



Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #68

June 7, 2017

9:00 am – 11:30 pm

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

NOTES

Attendance

RAC Members

George Adrian, City of San Diego (chair)

Alex Yescas, Harris & Associates, for Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association

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

Betsy Keithley for Ann Van Leer, Escondido Creek Conservancy

Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District

Chris Helmer, City of Imperial Beach

Eric Anderson, San Diego County Farm Bureau

Greg Thomas, Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District

Janice DuVall, San Diego County Office of Education

Jennifer Hazard for Olga Morales, RCAC

Joseph Randall for Kimberly Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District

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

Kelly Craig for Robyn Badger, San Diego Zoo Global

Mark Stadler for Bob Yamada, San Diego County Water Authority

Meredith Meyers, San Diego Coastkeeper

Michael Garrod for Ron Mosher, Sweetwater Authority

Michael McSweeney, Building Industry Association

Michelle Berens for Brian Olney, Helix Water District

Mike Thornton, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority

Oscar Romo, Alter Terra

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

Rob Roy, La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians, for John Flores, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians

Robin Rierdan, Lakeside River Park Conservancy

Sandra Jacobson, California Trout

Sarah Pierce, San Diego Association of Governments

Yazmin Arellano, City of El Cajon, for Roberto Yano, City of Chula Vista

RWMG Staff and Consultants

Andrew Funk, City of San Diego
Goldy Herbon, San Diego County Water Authority
Jeffery Pasek, City of San Diego
Jen Sajor, Woodard & Curran
JoAnn Weber, County of San Diego
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego
Rosalyn Prickett, Woodard & Curran
Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran
Sarah Wheeler, City of San Diego
Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego

Interested Parties to the RAC

Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association (retired)
Barry Pulver, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Eylon Shamir, Hydrologic Research Center
Joel Kramer, San Diego State University
Martha Davis, City of San Diego
Maria Margarita Borja, City of San Diego
Michele Shumate, San Diego County Water Authority
Rich Williamson, Yuima Municipal Water District

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. George Adrian, City of San Diego, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

San Diego RWQCB Update

Ms. Rosalyn Prickett, Woodard & Curran, presented the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) update on behalf of Ms. Laurie Walsh, San Diego RWQCB, who was unable to attend the RAC meeting. The complete Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) for the San Juan Watershed Management Area was submitted to the San Diego Water Board on April 3, 2017. The 30-day public comment period closed on May 8, 2017. The San Diego Water Board is currently reviewing the Plan for compliance with the Regional MS4 Permit requirements.

The Santa Margarita River Watershed Management Area WQIP deliverable describing the Goals, Strategies, and Schedules are due to the San Diego Water Board July 7, 2017. Once received the San Diego Water Board will post the deliverable for a 30-day public comment period. Interested persons wishing to comment on this aspect of the draft Water Quality Improvement Plan should contact Erica Ryan at 619-521-8051 and Erica.ryan@waterboards.ca.gov.

The State Water Resources Control Board held a focused Stakeholder Meeting on May 26th, 2017 in Sacramento. Persons interested in seeing Meeting Notes from the meeting should visit the State Board's website: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/tmdl_igp.shtml#sm.

The San Diego Water Board is updating the Carlsbad Desalination Plant NPDES Permit. This is a high priority for the Board. Staff provides monthly updates on the status of permit reissuance to the Board. Persons interested in these monthly Board updates should visit the San Diego Water Boards website at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/publications_forms/publications/eoreports.shtml.

Persons interested in the status of this permit reissuances can find the most current information at this website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/regulatory/carlsbad_desalination.shtml.

In addition, an email list is available for interested persons to subscribe to at this website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg9_subscribe.shtml.

Finally, the San Diego Water Board continues its work on the Contact Water Recreation (REC-1) Triennial Review Project. This project seeks to track and evaluate available and forthcoming data, reports and information related to potential modification of water quality objectives or implementation plans for the REC-1 beneficial use. Board staff recently provided significant comments on the preliminary draft Cost Benefit Analysis. This triggered a need for the project team to take additional time to respond to these substantive comments delaying availability of the final public report until July 2017. A public meeting to discuss the final report is scheduled for August 2017. For more information on this project please contact Michelle Santillan at the San Diego Water Board michelle.santillan@waterboards.ca.gov.

General Agricultural Orders – Eric Anderson, San Diego County Farm Bureau, and Barry Pulver, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

Mr. Eric Anderson, San Diego County Farm Bureau, presented a brief history of agriculture regulation in San Diego County. Agriculture was initially exempt from regulation under the Clean Water Act, but has been gradually regulated over the years starting with dairies under waivers. There were over 200 dairies in San Diego County in the 1960's, but only five exist today. Due to the high cost of water in the county, growers are efficient with water and, therefore, have small discharges. Stormwater was considered the biggest issue in the county; nurseries were the first agricultural entities to be brought into the stormwater permit. Over the years, the requirements of the agricultural waiver became more stringent. Joining the Irrigated Lands Group became the best way for agriculture growers to participate in the stormwater waiver. The waivers were renewed every five years; as they were renewed, waivers started to include general waste discharge requirements. In December, the RWQCB adopted the general waste discharge requirements for agricultural operations in the county.

Mr. Barry Pulver, San Diego RWQCB, presented on the general waste discharge requirements for the Commercial Agricultural Operations Regulatory Program. In 2016, San Diego County transitioned from waivers to having two orders: the Third-Party General Order (Order No. R9-2016-0004) and the Individual General Order (Order No. R9-2016-0005). The major difference between the two orders is the cost to comply. While the Third-Party General Order can cost 75 cents per acre, the Individual General Order can cost anywhere between \$200 and \$400 per acre. The orders require growers use "effective management practices" or best management practices (BMPs) to minimize or prevent the discharge of wastes to surface water and groundwater. The framework for this requirement includes a Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP), education, monitoring and reporting, and a feedback

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mechanism via a Water Quality Restoration Plan (WQRP). The WQPP is an assessment of practices used by the grower that helps to identify ways in which discharge can be prevented and is updated every year. Education about the latest technologies can help to minimize and prevent discharge. A Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) includes visual inspections as well as surface water and groundwater monitoring. The WQRP identifies the management practices currently being implemented and additional or improved management practices that will be implemented to prevent or minimize the discharge of any waste that caused the exceedance of the “Water Quality Benchmarks.” If any exceedances occur, the WQPP will need to be updated to reflect address these issues.

The orders also incorporate elements of other water quality guidance documents, such as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). Growers in the Rainbow Creek Watershed are required to follow the Rainbow Creek Nutrient Reduction and Management Plan. Mr. Pulver also explained that the Water Quality Benchmarks in the orders were tied to the monitoring program and are considered constituents that would be indicative of any progress made with the BMPs. The MRP varies slightly with each order. The Individual General Order requires a Core Monitoring Plan for surface water and groundwater, while the Third-Party General Order focuses on a regional monitoring plan (RMP). The Core Monitoring Plan focuses on the effects of the individual agricultural operation, while the RMP assesses the effect of the agricultural operations collectively on regional surface water quality. A concerted effort with the Southern California Storm Water Monitoring Coalition (SMC) helped to identify 13 monitoring sites. Monitoring Data is uploaded to the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) for public access. A WQRP is required when certain water quality benchmarks are exceeded or when directed by the San Diego Water Board.

Mr. Pulver encouraged the RAC and the public to visit the San Diego RWQCB website <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/> to stay updated on the Agriculture Orders.

Mr. Anderson added a final note about outreach. He would like to get his information out to as many farmers in the region as possible and asked attendees to encourage their growers to reach out and participate in the orders.

Questions/Comments:

- Who is responsible for creating the monitoring plans? Can you give any examples?
 - The Third Party Group is responsible. The monitoring plans are not due until September, so we do not have any examples at the moment. The MRPs are just starting to be developed, but will be posted online when completed.
 - Part of the plan is making growers more aware of BMPs. Information on BMPs and local data is available through UCSD Extension.
- Can you give an example of a Third Party Group?
 - The Third Party Group assists in enrollment, the WQPP, and helps with submitting quarterly and yearly inspections. Most importantly, they act as a point of contact with the RWQCB. We currently only have one application for a Third Part Group, from the San Diego Irrigated Lands Group (ILG). They have been really helpful, and have also developed an online tool for participants in the group.
- How do they find ILG?

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- You can find them on the RWQCB website on the contacts tab. Or you can find them on the San Diego County Farm Bureau website. The Farm Bureau is like the Chamber of Commerce for agriculture. ILG is a separate non-profit composed of Farm Bureau members.

Project Completion Reports

Two Proposition 84 projects presented their completion report.

Proposition 84 Round 1: Project 6 Implementing Nutrient Management in the Santa Margarita River Watershed – Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego

Ms. Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego, presented on the Proposition 84-Round 1, Project 6: Implementing Nutrient Management in the Santa Margarita River Watershed. Ms. Gaines started by describing the project background. Estuaries and tributaries in the Santa Margarita River Watershed were 303(d) listed for nutrients and eutrophication. A stakeholder group, formed in 2011, developed a watershed process to evaluate and address the listings using best available science. The purpose of the project was to develop scientific-based targets to support TMDL or Alternative TMDL development. The goals of the project were to increase stakeholder involvement, further the technical foundation of water quality management, develop and maintain a diverse mix of water resources, and protect and maintain habitat. The project conducted 33 sampling events over seven sites from January to September 2015 and then again from April to July 2016. Water quality data collected included nutrient loads, dissolved oxygen (DO), pH, temperature, and conductivity.

Phase II of this project is currently underway as part of the Proposition 84-Round 2 funding package. Phase II will use data collected in during this project to develop the nutrient water quality goals.

Questions/Comments:

- What part of the river was sampled?
 - We sampled the estuary. Phase II will focus on the lower Santa Margarita River on Camp Pendleton.
- Since the watershed isn't urbanized, what do you expect to set as the water quality goals?
 - We don't know if dry weather is a factor yet for the lower river.
- Is rock mining in the basin still a possibility? Will this be a concern?
 - The gravel pit is in Riverside County. I don't know the details, but I believe it's dead.
- The Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) is proud of this project. It crosses jurisdictional lines, which is very rare, so this is a great accomplishment.

Proposition 84 Round 3: Project 2 Fallbrook Plant Nurseries Recycled Water Distribution System Expansion

Mr. Jack Beebee, Fallbrook Public Utilities District (FPUD), presented on the Proposition 84-3, Project 2 – Fallbrook Plant Nurseries Recycled Water Distribution System Expansion. FPUD's recently added recycled customers include Color Spot Nursery, Olive Hill Greenhouses, and Roseland Nursery. A total of seven recently added customers doubled the recycled water use in the district. Mr. Beebee

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explained that historical recycled water use only leveraged about 50% of the recycled water supply. The project expanded the recycled water system to the east and installed 10,200 ft of 12-inch PVC pipe. FPUD assisted nurseries in the permitting process with designs and construction of 4 new nursery recycled water meters. Three of the meters have been installed with the final meter scheduled to be installed in July 2017.

The project's goal was to reduce potable water demand, discharge to ocean outfall, and need for fertilizer. The project also reduced costs for agriculture users. They now have access to a non-interruptible water source and have seen reductions in their water costs and fertilizer costs. FPUD projects recycled water usage to build up to 95% by August 2017. Project monitoring reports will be submitted on an annual basis for five years. FPUD has future plans to connect the remaining customers to the recycled water system. Mr. Beebe highlighted the importance of providing recycled water permitting assistance to customers to facilitate the project.

Questions/Comments:

- Recycled water is higher in salts. How do growers cope with the build-up of salts in the soil?
 - Salt levels are actually not that high and loading in the basin is minimal. Based on the Salt and Nutrient Management Plan, the salt loading impacts are small relative to other sources, like imported water. Additionally, many of the nurseries use potted plants.

Case Study on Hodges – Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority & Jeff Pasek, City of San Diego

Ms. Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), and Jeff Pasek, City of San Diego, presented on the Hodges Case Study. Ms. Roy presented the background and challenges related to Hodges Reservoir. Hodges reservoir is 303(d) listed for a build-up of nutrients in the sediment. Water quality challenges include high manganese/sulfur concentrations, high organic carbon concentrations, low dissolved oxygen, algae, fish kills, methyl mercury, and urban and agriculture runoff. Water quality in the reservoir is an issue year-round. Heavy nutrient loads lead to summer time algae blooms. Inversion, in which water from the upper half of the lake sinks, during the winter leads to fish kills and the cycle continues. This is a major concern when determining whether to utilize Hodges Reservoir as part of the San Diego region's water system.

The Hodges Case Study identifies challenges to holistic watershed management and opportunities to address these specific challenges. The process of developing the case study started with a compendium of documents and regulations in the catchment. Twelve stakeholder agencies and 27 documents were identified, and two stakeholder workshops, two workgroup meetings, and 11 jurisdictional and regulatory interviews were conducted to identify challenges to watershed management. The most significant challenges identified were Basin Plan priorities, specific requirements beyond control of an entity, TMDLs that do not align with stakeholder issues, watershed group limitations, and financial constraints. Opportunities for integration were also identified. These opportunities were: solutions that align with the Practical Vision, regulatory flexibility, using the science and data, leveraging existing watershed groups, multiple benefit solutions, and grant funding.

Mr. Pasek then presented on four IRWM-based solution that were implemented to address Hodges Reservoir's water quality challenges. Two projects addressed the reservoir directly, and two projects addressed water quality on a watershed-scale. The two projects that directly addressed issues in the reservoir were developed as a result of reservoir conceptual planning efforts: the Hodges Hypolimnetic Oxygenations System and the Hodges Natural Treatment System. The watershed projects, which both took place at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, were the Biofiltration Wetland Creation and Education Program and the Safari Park Drought Response and Outreach Project. Mr. Pasek also mentioned other efforts to address the water quality issues, including the Hodges Reservoir Mercury Pilot Project.

Mr. Pasek ended by saying that these projects have multiple benefits and involved multiple stakeholders. The compendium was the foundation for the success of these solutions.

Questions/Comments:

- Santa Fe Irrigation District (SFID) and San Dieguito Water District use Hodges as a basin resource. We have to get creative when it comes to treating the water. We would like the water quality to improve upstream so that we don't have to do it downstream.
- We always hear people say that it would be great to capture rainfall in wet years. Hodges is large and connected to the regional water system, so it makes sense to work to fix this reservoir.
 - Hodges spills every 4.5 years with an average loss of 20,000 AF in spills. At \$1,000/AF, this is a lot of money - \$20 million every 5 years. The money invested into these projects is small compared to the value of the water lost to spills.
- Water that SFID treats turns into the wastewater that San Elijo Joint Powers Authority (SEJPA) treats and recycles. Water quality improvements upstream help multiple places downstream.
- Lake Elsinore explored alum treatment for algal growth. Did you consider this for Hodges?
 - Yes, this has been explored and it could be an option. However, because Hodges is a drinking water source there is some concern about using alum (a form of aluminum). There are some storm water solutions that are more effective and affordable than chemical treatment.
 - In the Conceptual Planning Report, we brought on experts who looked at all possible solutions and honed in on the best solutions.
- The vegetation in the area that floods when the reservoir is full is visible from many areas. What is the solution for habitat and vegetation removal? How can you resolve this issue? Also, I know there were talks about transferring water between Hodges and Olivenhain reservoir for hydropower. How clean does the reservoir need to be for this?
 - Energy is already being generated so the water doesn't have to be clean. As for the habitat loss – riparian trees that don't survive during flooding decompose and adversely impact the water quality of the reservoir. These trees cover 200 acres and there is about 350 square feet covered in vegetation that is lost to flooding. There is a very small impact to the reservoir overall and is not the main issue impacting water quality. Habitat loss is episodic.
- Why can't we fill Hodges all the way up?
 - We have to maintain a minimum level in the reservoir, but we don't want it at full capacity because want to leave some room for runoff capture. Also, the more water that is stored in the reservoir, the more that is lost to evaporation.

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- We lower elevations in the winter in the hopes of catching storm water. It's also a flood control mechanism.
- Water quality in Hodges is not good, which also affects the water quality in Olivenhain Reservoir. We can't move the water into the regional system because Olivenhain Reservoir and Hodges Reservoir exceed water quality limits.
- Sweetwater Authority got raw water from Hodges this year and we had to do more to clean the water up. All these projects will help all the agencies in the end and it will save millions of dollars in treatments costs. We really appreciate these projects.
- I'm curious about the outcome of the Mercury Pilot.
 - Mercury exceedance is not a water quality issue. The concern was the bioaccumulation of mercury in fish and in people. This was more of a health hazard. Oxygenation will help to reduce bioaccumulation, which is what the current study is trying to determine. The first step of bioaccumulation happens in anoxic waters. Oxygenation, which helps address some of the water quality issues, stops this process as well.
- What is the source of the mercury?
 - There is no upstream source. It's from atmospheric deposition and possibly just the geology. Anoxic conditions just accelerate the accumulation.

IRWM Program Updates

Ms. Gaines, and Mr. Mark Stadler, SDCWA, presented on updates in the IRWM Program.

Proposition 1 Planning Grants Status

Ms. Gaines updated the RAC on the status of the Proposition 1 DAC Planning Grant and the Proposition 1 IRWM Planning Grant. A revised proposal of the DAC Planning Grant was submitted on May 11, 2017 and the final grant award is anticipated in June 2017. The grant contract is anticipated in July 2017 and LPS contracts are anticipated in August 2017. The IRWM Planning Grant contract is anticipated in June 2017 with the Plan Update kick-off scheduled for October 2017.

Regional Storm Water Capture & Use Feasibility Study

Ms. Gains also presented on the Regional Stormwater Capture & Use Feasibility Study (SWCFS). The project's scope of work includes five tasks. The County was awarded \$149,941 via the Proposition 1 Planning Grant and the contract was awarded to ESA for \$339,997. Partners on this project include water agencies, Copermittees, and NGOs. The 18-month project is scheduled to be complete by November 2018. The kick-off meeting occurred on May 5, 2017 and the team is currently developing an outreach plan with a workshop schedule in July 2017.

G3 Retreat Summary

Mr. Stadler presented a summary of the G3 Retreat, which took place on January 23rd and May 4th. The goals of the G3 Retreat were to finalize the grant policies, evaluate the success of the IRWM Program, and to discuss the vision for the IRWM Plan Update.

Mr. Stadler presented the final Grant Reallocation Policy and the Final Grant Administration Policy, which incorporated input from the RAC. The Grant Reallocation Policy set a threshold of 10-25% change in benefits and clarified the "off-ramps" for each step during the reallocation process. The Grant Administration Policy states that funding allocation for the Grant Administration Program

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(GAP) may be increased depending on the grant package. The policy will be employed if the project extends contract beyond the original grant contract and no GAP funds remain. Both policies will be incorporated into all new LPS contracts and into any new amendments to existing LPS contracts. Both policies will also be available online at <http://sdirwmp.org> under the Grants & Agreements tab.

The G3 evaluated IRWM success by assessing how grant dollars have been allocated by project type. Additionally, they looked at the percentage of projects that addressed each of the four IRWM goals: water supply, water quality, watersheds and natural resources, and sustainable integrated resource management. The two graphs presented show that water supply and water quality are highly prioritized. The G3 also discussed their vision for the IRWM Plan Update. They discussed gaps in the current IRWM Plan, areas of interest to the Region, how to address required plan updates, and which technical areas could be made more robust. The RAC will be solicited for input on the Plan Update at a future RAC meeting.

Statewide IRWM Update

Mr. Stadler presented on three statewide IRWM updates. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) recently released “Stakeholder Perspectives: Recommendations for Sustaining and Strengthening Integrated Regional Water Management.” This was published as a result of the DWR Water Summit. It is unclear what happens next, and RWMGs and Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) plan to ask DWR about future “Stakeholder Perspectives.” DWR recently briefed the Roundtable of Regions about possible changes to how the IRWM Program is operated. DWR presented potential solutions to perceived problems with the process and emphasized that this is just the start of a broader conversation. Mr. Stadler was under the impression that DWR is open to compromising. Finally, Mr. Stadler outlined the Proposition 1 grant program schedule. The DAC Grant contract target date is set for October 2017. Two upcoming implementation rounds under Proposition 1 will allocate \$33 million for the San Diego Funding Area.

Questions/Comments:

- Why would you add the new policies to existing contracts?
 - We would only add it to new amendments in existing contracts. This was just an opportunity to include the policies, which need to be put in place as soon as possible.
- As an LPS, I want to understand the increase in GAP funding. This seems counter to getting groups together on projects.
 - The GAP funding policy is not specific to size or complexity of projects.
- Would the GAP policy be individually based?
 - It only applies to projects that extend beyond the contract end date and when GAP runs out of money.

IRWM Grant Administration

Ms. Loisa Burton, SDCWA, presented an update to grant administration. The San Diego IRWM Program has been awarded a total of \$91 million for 58 projects to-date. A total of 30 projects have been completed or are at least 80% complete. The program has billed \$48.2 million to DWR and has received \$42 million so far. Ms. Burton presented on significant milestones for projects included in Proposition 84 and Proposition 1 funding packages.

Questions/Comments:

- Which funds end in 2019?
 - The second round of Proposition 1 funding.

Public Comments

Mr. Andrew Funk, City of San Diego, made an announcement about the upcoming San Diego Basin Study public meeting. An official announcement will be sent around soon.

Summary and Next Steps

Next RAC Meeting:

- August 2, 2017 – 9:00-11:30 am

2017 Meeting Schedule:

- October 4
- December 6