

## **IRWM Program Updates**

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### ***IRWM Planning Grant Award***

Ms. Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego, presented an update on the Proposition 1 IRWM Planning Grant. A draft award of \$250,000 was recently announced to update the 2013 San Diego IRWM Plan. The IRWM Plan Update will incorporate new guidelines, policies, and regulations, including the development of a Storm Water Capture Feasibility Study (SWCFS). RWMG also sent a thank you letter in January 2017. The anticipated final award is expected in February 2017 and a kick-off for the IRWM Plan Update is planned for June or July 2017. Ms. Gaines noted that they hoped to be able to get the SWCFS started prior to this kick-off meeting.

### ***DAC Planning Grant Status***

Ms. Gaines also presented an update on the DAC Planning Grant. Ms. Gaines reminded the RAC of the funding reallocation process that occurred in November. The Project Selection Workgroup recommended \$325,000 of grant funding for The Escondido Creek Conservancy's (TECC) *Storm Water Quality for Grape Day Park DACs* project. The total proposed grant request is \$5,536,550. The

DAC Planning Grant application was submitted on January 27, 2017 and is now in review with DWR. A post-proposal meeting with DWR is anticipated in February 2017. The grant award is anticipated in March 2017 and a grant contract is anticipated in April 2017.

### ***San Diego Region Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) Status***

Ms. Gaines provided an update on the San Diego Region SWRP. Public comments on the Draft SWRP were due December 23, 2016. A Draft Final SWRP was submitted on January 31, 2017. The SWRCB provided comments which must be addressed within 30 days of the submission of a Revised Draft Final on February 28, 2017. A Final SWRP will be submitted to SWRCB on March 30, 2017. Ms. Gaines highlighted some of the major comments from SWRCB. The SWRCB would like additional information about the quantification of storm water capture and the beneficial uses. The SWRCB was also concerned that the projects included in the SWRP did not represent all the types of storm water capture projects in the San Diego region. Finally, the SWRCB would like to see more Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) information pulled into the plan, rather than just references. Ms. Gaines suggested re-opening the OPTI database so that additional project information addressing the SWRCB comments can be included. Ms. Gains asked the RAC for input on this strategy.

### **Questions/Comments:**

- Can we open OPTI for more days?
  - We cannot. We are on a tight schedule and two weeks is all we can handle. We were surprised by the comment that the project list was not representative of the San Diego Region.
- Has the City integrated any alternative compliance programs?
  - There is no mechanism to do this, but it has been considered
- We have to tell the SWRCB that there is a parallel process occurring. And that the projects will come in eventually.
- Is there any guidance on what they are looking for? I don't see any problem with opening up OPTI.
  - Extra projects that are more conceptual can be included in order for the project list to be more representative. The problem is that the projects included in the SWRP need to be quantifiable.
- The SWRCB is really working with us and they want us to succeed. So the fact that they gave us an additional 30 days to address their comments is very promising.
- Maybe we can go back to SWRCB and say that our stakeholders need more time. We can say we will have a finalized project list in March.
- I know that these are implementation projects, but can we include projects that are in the planning phase?
  - Great idea.
- In terms of the quantification of benefits, can you give us examples?
  - When we re-open OPTI, we will include more specific directions.

### **IRWM Grant Administration**

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Ms. Loisa Burton, SDCWA, presented a financial summary and progress report of all current and active projects that received Proposition 50 and Proposition 84 grants. All projects that received Proposition

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50 funding are now complete. Eleven out of 38 projects that received Proposition 84 Rounds 1, 2, and 3 funding have been completed or are at least 80% complete. A total of \$41.8 million in grant funding (out of \$89.6 million awarded) has been billed to DWR. The Proposition 84 Round 1 program has been extended through December 2018 due to anticipated delays. Ms. Burton presented project highlights from each of the funding rounds. Completed projects can expect to see retention funds distributed within two weeks of their release from DWR.

SDCWA is developing a Funding Reallocation Policy which will provide guidance for reallocation of grant funding. RAC approval of the final policy will follow at a future RAC meeting. A Grant Administration Program (GAP) Funding Policy is also being developed. This new policy will provide guidance for funding the GAP. Upon approval from the RWMG, the new policies will be distributed to the RAC for review.

Questions/Comments:

- Where is the Reynolds project located?
  - It is located in the southern part of National City, on the northern edge of Chula Vista. It pulled brackish groundwater and cleaned it up. It was part of an expansion project.
- Are you doing anything to recharge the aquifer at the Reynolds project site?
  - No we aren't. We worked with USGS and the County to verify that we are still within the safe yield.

**Public Comments**

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- Bill Steel retired in December. He will be having a retirement party on Monday February 6 in Old Town. All are invited! I also wanted to say great job to the IRWM team. You have always helped get USBR information out to the public.
- Amazing job to everyone throughout the drought!
- The San Diego Basin Study Task 2.4 will be to hold a Stakeholder Meeting in March. We will follow up with a set date soon.
- I just wanted to let everyone know that conservation efforts helped with 20% water use reduction in December. So happy to know that everyone is still pushing forward with conservation efforts. Thank you!

**Summary and Next Steps**

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Next RAC Meeting:

- April 5, 2017 – 9-11:30am

2017 Meeting Schedule:

- June 7
- August 2
- October 4
- December 6

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