



## **Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #47**

February 5, 2014

9:00 am – 11:30 am

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

### **NOTES**

#### **Attendance**

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##### **RAC Members**

Ken Weinberg, San Diego County Water Authority (Chair)  
Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association  
Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District  
Cari Dale, City of Oceanside (and Alternate Mo Lahsaie)  
Cathy Pieroni for Marsi Steirer, City of San Diego  
Crystal Najera, City of Encinitas  
Dave Harvey, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (and Alternate Natalie Smith)  
Denise Landstedt, Rancho California Water District representing the Upper Santa Margarita Watershed IRWM Region  
Dennis Bowling, Floodplain Management Association  
Eric Larson, San Diego County Farm Bureau  
Jennifer Hazard, Alter Terra (and Alternate Oscar Romo)  
Jack Simes, United States Bureau of Reclamation  
Joe Kuhn, City of La Mesa  
Joey Randall for Kimberly Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District  
Katie Levy, SANDAG  
Kimberly O'Connell, University of California – San Diego Clean Water Utility  
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  
Travis Pritchard, San Diego Coastkeeper  
Troy Bankston, County of San Diego (and Alternate Sheri McPherson)

##### **RWVG Staff**

Goldy Herbon, City of San Diego  
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority  
Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority

**Interested Parties to the RAC**

Bill Luksic, RMC Water and Environment  
Bill Tippetts, The Nature Conservancy  
Bryn Evans, Dudek  
Crystal Mohr, RMC Water and Environment  
Dana Frieauf, San Diego County Water Authority  
David Wells, City of San Diego  
Deanna Spehn, Assemblymember Toni Atkins  
Eleanora Robbins, AOSSL Incubator  
Gloria Silva, USDA Forest Service – Cleveland Forest  
Katheryn Thodes, La Playa Heritage  
Kevin Denny, Quantum Ozone  
Mike McCoy, Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association  
Robert Stone, Quantum Ozone  
Rosalyn Prickett, RMC Water and Environment  
Sally Johnson, RMC Water and Environment  
Sharon Hudnall, Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation  
Steve Bastasini, Urban Meters  
Ted Clowes, AOSL Incubator  
Terrell Breaux, City of San Diego  
Trent Biggs, San Diego State University

**Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Ken Weinberg, San Diego County Water Authority, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room. Mr. Weinberg explained a new public comment process for RAC meetings – public comments will be solicited after each agenda item, and speaker cards are available at the back podium. Speakers do not have to fill out a card to speak, but are encouraged to do so. Comments will be invited at the end of the meeting as well.

**IRWM Grant Program – Round 2 Awards**

Mr. Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority, presented the final award for the Proposition 84 Implementation Grant – Round 2. DWR has awarded the San Diego IRWM Region the full 100% funding request for their application (\$10.3 million) – this is an increase from the draft recommendation of 50%. He attributed the success of the Region to the effort made by the IRWM team and members of the RAC, who wrote letters and met with DWR and other representatives during the comment and review process. Mr. Stadler explained that San Diego was one of seven IRWM Regions to have their draft award amounts revised, which was something DWR has not done in the past. The additional funds will be taken from the Round 3 grant money, and will be available contingent on the State Legislature’s approval of the Governor’s budget (which includes Prop. 84 IRWM Implementation Grant – Round 3 appropriations). 50% of the funding will be available now, per the draft award. Mr. Stadler expressed confidence that the remaining 50% would be made available, but emphasized that the Region cannot be complacent, and so he encouraged RAC members and stakeholders to write their legislators encouraging them to pass the budget and support the increased funding allocations. Mr. Stadler reminded the group of the seven projects included in the grant application, and their respective funding allocations.

Questions/Comments

- Credit goes to everyone who worked hard to meet with DWR and respond to the draft awards.
- The San Diego RWMG will send a formal thank you letter to DWR.
- What is the timeline for the future appropriations?
  - If all of the money requested by the Governor is included as part of the budget, we expect the budget to be passed in June, 2014. The RWMG is working with DWR on the agreement for the grant.
- Mr. Dave Harvey, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), stated that he will be in Washington D.C. next week if there is anything he can do to help while he is there to please let him know.
- Ms. Deanna Spehn explained that there is pending legislation (SB731) to speed up the passing of the budget. This legislation should be passed within 30 days, and would move the budget up by 5-6 months. She encouraged people to watch for news of this in the coming days.
- What is the status of the official award letter?
  - The official award letter should arrive shortly. This is important because the date of the letter marks the date that reimbursable expenses for the funded projects can begin.

**IRWM Housekeeping**

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**Grant Administration**

Mr. Bill Luksic, RMC Water and Environment, provided an update on the status of the IRWM grant administration. Mr. Luksic noted that for the Proposition 50 Grant, the Region has four outstanding invoices that have been submitted to DWR but have not been paid. Of the four outstanding invoices, DWR has recently provided comments on the oldest one, submitted to DWR in February 2013 (one year ago). Four projects have been completed, and most are progressing as planned. There are two contract amendments in review with DWR, with one more anticipated. Approximately 40% of the budget has been expended, with reimbursements requested totaling \$9.77 million, and reimbursement received totaling \$8.28 million.

Mr. Luksic presented the Proposition 84 Planning Grant, and explained that the Region is preparing to submit the final invoice and report. For the Proposition 84 Implementation Grant – Round 1, the Region is preparing to submit the latest invoice to DWR within the next few weeks. Projects for Round 1 are progressing as planned.

**IRWM Legislative Approach**

Mr. Stadler reminded the RAC of the San Diego County Water Authority's strategy for improving the IRWM Process through a legislative approach. There are three aspects of the strategy: pursue increased allocation of Round 2 funds, streamline IRWM grant process, and distribute full balance of funds allocated to each region. Mr. Stadler noted that the first item has been successful in that DWR awarded the Region their full Round 2 grant request. The Water Authority is still looking for someone who can forward legislation in the assembly, but there is a possibility that language could be included in the budget or a future water bond that would streamline administration of IRWM grants.

The Water Authority would like to see DWR provide full funding to individual IRWM Regions, who would then administer grants locally, with DWR auditing Regions to ensure proper use of grants. Mr. Stadler noted that such an approach would require coordination between Regions within a funding area, but could point to the Tri-County Funding Area Coordinating Committee as an example of what a Region should and could be doing to coordinate funding allocations and provide opportunities for collaboration between Regions.

#### Questions/Comments

- Moving grant administration to local control is a good idea, the San Diego Region is a good example of this, and it could be good for NGOs and possibly reduce grant administration costs. Can RAC members submit letters of support?
  - Yes, that would be greatly appreciated.
- The discussion of the recommendations mentioned the Tri-County FACC. This is the first time that the Upper Santa Margarita Tri-County FACC member has heard about this. This is a good idea, but should have a Tri-County FACC meeting to discuss and get everyone on the same page.
  - Tri-County FACC meeting is a good idea. The Water Authority would like to point to the Tri-County FACC as an example of what should be done to get funding.
- As an NGO, the Farm Bureau supports this strategy, but wants to know what the risk is to us? Would the Region get less funding than we are now if there is prorated allocation of funding?
  - The prorated funding would be a prorated share of the amount appropriated in a given year, assuming that the funding will not all be allocated in a single year, but the total amount of funding would remain the same.

#### **DWR Process Improvements**

DWR is holding a series of IRWM Process Improvement Workshops to improve the grant process for Round 3. The workshop on February 25, 2014 (1:00 pm) will be webcast (<http://www.calepa.ca.gov/broadcast>) and the Water Authority will be attending a workshop in person on February 27, 2014 (1:00 pm) at the Irvine Ranch Water District (Irvine Ranch Water District; Learning Center; 5 Riparian view; Irvine, CA 92612). Mr. Stadler encouraged RAC members to attend. He presented the recommendations of the San Diego IRWM Program for process improvement:

- 1) Defer to regional project selection process
- 2) Streamline application for non-competitive Funding Areas
- 3) Reduce excessive economic analysis
- 4) Expand eligible project types to include innovative solutions
- 5) Allow for flexibility in Work Plan/Budget format.

The Water Authority will send a formal letter to DWR that discusses these five points in addition to attending the workshop in person. Innovative solutions would include research and development (R&D) type projects that are generally not eligible for DWR implementation grant funding because they do not necessarily have capital (on-the-ground) components.

Questions/Comments

- Can the RWMG provide a sample letter as guidance for project proponents who want to send in a comment letter to DWR?
  - Yes, the RWMG will provide a sample letter to the RAC.
- What does the IRWM Program consider an R&D project?
  - DWR wants to see a Return on Investment (ROI), to know how much the State of California will benefit for every dollar spent on a project, which is why grant funding is geared towards capital projects. R&D projects are how next generation and innovative projects and solutions develop, but their ROI is not guaranteed because some R&D projects do not produce the anticipated benefits. An example is stormwater and water supply, which have been politically and jurisdictionally separated, and are regulated under different legislation and considered separate by regulators. Given the Region's water quality issues that impact water supply management (via reservoir management), there is a need to coordinate efforts for stormwater quality and water supply management – however, a technique to do this would require change and is not certain at this time.
  - DWR's scoring process does not favor inclusion of innovative projects that would do things such as coordinate stormwater quality and water supply management, even if such a project would potentially bring large-scale benefits to the region. The RWMG wants DWR to give regions more flexibility in the types of projects that can be included for IRWM funding, especially considering that there is a need to fund R&D projects (local jurisdictions are just as hesitant to dedicate funding to projects that are not guaranteed to provide a ROI).
- Sometimes there is an issue that needs to be addressed, but there isn't enough information to do so. Would a project like that be considered an R&D project?
  - You've got to start somewhere, so yes, but should be able to show a nexus between the R&D project, the issue, and the potential solution.
  - It would be helpful if the RAC had a workshop on R&D projects and how they relate to IRWM. R&D for purposes of IRWM planning is specific – we don't want to give stakeholders the wrong idea that any R&D project can be potentially eligible for IRWM funding.
- A member of the public commented that she was glad to hear that the IRWM Program is talking about innovative solutions. She expressed her belief that active faulting is occurring in parts of downtown San Diego, and that there's a need for active faulting analysis, which isn't currently happening. She thought it would be a good project idea to remove all liquefiable soils in these areas and replace them with cisterns to capture stormwater. She reiterated that it was good to hear innovative things are being talked about.

### **Tijuana River Watershed Panel**

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Ms. Jennifer Hazard, Alter Terra, facilitated a panel on the Tijuana River Watershed. She introduced the panel members: Dr. Trent Biggs, San Diego State University Professor of Geography; Dr. Mike McCoy, Co-Founder and President of Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association (SWIA); Bryn Evans, Senior Project Manager at Dudek; and Dr. Oscar Romo, University of California – San Diego Urban Planning Professor and Contractor to the State Water Resources Control Board. Ms. Hazard explained that the Tijuana River straddles the border between the United States and Mexico, crossing the border multiple times, though in the San Diego region, it flows from south to north, from Mexico into the United States. Pollution from Tijuana enters the river and leads to water management challenges for San Diego managers.

Dr. Biggs presented the hydrology and topography of the Tijuana River Watershed. He explained the sedimentation problems of the Tijuana River were primarily from gulying along unpaved roads during storms. Gullies form in unpaved roads during storm events and are quickly filled in by road crews. These unpaved roads make up approximately 80% of the roads in the watershed. Areas that have paved their roads no longer experienced gulying, and roads stabilized. The issue of sedimentation associated with roads is important, because portions of the watershed are experiencing rapid development – due to the currently undeveloped nature of portions of the watershed, there is an existing opportunity to implement best management practices that will help to alleviate sedimentation and water quality concerns.

Dr. McCoy presented on the history of the Tijuana Estuary and partnerships between the U.S. and Mexico. The Tijuana Estuary is a model for integrated estuary management and urbanization. When SWIA first began its work, there were few laws in place to protect the estuary, but with the advent of environmental legislation, this started to change. In 1980 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service took ownership of the estuary, and in 2010 it became as State Marine Protected Area. Throughout the history of working to protect the estuary, there have been efforts to get Mexican organizations and agencies involved, and in 2004, Mexico became officially involved in management of the Tijuana Estuary Research Reserve. The water treatment plant built to treat water entering the Tijuana River is a joint effort between agencies in the U.S. and Mexico. The work related to protecting the estuary provides meaningful and well paid jobs.

Mr. Evans provided a brief summary of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy, which identified seven priority action areas. The Recovery Strategy was a joint effort between agencies, NGOs, private landowners, and the public. Mr. Evans also discussed the new Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) permit approach and the Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP). The new MS4 permit shifts water quality management from a jurisdictional-based approach to a watershed-based one and from a focus on water quality management actions to water quality measurements in the receiving waters. The goal of monitoring is to inform people of the nexus between the water quality of the receiving waters with the discharges from the MS4. An integrated, cooperative approach to water quality management is already in place in the Tijuana River Watershed.

Dr. Oscar Romo presented the relationship and partnerships between the U.S. and Mexico, as related to water quality management. As in the U.S., there are federal, state, and municipal/local water agencies in Mexico. The federal level agency is a robust, powerful agency in the Mexican government, and is responsible for all national waters of Mexico. The state-level agencies are responsible for providing drinking water to municipalities, building aqueducts and dams, and

providing wastewater treatment. The municipalities are responsible for water quality impacts from runoff, including sedimentation and trash. Because of this responsibility, municipalities provide the funding to address water quality issues, but both their funding and their capacity to implement strategies are limited. Dr. Romo noted the compatibility of the mission, visions, goals, and objectives of the IRWM program with the needs and goals of the Tijuana River Watershed. He acknowledged that there are laws and regulations in the U.S. that limit the amount of funding local, regional, and state agencies can provide for cross-border projects. There is a different perception of the Tijuana River on each side of the border. Mexico considers the river an asset.

Questions/Comments:

- It would be nice to have federal agencies provide the funding but allow local agencies to manage the projects and programs that are funded.
  - Mexico tends to put its money into social agencies and programs, but the City of Tijuana has been able to use this money to improve conditions in the river.
  - It should be noted that there are 26 basins for trash and sediment capture on the Tijuana side of the river (more than are on the U.S. side)
- San Diego and Tijuana are working on the same issues, and both have responsibility at the municipal level. The State thought about stepping in to manage the river, did it ever do so?
  - The state is responsible for water delivery, but the law requires municipalities to manage water quality and water agencies. However, the state won't transfer that power, and the resources remain under state control, rather than local control.
  - Funding is simply not available for water issues in Mexico – for example, DWR had made it clear that IRWM funds cannot be spent for projects in Mexico even if those projects would greatly benefit water quality in the U.S.
- There seems to be a contradiction in water quality management – there was discussion about the benefit of road pavement for water quality. That contradicts what we generally consider to be true in that paving road reduces infiltration, compacts soils, and generally increases water quality concerns.
  - In Mexico the issue with sedimentation is so severe that there is a need to find a way to stabilize roads to prevent or reduce sedimentation from unpaved roads. At some point in the future, roads will be paved due to rapid development, so there is an opportunity to implement best management practices that can help with sedimentation and also reduce other water quality concerns – permeable pavements or sedimentation basins alongside roads are examples.
  - In Mexico there are other issues that are not as common in the U.S. – such as the fact that unpaved roads can contribute to trash problems, because erosion is so severe that when it rains, some roads become impassable for garbage collection trucks.
  - The opportunity to manage stormwater is often lost when development happens. It is much more expensive and difficult to retrofit an urbanized area for stormwater management than to incorporate it during development. Tijuana does not have a significant amount of existing infrastructure, so there could be an opportunity for San Diego to share lessons and techniques for implementing stormwater management best management practices during development.

- This issue has a nexus with the federal government. There is only so much scope for the City of San Diego to implement water quality solutions. Maintenance of the Tijuana River and trash cleanups cost approximately \$1.5 million per year, and there is very little the city and regional agencies can do. Best solution to water quality issues is management at the source. There should be funding for efforts to help agencies collaborate and encourage agencies to participate in water quality projects and provide opportunities to get involved across the border.
- Need to collaborate based on science, not politics.
- Are other border communities having similar challenges to watershed management and cross-border flows?
  - San Diego and Tijuana are the largest cities along the border. Federal agencies consider the entire border to be a problem, but implement solutions in Tijuana. All of the problems are based on what happens here, but shouldn't dismiss other communities.
- What is the big hurdle to implementing solutions? Is it funding? Leadership? Collaboration?
  - The biggest hurdle is culture. There has been a culture of not communicating well across the border, and perceptions of each other are very different. Even though Mexico contributes a large economic benefit to San Diego, agencies don't want to spend their money in Mexico. But money goes further in Mexico, so a solution could be cheaper there. There is a lack of trust between agencies on both sides of the border. The culture needs to change.
- There is a San Diego County Water Authority project in the Tijuana River Valley, and the problems that have been discussed are hindering implementation of the project. Solving these problems is important, but both sides of the border have an issue with limited resources. Is this still a priority?
  - It is beginning to be addressed, but funding across the border is a problem. A regional approach may be better, but still need to work on getting funding where it needs to go. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has contributed to the issues of cross-border management, and should consider providing funding for such projects, to offset their impact.
- What about climate change in the Tijuana River Valley and climate change resilience? The Urban Tree Canopy Assessment, which evaluates green infrastructure potential, is a good way to assess opportunities and problems, but is not something that is done here yet. It's a good platform for future decisions and could be integrated across Tijuana and San Diego.

### **Overview of Implementation Actions in the 2013 IRWM Plan**

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Ms. Goldy Herbon, City of San Diego, reviewed the Implementation Actions included in the 2013 IRWM Plan, and reminded the RAC of the commitments made by the action item sponsors. These commitments are:

- Submittal of Work Plan and quarterly reporting to the RWMG and RAC
- Status presentation to RAC in ~12-18 months
- Final presentation to RAC in ~3 years



Implementation Action R-3, Monitor development of Regional Board Practical Vision, and R-4: Incorporate priority themes from Regional Board Practical Vision into IRWM Plan have been completed by the RWMG, with a presentation planned for a future RAC meeting. Action Item R-6: Convene IRWM stakeholders to review Basin Plan priorities, resources, and schedules..., and R-7: Convene workshop with Regional Board and IRWM stakeholders to discuss priorities, are both underway.

### **Update on Water Supplies**

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Mr. Weinberg opened discussion regarding the status of San Diego County Water Authority supplies, and actions they are considering in response to the state's drought declaration. The key issue is how the drought will affect San Diego and how we will coordinate locally to address this statewide issue. San Diego has two sources of imported water: the State Water Project and the Colorado River. The Region has developed local supplies, reduced overall water use, and invested in storage over the last several years. There is a record level of storage in Southern California, but conservation remains the biggest tool in weathering the drought.

Ms. Dana Frieauf, San Diego County Water Authority, explained that calendar year 2013 had the lowest level of precipitation on record, so reservoirs are not being replenished. To make matters worse, calendar year 2012 was also very dry. The state has called for 20% reduction in water use through voluntary conservation. The Water Authority has a drought response plan prepared. Stage 1 of the drought response is voluntary conservation. There will be a Board Meeting on February 27, 2014 to discuss the planned drought response and how to proceed. Thanks to the investments made by the Region, locally our water supplies are not threatened, despite the statewide drought.

#### Questions/Comments:

- Voluntary restrictions do not seem to be enough. What is the plan? Coastkeeper is pushing for stronger rules on water use and wants to know what water agencies plan to do – voluntary conservation does not seem like an adequate response to this statewide crisis.
- Drought response team is emphasizing continued conservation – it is important to note that San Diego currently uses 27% less potable water on a per capita basis than we did in 2007 when the population was lower than it is today – we have a history of being able to conserve water well. NGOs can help with outreach for conservation, and once people start to conserve, it tends to become a permanent change.
- The San Diego Region has time to see how supplies are holding up and how they are changing. The investments the Region made in conservation, storage, and local supplies had bought us time. But the 0% allocation from the State Board (State Water Project) does change things. Water Authority is looking ahead to 2015 and how to prepare for a situation in which the drought persists for several more years.
- Customers are already complaining about water restrictions and conservation. Water that is conserved does not last forever, open reservoirs lose 4-5 feet of water per year from evaporation. It is important to balance current concerns with reality – if we do not use water that is stored in our reservoirs, we will lose it to evaporation.

- When is the Water Authority Board Meeting to discuss conservation?
  - February 27, 2014
- Need to balance ecology that can handle the rain when it does come. Cannot keep telling people to conserve more.
  - The message is to continue to conserve, not conserve more.
- At some point, water restrictions have an economic impact, and the Water Authority will keep this in mind when considering actions in response to the drought.

### **Next RAC meeting**

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

#### Next RAC Meeting:

- April 2, 2014 – 9-11:30 A.M.

#### 2014 Meeting Schedule:

- June 4, 2014
- August 6, 2014
- October 1, 2014
- December 3, 2014

### **Summary and Thanks**

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Mr. Weinberg opened the floor to public comments and questions prior to adjourning the meeting.

#### Questions/Comments:

- Will copies of the Tijuana River Watershed Panel's presentations be made available?
  - All presentations, meeting materials, and minutes will be made available on the San Diego IRWM website ([www.sdirwmp.org](http://www.sdirwmp.org))

Let the RWMG know if you have any suggestions for presentations at future meetings (email Rosalyn Prickett, [rprickett@rmcwater.com](mailto:rprickett@rmcwater.com))