



Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #48

April 2, 2014

9:00 am – 11:30 am

The Water Conservation Garden Cuyamaca College
12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, CA 92019

NOTES

Attendance

RAC Members

Arne Sandvik for Albert Lau, Padre Dam
Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association
Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District
Brian Olney for Mark Umphres, Helix Water District
Cari Dale, City of Oceanside (and Alternate Mo Lahsaie)
Crystal Najera, City of Encinitas
Dennis Bowling, Floodplain Management Association
Eric Larson, San Diego County Farm Bureau
Hawkeye Sheene for Kimberly O'Connell, University of California San Diego
Jay Klopfenstein for Ronald Wootton, Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation
Jennifer Casamassima for Marsi Steirer, City of San Diego
Jennifer Hazard, Alter Terra
Jennifer Sabine, Sweetwater Authority
Joey Randall for Kimberly Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District
Lawrence O'Leary for Patrick Crais, California Landscape Contractors Association
Lauma Jurkevics, Department of Water Resources
Leigh Johnson, University of California Cooperative Extension
Natalie Smith for Dave Harvey, Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Robyn Badger, San Diego Zoological Society
Toby Roy for Ken Weinberg, San Diego County Water Authority
Travis Pritchard, San Diego Coastkeeper
Troy Bankston, County of San Diego (and Alternate Sheri McPherson)

RWMG Staff

Goldy Herbon, City of San Diego
Dana Frieauf, San Diego County Water Authority
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego
Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego

Interested Parties to the RAC

Bryn Evans, Dudek
Cecilia Tipton, City of Santee
Chris Pinto, Jamul Indian Village
Christina Schaefer, SES
Crystal Mohr, RMC Water and Environment
Elyssa Roberts, Open Space Management
Glen Schmidt, American Society of Landscape Architects
John Bolthouse, Water Conservation Garden
Julia Chunn-Heer, Surfrider Foundation San Diego
Julie Hampel, University of California, San Diego
Kevin McKernan, San Diego River Conservancy
Kirk Ammerman, Kimley-Horn and Associates
Luis Generoso, City of San Diego
Michelle Curtis, Helix Water Department
Michele Shumate, San Diego County Water Authority
Pam Meisner, Water Conservation Garden
Pete Vrettas, San Diego State University
Rich Thesing, Tierrasanta Community Council
Robert Mesa, Jamul Indian Village
Rosalyn Prickett, RMC Water and Environment
Roxy Carter, California Trout
Sally Johnson, RMC Water and Environment
Terrell Breaux, City of San Diego

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room. Mr. Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority, welcomed back Loisa Burton.

IRWM Grant Program and “Drought Relief” Funding Opportunity

Mr. Stadler announced to the RAC that the San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region has a new Regional Service Representative from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) – Melissa Sparks. Ms. Sparks has worked hard to clear the Region’s outstanding invoices, which are now in DWR’s comptroller’s office, and reimbursements checks are expected to arrive soon. Total outstanding reimbursements are approximately \$1.5 million. Mr. Stadler updated the RAC on the status of the latest Proposition 84 Round 1 Implementation Grant invoice, which totaled \$1.169 million, and has been approved by the Water Authority and will be sent to DWR soon. DWR has also approved the Region’s 7th amendment to its Proposition 50 Grant.

Mr. Stadler told the group that the Region’s Proposition 84 Round 2 Implementation Grant award letter has been received, and that work begun as of February 21, 2014 is eligible for reimbursement. Funding match can be earned for work completed after September 30, 2008. He reminded Project Sponsors that there is a workshop with DWR in the afternoon to review and address comments on the draft grant contract. An executed Round 2 contract is anticipated by June.

Proposition 84 Round 3 Drought Relief

Mr. Stadler discussed Senate Bill 104 (SB104), the bill will fund emergency drought relief through a third, expedited round of Proposition 84 Implementation Grant funding (referred to as Round 3). There is a total of \$472 million remaining from Proposition 84 funds, of which approximately \$22 million will go to fund regions that received increases in their awards between the draft and final funding recommendations from Round 2 (including the San Diego Region), and \$200 million will be made available for the expedited drought relief grant cycle (Round 3). Mr. Stadler reminded the group that because DWR has not yet released a Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) with grant application details, all the information presented on the anticipated Round 3 Drought Relief funds is speculative. It is unknown if the \$200 million will be allocated by Funding Area or statewide, so the total amount available to the San Diego Region is currently unknown. Mr. Stadler reminded everyone to watch their emails for announcements regarding Round 3. It is anticipated that the funds will be awarded in early Fall 2014, the Water Authority is assuming that to mean October.

The Round 3 funding is coming through the IRWM Program and has some additional requirements specific to drought relief funding. Because the funding will be coming through the IRWM Program, projects must also be IRWM projects to receive funding (such as water supply, water quality, and natural resources projects that provide multiple benefits). For the San Diego Region, it is anticipated that eligible projects will include water conservation, irrigation efficiency, and water reuse/recycling projects. Expedited funding can also go towards projects that address water quality or natural resources issues caused or exacerbated by the drought.

Mr. Stadler presented the tentative schedule for the Round 3 cycle from DWR. The draft PSP is expected in early April, final PSP in early June, and the grant application is anticipated to be due in early August. Due to this expedited schedule, the San Diego Region needs to move forward with the project selection process now in order to adequately follow the project selection procedure outlined in the 2013 IRWM Plan. The San Diego Project Database is currently open and will be accepting projects for Round 3 from April 1st to April 30th. There will be a joint RAC meeting and Project Integration Workshop on April 22, where RAC members will be asked to vote on scoring criteria. In addition, a tutorial will be provided on how to use the Project Database, and project sponsors will have the opportunity to mingle and discuss opportunities for project integration. Projects will be scored from April 30th to May 14th, with a second workshop on May 15th to present the project scores and solicit input from the RAC and the public on scoring results and priorities. Project Interviews will be held on May 28th, and the RAC meeting to approve the grant proposal package will be the regular June 4th RAC meeting. RAC members need to save the dates for the workshops and RAC meeting as actions will be requested at each of them. Project sponsors should save the date for the interviews if they will be submitting projects for consideration in Round 3.

The Project Selection Workgroup will be convened, and is looking for members. Please contact Crystal Mohr (cmohr@rmcwater.com) if you are interested in participating in the Workgroup. It is anticipated that there will be four meetings of the Project Selection Workgroup between May 19th and May 30th, from 6 to 8 hours each. The Project Selection Workgroup will review projects, interview project sponsors, and recommend a suite of projects to the RAC for inclusion in the Round 3 grant application. The RAC approves the suite of projects, and the Water Authority's Board makes a final approval of the suite of projects prior to submittal to DWR.

Questions/Comments

- Is the drought funding for shovel-ready projects only or can it also go for design projects?
 - DWR is shying away from the term “shovel-ready” but it is anticipated that they are looking for construction and on-the-ground projects. Design projects are probably not what they are looking for. We expect that they are looking for projects that result in production of new water or water savings; however, because a PSP has not yet been released, this information is still speculative.
- What about projects that speed up the process for implementing production of new water or water savings? Say, a project that will be produce new water in 2020 instead of 2030. What does “expedited” mean?
 - We are still waiting on the PSP, but are hoping that DWR will provide definitions for “drought relief” and “immediate”.
 - We expect that DWR is looking for water by 2014 or 2015.
 - The grant contract has been a 5-year cycle in the past, but we have been hearing that it will be a 3-year cycle for Round 3. That means projects must be completed within three years of the grant award.
- Can project sponsors be on the Project Selection Workgroup?
 - Yes. There is a concerted effort to prevent conflicts of interest for those who are on the Project Selection Workgroup. For example, no information about a project can be shared with the Workgroup if it is not included in the project database – this eliminates the ability for those in the room to provide additional information about their own projects.

Proposition 84 Round 4 Implementation Grant

Mr. Stadler presented what is known about the presumed final round of Proposition 84 Implementation Grant funding – Round 4. Following award of Round 3 funds (assuming the full \$200 million is awarded), \$250.7 million will be available statewide. There is hope that Round 4 will be a more traditional round of IRWM funding, meaning that it will not be issued on an expedited schedule and there will be time to implement the full IRWM process for project selection and integration. It is anticipated that Round 4 will begin in 2015 or 2016. After Round 2, the San Diego Funding Area (which contains the San Diego IRWM Region, Upper Santa Margarita IRWM Region, and South Orange County IRWM Region) had \$56 million remaining. The amount available for Round 4 will be \$56 million minus whatever is awarded to regions in the Funding Area during Round 3.

Assembly Bill 1874

Mr. Stadler reminded the group that the water crisis from the drought provides an opportunity to implement changes to the statewide IRWM program that the Region has been asking for. As has been discussed at previous RAC meetings, the Water Authority has been working on a legislative approach to making changes to the IRWM program. The Water Authority sponsored a bill that Assemblymember Gonzalez has authored to streamline IRWM processes. This bill would implement block grants where non-competitive funding areas (those with a single planning Region, or with agreements between planning Regions as with the San Diego Funding Area) would write streamlined applications, and receive all the funds for their Funding Area or Region, to be administered locally. The Regions would be subject to audits to ensure proper use of the funds, but would move IRWM

decision-making to the local level, which was the intent of the IRWM program. The streamlined process would also reduce the cost to apply for and administer the grants, and allow funds to be distributed more quickly. As the bill moves forward, the Water Authority will ask RAC members for support.

Questions/Comments

- Is there any provision for streamlining CEQA for the Round 3 grant opportunity?
 - There have been many comments to DWR requesting this, but the answer is as yet unknown if the CEQA process will be streamlined for the expedited funds, because the PSP has not yet been released.
- The Water Authority is advocating that if a project meets the criteria of the PSP, and it has been funded in previous rounds, that DWR should be able to award funds to the project without requiring a detailed application.
- Do the results of the project need to be realized by 2015? For example, new water actually produced or delivered in 2015?
 - This is still unknown, but it is expected that new water would need to be produced/delivered by 2015.
- The draft PSP is expected soon, but there is no definite date on when it would be released. Can the project selection and grant application processes be pushed out?
 - April 30th is the deadline to submit projects to the database for consideration for Round 3 funding. We don't anticipate that DWR's scheduled will change much, and it is already a compressed timeline.
- Do we submit projects online?
 - Yes. You can submit projects through the online Project Database. If you have any questions contact Rosalyn Prickett or Crystal Mohr (cmohr@rmewater.com). There is also a flyer in the meeting materials on how to use the Project Database (OPTI flyer), and a flyer with information on the Integration and Scoring workshops. The Integration Workshop will have a brief tutorial on how to use the Project Database.

Next RAC meeting

Mr. Stadler presented the schedule for RAC meetings set for 2014:

Next RAC Meeting:

- Joint RAC Meeting and Integration Workshop: April 22nd, 2014 – 9:00 am – 11:00 am
- Joint RAC Meeting and Scoring Workshop: May 15th, 2014 – 9:00 am-11:00 am
- June 4th, 2014 – 9-11:30am

2014 Meeting Schedule:

- August 6, 2014
- October 1, 2014
- December 3, 2014

Regional Drought Response

Ms. Roy introduced Ms. Dana Frieauf, San Diego County Water Authority, and Ms. Michelle Curtis, Helix Water District, to present drought responses from local agencies.

Ms. Frieauf presented an overview of current drought conditions, reviewed the region's investments in supply reliability, and presented regional conservation programs. She showed that statewide runoff has been well below average the last few years, but noted that because the Water Authority gets a large portion of its imported water from the Colorado River, its water supplies are in better shape compared to other regions that are solely dependent on water from the State Water Project. Despite the availability of Colorado River water, the Water Authority's reservoirs are at approximately 40% of capacity. Ms. Frieauf noted that the impacts of drought vary across the state, with regions dependent on a single watershed or a single source of supply being the most vulnerable. The San Diego Region has invested in portfolio diversification through Colorado River transfers, water conservation (water use is down 24% since 2007), and regional storage. In February 2014, the Water Authority Board activated the voluntary stage of its Water Shortage and Drought Response Plan, and declared a Level 1 Drought Water condition.

Ms. Curtis presented Helix Water District's water management efforts. She noted that water use within the District's service area dropped during the drought that took place in the 1990s; although per capita water use has increased since the 1990s, water use never returned to pre-1990s levels. Water management implemented by the Helix Water District includes water loss control, storage, conservation, water reuse, and compliance with best management practices. Conservation pricing (tiered water rates) has helped encourage conservation. The District offers a survey programs for properties that are irrigating improperly or inefficiently, and provides suggestions on how to use water more efficiently. They also offer rebates for water efficiency devices (low-flow toilet, weather-based irrigation control, etc.), turf replacements, and free low-flow showerheads. The District also conducts education and outreach to schools, conducts workshops and classes, and partners with the Water Conservation Garden to showcase water efficient landscaping.

Conservation Showcase

Ms. Roy introduced Michele Shumate (Water Authority), Julia Chunn-Heer (Surfrider Foundation), Lawrence O'Leary (California Landscape Contractors Association), and John Bolthouse (Water Conservation Garden) to present on different conservation approaches in the Region: incentives, on-the-ground, private, and community (respectively).

Ms. Shumate presented the Water Authority's Turf Replacement and Agricultural Efficiency Program, funded through Proposition 50 and Proposition 84 IRWM grants. The program is a joint effort between the City of San Diego and the Water Authority. In total the turf replacement program has issued 681 residential rebates, and 126 commercial rebates, for a total of 807 rebates since 2010. The Agricultural Efficiency Program includes water use efficiency audits, agricultural assessments, and a research project. The research project is investigating the efficient use of recycled water on avocados with the goal of converting avocado groves to recycled water.

Ms. Chunn-Heer presented Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Gardens program. This program aims to reduce ocean pollution from runoff through landscaping based around the principles of C.P.R. – Conservation, Permeability, and Retention. The Ocean Friendly Gardens program encourages property owners to think of their property as a mini-watershed. The program implements a number of

components, including a watershed class, hands-on-workshops, a garden assistance program for conversion to ocean friendly gardens, and neighborhood walks hosted by program participants. Ms. Chunn-Heer then presented a series of before-and-after photos showing the diversity, beauty, and success of the ocean friendly gardens.

Mr. O'Leary presented on the help that professional landscapers can provide in improving water use efficiency through proper design, installation of appropriate technology, and selection of vegetation. He emphasized that private landscapers can and should work with the Region to maintain the vibrant landscape of San Diego while promoting and implementing water conservation measures. Professionals in the industry work to promote water, soil, and energy conservation, and while technology has progressed to allow for highly efficient irrigation systems, there is a need for training operators, which can also serve disadvantaged communities by building skills and elevating workers to skilled operators who can command a higher salary, thereby improving their situation. Mr. O'Leary said that long-term water management funding should include landscape because it keeps San Diego looking good and protects protect values, they are large consumers of water, and can fix water wasting situations, and promote recycled water use.

Mr. Bolthouse welcomed the group to the Water Conservation Garden, and invited everyone to break into groups for tours of the garden. The group moved outside and toured the grounds, which feature a variety of water-wise gardens, showcasing the beauty of water-wise gardens and native plants.