



## **Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #60**

February 3, 2016

9:00 am – 11:30 am

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)  
Ann Van Leer, Escondido Creek Conservancy  
Arne Sandvik for Albert Lau, Padre Dam  
Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District  
Brian Olney, Helix Water District  
Chris Helmer, City of Imperial Beach  
Chris Trees for Mike Thornton, SEJPA  
Crystal Najera, City of Encinitas  
Eric Larson, Farm Bureau San Diego County  
Gloria Silva, Cleveland National Forest (and Alternate Emily Fudge)  
Jennifer Hazard, Alter Terra  
Jennifer Sabine, Sweetwater Authority  
Joey Randall for Kimberly Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District  
John Flores, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians  
Julia Escamilla for Greg Thomas, Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District  
Kelly Craig for Robyn Badger, Zoological Society of San Diego  
Kimberly O'Connell, University of California – San Diego Clean Water  
Lauma Willis, DWR - SRO  
Lan Wiborg, City of San Diego Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association  
Mark Stadler for Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority  
Michael McSweeney, Building Industry Association  
Phil Pryde, San Diego River Park Foundation  
Ron Wootton, Buena Vista Lagoon Foundation  
Sarah Pierce, SANDAG

##### **RWMG Staff and Consultants**

Alexis Cahalin, RMC Water and Environment  
Enrique Lopezcalva  
Goldy Herbon, City of San Diego  
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority  
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego

Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego  
Vicki Kalkirtz, City of San Diego

**Interested Parties to the RAC**

Alex Heide, City of Poway  
Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association  
Bill Harris, City of San Diego  
Catherine Rom, City of San Diego  
Clay Clifton, Sweetwater Authority  
Dianne Modelo, City of San Diego  
Eylon Shamir, Hydrologic Research Center  
Janice DuVall, SDCOE  
Mo Lahsaie, City of Oceanside  
Sandra Jacobs, Caltrans  
Sara Agahi, County of San Diego  
Terrell Breaux, City of San Diego

**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.

**Highlight on El Niño**

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The four speakers presenting on El Niño were introduced to the group: Ms. Sara Agahi, County of San Diego, Mr. Chris Helmer, City of Imperial Beach, Mr. Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation, and Mr. Bill Harris, City of San Diego.

***Sara Agahi, County of San Diego – Highlight on El Niño: Regional Flood Control***

Ms. Agahi presented on El Niño and how it impacts regional flood control. Ocean temperature departures from normal conditions are showing the current El Niño to be the strongest on record. Ocean and atmospheric data has been collected since the 1950's, allowing for the identification and categorization of past El Niño and La Niña events with varying intensities. Years of significant flooding in San Diego County were compared to the varying El Niño and La Niña conditions showing that significant flooding events have occurred across the range of intensities of El Niño and La Niña events, including in normal condition years. Due to the unpredictability of when flooding can occur, we need to be prepared for flooding events at all times. San Diego County's "El Niño Ready" website (<http://www.readysandiego.org/el-nino/>) provides information on El Niño, how to prepare for potential flooding events, how to protect your property, and other local resources. The County of San Diego Department of Public Works stocks nine fire stations around the County with sand and sandbags during the rainy season. Due to the strong El Niño event, a six additional fire stations will be stocked with sand and sandbags, and an additional 34 stations will be stocked with just bags.

The Upper Tijuana River Watershed straddles the border and extends into both the US and Mexico. In order to effectively manage flood waters in this region, the County has developed a unique collaborations with the local and regional Mexican government, the International Boundary and Water Commission, and the City of San Diego. With this effort, the County Flood Control developed the first and only Bi-National Flood Warning System in North America.

The County's Department of Public Works has three maintenance crews that focus exclusively on inspecting and maintaining road drainage and flood control systems. The County has updated its inventory of temporary signage and traffic control devices in order to prepare for times when localized flooding occurs. The County's pre-approved emergency contractors allow the County to instantly execute recovery contracts to repair public infrastructure in the event of an emergency. In preparation for the potential flooding that may occur in association with El Nino, the County has been inspecting, maintaining and improving facilities and regional infrastructure.

***Chris Helmer, City of Imperial Beach – El Nino: Tijuana River Watershed***

Chris presented on the Tijuana River Watershed and how it will be impacted by El Nino and potential flooding. The Tijuana River Watershed is the largest in the County at 1.1 million acres. The main issues in the Tijuana River Watershed are water quality, trash, sediment, and flooding. During 2015, there were many beach closure days due to poor water quality. Trash is a major issue and during Tijuana River Action Month, people come out to help collect trash from the watershed. Trash and debris cause many issues including impacts to recreation and is conducive to mosquitos and therefore, vector diseases.

***Rob Hutzel, San Diego River Park Foundation – El Nino: Watershed Impressions***

Erosion occurring during rain storms causes sedimentation. These storms can also cause trash and debris to collect in the watersheds. In 2015, most sites in the San Diego River Watershed saw less trash than in previous years.

Dissolved oxygen levels increased by 16% at all monitoring sites, and increased by 61% at ponds in Santee and in Mission Valley.

We need to be aware of the growth of aquatic plants with flooding, specifically with invasive species. Flooding can cause invasive species, and aquatic plants in particular, to spread to new locations.

***Bill Harris, City of San Diego***

Bill presented on how all the agencies in the region need to work together to assure the community that they are preparing for potential flooding with the current El Nino event. The City has been meeting with Scripps and the National Weather Service to try and understand El Nino and how it will impact the City and the region. The City is using this information to prepare for the potential flooding events.

**Questions/Comments:**

- It seems like there is a resource problem as far as clean-ups go; has there been outreach to inquire about people on probation serving their community service assisting in watershed clean-ups as an additional resource? Has using the sediment which causes water quality issues during flooding events as a resource for ground cover, etc. been explored?
  - The California Conservation Corps is used to augment watershed clean-up resources. Emergency contracts are also set up as a resource.

- We have recently had winds with relatively high wind speeds, is there any correlation between El Nino and higher wind speeds?
  - Currently there is no evidence to support a correlation between higher wind speeds and El Nino, but they do watch for patterns and the City is treating weather as an emergency condition.
  - The windy storms we have had recently were similar to typical Canadian storms, which makes sense considering El Nino pulls the Pacific jet stream south. In normal conditions, the Pacific jet stream crosses Canada and the northern US, but during El Nino the jet stream is pulled down and crosses Southern California and Mexico.
  - Note that El Nino is a warm water condition that impacts weather. Many people associate El Nino with rainy, stormy weather, which can occur due to the warm water condition and weakening of trade winds, but an El Nino event refers to the warming of surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean.
- Feedback for IRWM: Start discussing grants to address sea level rise and associated flooding for coastal cities.
  - Agreed.
- Rainfall is inconsistent making it hard to predict where rainfall devices should be located. Sediment disposal is least planned for with flood control. Due to experience, sediment is not good for construction purposes as the material is inconsistent. WE need to have a place to dispose of/stockpile the sediment so the next flood is not made worse. We need to plan ahead for debris during flooding and where to put it.
  - We are integrating our thinking on this issue. Sedimentation is a natural process but can also be a terrible problem. We need a holistic view of this issue.
- Another impact of flooding and sea level rise is salinization of groundwater. This issue should not be forgotten in the conversation of flooding and sea level rise.
  - Keep a lookout for Floodplain Management Association luncheons where these topics are discussed, if interested.

### **Regional Water Supply Update**

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Ms. Dana Frieauf, SDCWA, presented on the status of regional water supplies. San Diego County's water supply comes from the State Water Project (19%), the Colorado River (64%), and Local Supplies (17%). As of February 2, 2016, Northern Sierra precipitation and snowpack was 120% of normal. Last year's snowpack was only 5% of normal conditions. To get out of the drought, we would need 150% of normal conditions for several years because storage is so low due to the last 4 years of drought conditions. In the Upper Colorado River Region, snow conditions range between 97-177% of normal conditions. The Water Authority does not anticipate a shortage in supply from the Colorado River. Local precipitation is also above normal with the station at Lindbergh Field showing 117% and the Ramona Airport showing 134% of normal precipitation. The increased precipitation resulting from El Nino conditions will not help local supplies to meet all demands. In order to obtain enough supplies to meet demands, we need to focus on Northern California and the Colorado River.

In November of 2015, the Governor declared that if the drought persists through January 2016, mandatory water use restrictions may be extended through October 2016. On February 2nd, the SWRCB extended the regulations through October, but will reevaluate the existing restrictions in April based on the supply conditions. Additionally, a new Local Drought-Resilient Supply Credit may apply, recognizing investments in drought-resilient supplies. The credit applies to supplies developed after 2013; the total reduction cannot exceed 8% and conservation standards cannot drop below 8%.

Questions/Comments:

- What is the process for getting an 8% credit?
  - The agency needs to apply by April. SDCWA is working with its member agencies in regard to the credit.
- What is the current condition of the Colorado River reservoirs? With current snow levels, if precipitation increases and conditions improve, how will it impact the reservoirs and storage?
  - The Colorado River has had a multi-year drought as well and is still below average. We will need a number of years with above-average snow levels and precipitation to raise levels back to average levels.
- What are the categories for getting credit?
  - There is already a credit for recycled water. The credit applies primarily to seawater desalinization and coastal indirect potable re-use projects.
  - Credits are also available for groundwater demineralization projects and desalination plants.
- We anticipate DWR will accommodate new extensions of regulations in the Urban Water Management Plans (UWMPs). Should we talk about the extension of drought regulations in the Water Shortage Contingency Planning chapters?
  - What numbers do we report in the UWMPs on the supply side?

**Project Completion Report**

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Dianne Modelo from the City of San Diego presented on the project completion report for the Irrigation Hardware Giveaway and Grass Replacement Rebate Program, which was awarded funding through Proposition 50.

Questions/Comments:

- Turf replacement in LA is a return on investment.
  - They will be taking a look at that.

**Proposition 84-Round 4 Final Awards!**

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Ms. Goldy Herbon, City of San Diego, presented on the Proposition 84-Round 4 Final Awards.

- 37 grant proposals received by DWR with total grant request of \$306.5M
- 26 grant proposals recommended for funding with total award of \$232M
- San Diego IRWM was recommended for full \$31M grant award!

- Tri-County FACC Partners also recommended for full funding requests:
  - Upper Santa Margarita Watershed: \$2.8M
  - South Orange County: \$4.9M

### **Proposition 1 Updates**

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Mr. Mark Stadler, SDCWA, gave an update on Proposition 1. There is approximately \$38 million total available for San Diego IRWM Region under Proposition 1. DWR recently released draft documents, including Draft IRWM Program Guidelines, Draft IRWM Planning Grant Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP), Draft IRWM Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Involvement Request for Proposals (RFP). These documents are available online:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/prop1index.cfm>. The comment period on the draft documents extends through March 18th. The RWMG is preparing a comment letter on behalf of the Region.

Ms. Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego, gave an update on the Proposition 1 Stormwater. She explained that a Storm Water Resources Plan (SWRP) meets provisions of Water Code 10565 as amended under Senate Bill (SB) 985, recognizes storm water as a resource, and emphasizes multi-benefit projects. A SWRP must be developed on a watershed basis, quantitatively prioritize projects, prioritize use of public lands, provide for community participation, provide multiple benefits for project design, and not come at the expense of water quality. The reasons for preparing a SWRP include compliance with SB 985, which requires that storm water and dry weather runoff capture projects be incorporated into a SWRP to receive Proposition 1 funding. Ms. Gaines explained that the mandatory requirements of a SWRP can be met by compiling multiple efforts into a “functionally equivalent” document. She also informed the group that grant funding is available for SWRP preparation and for projects that implement a SWRP.

The Storm Water Grant Program includes a Planning Grant and an Implementation Grant. The Planning Grant has \$20 million available, and anticipates awarding between \$50,000 and \$500,000 per application. Applications are due March 4, 2016, with proposals for development of a SWRP receiving priority. The Implementation Grant has up to \$166 million available, with an anticipated \$250,000 to \$10 million available per application. Implementation grants are due July 8, 2016, and proposed projects must be included in a SWRP. SWRPs are due to DWR by January 2017.

#### Questions/Comments:

- Any storm water projects have to apply through the Storm Water Grant Program for Proposition 1 funds.

### **SANDAG 2016 Ballot Initiative**

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Ms. Rosalyn Prickett, RMC Water and Environment, gave an update on the SANDAG 2016 Ballot Initiative. San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is drafting an expenditure plan called “San Diego Forward”. They are considering a ballot measure for November 2016, and are currently soliciting input on funding priorities, including funding for water quality. RAC members and stakeholders were encouraged to get involved. Support for water quality funding could be shown by completing a SANDAG survey, available here: <http://priorities.sandag.org/survey>.



## **IRWM Grant Administration**

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Ms. Loisa Burton, SDCWA gave an update on Proposition 50 and 84 Grants. For Proposition 50, Ms. Burton noted that there were only 4 more months left in the grant contract. Most projects are near completion, but they are still on-going. Major project milestones include Smart Controller rebates were issued, and the Water Recycling Facility Demonstration Plant construction was completed. Ms. Burton noted a number of amendments were underway for the grant agreement as it reached completion. Next steps for the grant agreement are Project Completion Reports, DWR site visits, and project presentations to the RAC.

Ms. Burton then presented on the status of the Proposition 84 Implementation, Round 1 grant. Projects are continuing as planned, and amendments are being processed. Upcoming activities under this grant includes a project completion report from the Regional Water Data Management Project, commencement of the Garden Guru Program, and continued construction of the Chollas Creek Integration Project - Phase I.

Under the Proposition 84 Implementation, Round 2 grant, Ms. Burton identified a number of milestones, including the Weigand Reservoir valve-turning event for the North San Diego Regional Recycled Water Project – Phase II, and completion of the San Pasqual Water Reclamation project under the Rural DAC Partnership Program – Phase II. Other projects with milestones include the Failsafe Potable Reuse at the Advanced Water Purification Facility, Sustaining Healthy Tributaries to the Upper San Diego River Project, and progress on the Chollas Creek Integration Project – Phase II. To-date, there has only been one amendment to the grant agreement with DWR. Upcoming progress on this grant include continued construction and implementation, and site visits from DWR in early March 2016.

Progress is underway on the projects included in the Proposition 84 Implementation, Round 3 grant. The Reynolds Groundwater Desalination Facility Expansion completed all land purchases required for construction, the Fallbrook Plant Nurseries Recycled Water Distribution System Expansion project has completed construction, and site mobilization and excavation has begun on the Carlsbad Recycled Water Plant and Distribution System Expansion Project. Upcoming efforts include continuation of project design and implementation.

The final grant currently being administered is the Proposition 84 Implementation, Round 4 grant. Ms. Burton congratulated the new Local Project Sponsors (LPS) and welcomed them to the grant administration progress. The grant agreement has not yet been executed. Next steps for this grant include processing the contract with DWR and LPS contract processing. Ms. Burton reminded LPS that the conditional requirements for grant execution were due February 22. She also informed the group that the first set of invoices and progress reports are anticipated to be due in Fall 2016.

## **Public Comments**

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Carlos Michelon, SDCWA, informed the group that the Sustainable Landscapes Program Guidelines were available.

### **Summary and Next Steps**

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The IRWM Program Summit will be held on February 29, 2016.

#### Next RAC Meeting:

- April 6, 2016 – 9-11:30am

#### 2016 Meeting Schedule:

- April 6, 2016
- June 1, 2016
- August 3, 2016
- October 5, 2016
- December 7, 2016