



Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #53

December 3, 2014

9:00 am – 11:30 am

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

NOTES

Attendance

RAC Members

Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority (chair)
Albert Lau, Padre Dam (and Alternate Arne Sandvik)
Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association
Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District
Crystal Najera, City of Encinitas (and Alternate Ligeia Heagy)
Goldy Herbon for Marsi Steirer, City of San Diego
Jack Simes, United States Bureau of Reclamation (and Alternate Leslie Cleveland)
Jennifer Hazard, Alter Terra
Joe Kuhn, City of La Mesa
Joey Randall for Kimberly Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District
Joni Johnson for Dave Harvey, Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Katie Levy, SANDAG
Kimberly O'Connell, University of California – San Diego Clean Water
Leigh Johnson, University of California Cooperative Extension
Mark Umphres, Helix Water District (and Alternate Brian Olney)
Mike Thornton, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Robyn Badger, San Diego Zoological Society
Ron Mosher for Jennifer Sabine, Sweetwater Authority
Stephen Beppler for Bob Kennedy, Otay Water District
Travis Pritchard, San Diego Coastkeeper
Troy Bankston, County of San Diego

RWVG Staff

Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego
Maria Mariscal, San Diego County Water Authority
Nancy Stalnaker, County of San Diego

Interested Parties to the RAC

Bill Luksic, RMC Water and Environment
Catherine Rom, City of San Diego
Cecilia Tipton, City of Santee
Crystal Mohr, RMC Water and Environment
Dave Gibson, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS
Emily Fudge, US Forest Service
Gloria Silva, US Forest Service
Lindsey Hawes, Center for Sustainable Energy
Mark Hatcher, Sweetwater Authority
Michael Garrod, Sweetwater Authority
Rosalyn Prickett, RMC Water and Environment
Sally Johnson, RMC Water and Environment
Steve Bossi, City of San Diego
Tom Adler, City of Chula Vista
Wes Danskin, United States Geological Survey

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

IRWM Grant Program

Grant Administration

Ms. Loisa Burton, SDCWA, updated the group on grant administration activities for the San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program. In total, 44 projects have been funded, for a total of \$59 million in grant funds.

Proposition 84 Implementation, Round 1

All projects funded under Proposition 84, Round 1 Implementation Grant are progressing as planned. Three projects were highlighted for the group:

- Project 3 – North San County Cooperative Demineralization Project: construction complete, engineer inspection held on November 4, 2014.
- Project 4 – Rural Disadvantaged Community Partnership Project: Identified two subprojects to be funded, including one tribal project, which will provide water services and septic systems to seven homes.
- Project 5 – Lake Hodges Water Quality and Quagga Mussel Mitigation: Lake Hodges Water Quality Improvements Assessment and Evaluation Report has been finalized.

Under this grant, the San Diego IRWM Region was awarded \$7.9 million, of which \$3.1 million has been billed, and \$2.9 million has been received. Two of the projects have been fully funded.

Proposition 84 Implementation, Round 2

Under the Proposition 84, Round 2 Implementation Grant, all Local Project Sponsor (LPS) Agreements have been executed, and LPS representatives attended a training for grant administration. Ms. Burton reminded the group that the first Progress Reports and Invoices for the Round 2 grant will be due to SDCWA on December 15, 2014.

Proposition 84, Implementation Drought Solicitation

Ms. Burton announced that SDCWA received a grant commitment letter from DWR on November 14. The San Diego IRWM Region was fully funded and awarded \$15.1 million for seven water supply projects. Grant Agreement materials from LPS are due to SDCWA by December 3, 2014.

Proposition 50

Projects funded under Proposition 50 are progressing as planned, with 10 of the 15 projects either completed or near completion. Projects 16 and 19 have been completed and reviewed, and received their final retention payments on November 6, 2014.

Ms. Burton updated the group on the status of the audit that DWR conducted on the Proposition 50 projects. SDCWA met with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on November 4, 2014 to discuss the audit results. SDCWA found inconsistencies in DWR's calculations, and is currently awaiting a final decision from DWR regarding the audit.

Proposition 50 is approximately 65% complete, and Ms. Burton was pleased to announce that DWR was paying invoices within 60 days.

Three projects are submitting their Completion Reports under Proposition 50:

- Chollas Creek Runoff Reduction and Groundwater Recharge Project: Installed porous pavement and biofiltration planters.
- Biofiltration Wetland Creation and Education Program: Zoo/Safari Park submitted third annual post-performance report. The wetland at the East Africa exhibit pond is doing well, and they are continuing work to improve treatment. The program reached 1,900 students last year.

Proposition 84, Round 4 Implementation Grant

Ms. Goldy Herbon, City of San Diego explained the anticipated schedule for the fourth and presumed final round of Proposition 84 Implementation Grant funding. For the San Diego IRWM Region, there is \$31 million remaining for the final round of funding. DWR has said that it is approximately 6 months behind the schedule posted online, and that the draft Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) would likely be available in Fall 2015, with applications due in Spring 2016, and final awards made in Fall 2016. DWR has also indicated that the schedule could be moved forward at DWR's discretion and that DWR has indicated that the funding could be allocated to another drought round if directed by the legislature. The San Diego IRWM Region will continue to track this funding opportunity and will provide updates to stakeholders and the Regional Advisory Committee on a continuous basis.

Proposition 1

Ms. Goldy Herbon also provided an update on Proposition 1 (the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014) that recently passed, with \$510 million allocated to IRWM grants. Of this, \$52.5 million is available to the San Diego Funding Area, which includes three

IRWM Regions. The three IRWM Regions are known as the Tri-County Funding Area Coordinating Committee (Tri-County FACC) and include the: San Diego, Upper Santa Margarita, and South Orange County regions, which have a funding agreement to split the Proposition 84 funding. It is anticipated that the Tri-County FACC will get together and implement a funding agreement for Proposition 1 funding. Under the funding agreement, \$38 million is anticipated to be available to the San Diego IRWM Region if the same funding split between the Tri-County FACC is implemented; this value may also vary based upon the amount of fees that DWR takes from the Funding Area (under Proposition 84, 8.5% of the funding was provided to DWR for grant administration).

IRWM is not the only category of funding available through Proposition 1, and those other opportunities will continue to be tracked by the San Diego IRWM Region and communicated to stakeholders and the Regional Advisory Committee.

There are some changes from Proposition 84 to Proposition 1 for the IRWM funds. The local funding match has been increased from 25% to 50%, although disadvantaged communities (DACs) will still be able to submit funding match waivers. There is also a statewide allocation of 10% to DACs.

Project 50-13: South San Diego Water Supply Strategy

Mr. Wes Danskin, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), presented on the South San Diego Water Supply Strategy project funded under Proposition 50, in partnership with Michael Garrod, Sweetwater Authority. Mr. Danskin stated that most of the funding for the project was provided by local and state dollars, with only about one-third of the funds coming from federal agencies. The Study Area focused on the San Diego Formation that ranges from approximately the Wild Animal Park in the north (near Escondido) to Mexico in the south, and from the mountains to the continental shelf. The project began with study questions developed with Sweetwater Authority in 2001 regarding the San Diego Formation and its ability to provide groundwater supplies. These questions are:

- How widespread are the freshwater aquifers of the San Diego Formation, and how long will freshwater last?
- How much brackish groundwater is available and how much could be available if brackish groundwater treatment can be expanded?

Using grant funding, six multiple-depth groundwater monitoring wells up to 2,000 feet deep were drilled. It was necessary to drill additional wells, because the conditions of the San Diego Formation, like many other groundwater basins in San Diego are not entirely known. Part of the reason for data gaps regarding groundwater resources in the San Diego region is due to the lack of oil, gas, and mineral resources in the region. In places where such resources are in abundance and actively used, groundwater resources are often better-understood and more heavily researched. The project provided much more data beyond water supply and water quality. Through the project, USGS was able to create a three-dimensional geologic model that allows researchers to see a cross-section of any place within the Study Area, which helps visualize how and where water moves. Data from the wells is available online, and updated every few hours. Results showed that the San Diego Formation was found to move water more quickly than expected, and subsurface flows were modest.

USGS has done lots of local and international outreach, and are using the best available science for this project. Mr. Danskin informed the RAC that USGS would be happy to give a presentation to their groups if they are interested.

Questions/Comments:

- Congratulations on the success of the project were given.
- What are the future research questions you would like to answer?
 - Would like to explore where the water starts, where it flows, and where it discharges. Exploring discharge requires offshore exploration, because the aquifers extend out into the ocean. That is why the Study Area includes land that extends through the continental shelf.
 - Would like to develop a good computer model for San Diego drainage, then have local agencies and groups ask what else the model can include that would be useful (e.g. add biological features, etc.).
 - USGS would like to use drones for research, such as measuring temperatures in rivers. Would like to use local insight to ask important questions and use technology to answer those questions.
- When mapping the groundwater flows, did the analysis consider tribal lands? Did the analysis consider how water is captured and how it leaves?
 - Still need to estimate water use (amount and type) in East County.
 - USGS is not a regulator but is trying to answer technical questions. Additional research to understand land uses, water rights, and other factors could be conducted.
- How can we work to facilitate stormwater capture?
 - As recharge projects go forward, might be able to see effects in groundwater monitoring wells – existing wells can be used to see the effectiveness of stormwater capture in recharging local basins.

DMS

Mr. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy, presented the progress of the Data Management System (DMS) project funded under Proposition 84, Round 1. The goal of the project is to develop recommendations for a regional, web-based DMS. There is a need to reduce data gaps and increase data sharing. Developing these recommendations is a stakeholder-driven collaborative process. Recommendations include supporting constructive, shareable data, a user friendly interface, accurate and timely dissemination of information, links to existing data systems, and defining watershed health and sustainability.

Participation in the workshops held this summer was high, with approximately 120 people attending one of two full-day workshops. The team has developed an outline of the recommendations and drafted a definition of watershed health and sustainability. Would like to create an accessible user interface that allows users to capture data from existing systems in a manner that is most useful to them. This system would need to be easy to use, and would need to provide consistency. The platform could allow for users to add modules that could do different calculations, depending on the users' needs.

Questions/Comments:

- What was the definition of watershed health and sustainability?
 - Don't have it at the moment, encourage people to attend the February workshop for the DMS project to learn more about project specifics.

Regional Board Presentation

Mr. Dave Gibson, Executive Officer of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), presented on the RWQCB's Practical Vision, the Basin Plan Triennial Review Strategy, and the RWQCB's efforts to coordinate with the San Diego IRWM Program.

RWQCB Practical Vision

The RWQCB Practical Vision is a 7-year planning document designed to create a cultural change. The Practical Vision has 7 key areas, 5 of which are public:

1. Healthy Waters: achieve particular outcomes through collaboration and stakeholder involvement
 - a. Shifting from focus on chemistry as a marker of healthy waters to biology
2. Monitoring and Assessment: question driving monitoring
 - a. Focus on health waters instead of the end of the pipe
3. Wetland and Stream Recovery: strategy to defend and restore wetlands
 - a. Coordination with 4 Southern California RWQCBs for a programmatic 401 for wetland restoration projects
 - b. Biological objectives as a compliance point
4. Proactive Public Outreach and Education: Increase public awareness of RWQCB and improve engagement through improved access
 - a. example: online streaming of Board Meetings, hoping to allow online viewers to submit questions/comments live via email
5. Local Sustainable Water Supply: move forward with alternative local water supplies and potable reuse
 - a. Include purveyor outreach

Triennial Review

The RWQCB is initiating its triennial review of the *Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin* (Basin Plan). A formal announcement about the review will be released December 8, and the solicitation for input will open at that time. During the solicitation process (December 8, 2014 to January 23, 2015), the RWQCB will accept written comments for possible revisions to the preliminary issues and other aspects of the Basin Plan.

RWQCB Staff has developed a short-list of recommendations that will be considered for this review cycle, including:

1. Biological Objectives for Water Bodies in the San Diego Region
 - a. Purpose is to develop biological water quality objectives for the attainment of beneficial uses of inland surface waters
2. Chollas Creek Metals Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) – site-specific water effect ratio (WER)
 - a. Action would be to revise the TMDL and the Basin Plan based upon the results of completed WER prepared by the City of San Diego

3. Evaluation of Water Quality Objectives and Methods for Quantifying Exceedances for the Contact Water Recreation Beneficial Use (REC-1)
 - a. Action would be to consider the 2012 United States Environmental Protection Agency's Recreational Water Quality Criteria
 - b. Purpose would be to track the progress of science that could lead to revised water quality standards and focus efforts on compliance prohibitions against discharges of fecal indicator bacteria
 - c. Cost-benefit analysis on bacterial indicator TMDL is underway by the City of San Diego, County, and Equinox Center

4. Housekeeping

Under the previous Triennial Review, RWQCB is currently amending the water quality objective for nitrogen in many groundwater basins to accommodate recycled water, and implementing wetlands projects.

Triennial Review comment period:

- Opens: December 8
- Public Workshop: January 8
- Closes: January 23
- Review to the Board: May 13

RWQCB is encouraging the new Division of Drinking Water to approve direct potable reuse (DPR) sooner rather than later – believes the technology is there and it is time for DPR in California. RWQCB is willing to partner with IRWM program and projects but needs funding to do so. Stormwater permits and recycled water reuse is coming up in February.

Questions/Comments:

- We've talked a lot about the use of water that we get from rainfall, but not about the production of water through other means, such as dehumidifiers. Would like to think more about how to create water – there is a lot of humidity in the air, and there are maybe other ways we should be thinking about water production.
 - The Conservation Action Committee at SDCWA discusses opportunities for alternative water supplies. Check the SDCWA website for information on those meetings.
- What about including the issues related to bacteria in wetlands and streams, not just the coastal areas?
 - The TMDL applies to some creeks, the amendment would include inland streams. Would like to avoid TMDLs when possible, and move away from having a TMDL be the default. We need to protect human health in creeks, not just at the beaches.
- Suggest meeting with County Health Offices regarding an agreed-upon approach to communicate health hazards in waters to the public.
- Can you define “safe and healthy watersheds” for the group?
 - There is no short definition, but it includes realizing watershed health through collaborative outcomes that support human and environmental uses and protect

biological functions. An overreliance on chemistry to assess safe and healthy watersheds can be limiting.

- The health of organisms in the water is the best way to determine water quality – biological indicators show the effects over space and time.

RWQCB and Coordination with the San Diego IRWM Program

The San Diego IRWM Program's regulatory workgroup recommended actions for improved coordination with RWQCB. These actions were included in the 2013 San Diego IRWM Plan. Many of the actions are either complete or underway, and an IRWM liaison has been assigned to track RWQCB activities and attend RWQCB meetings.

The RWQCB believes the San Diego IRWM Region is one of the best in the state, and values the efforts of the San Diego IRWM Program. The RWQCB would like to pursue future partnerships with the San Diego IRWM Program. Some potential projects include adjusting the water quality objectives of reservoirs that form an important part of the local water supply, and identifying more opportunities to partner more closely on future projects.

Questions/Comments:

- The Triennial Review process is moving quickly this round, how does the San Diego IRWM Program want to coordinate submitting comments?
 - Individual comments can be compiled for the February 4, 2015 RAC meeting, and the RAC can hold a workshop to determine a priority list that will be sent to the RWQCB on behalf of the San Diego IRWM Program.
 - For the IRWM Program, comments should be sent to Crystal Mohr (cmohr@rmcwater.com) when submitted to RWQCB so that they can be compiled for the February 4th RAC meeting.
 - The RWQCB will have a workshop on January 8, 2015 to discuss potential projects and suggestions.
- Is there an online system for submitting project suggestions, similar to what we do for grants?
 - The Triennial Review projects are not the same as IRWM grant projects – these are to make changes to the Basin Plan
 - The Basin Plan is a guidebook with the force of law
 - Updates to the Basin Plan are of interest to RAC members
 - Basin Plan updates are not simple - they require California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), State Water Resources Control Board review, USEPA review, and Office of Law review.

RAC Member Selection

Mr. Stadler reminded the group that the RAC membership is changing at the end of 2014, and thanked the outgoing members. Mr. Stadler also emphasized that the RAC members have terms but not term limits and that all stakeholders, including RAC members whose terms have recently expired, are encouraged to apply to sit on the RAC. Ms. Nancy Stalnaker, County of San Diego, reviewed the member selection process and presented the RAC Selection Workgroup nominations. A vote was held to approve the selection of the workgroup and give them the authority to select new members in accordance with the RAC charter.

Vote: Passed.

Summary and Next Steps

Mr. Stadler reminded the group of the 2015 RAC meeting schedule.

Next RAC Meeting:

- February 4, 2015 – 9-11:30am

2015 Meeting Schedule:

- February 4, 2015
- April 1, 2015
- June 3, 2015
- August 5, 2015
- October 7, 2015
- December 2, 2015

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Jack Simes, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, passed around a Colorado River Fact Sheet booklet and requested that RAC members read it before the February 4, 2015 RAC Meeting, where there will be a presentation on the Colorado River Water Supply and Demand Study recently completed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.