



## **Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #59**

October 7, 2015

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**

Lan Wiborg, City of San Diego (chair)  
Ann Van Leer, Escondido Creek Conservancy  
Arne Sandvik for Albert Lau, Padre Dam  
Bill Hunter, Santa Fe Irrigation District  
Chris Helmer, City of Imperial Beach  
Chris Trees for Mike Thornton, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority  
Chris Roesink for Patrick Crais, California Landscape Contractors  
Crystal Najera, City of Encinitas  
Eric Larson, Farm Bureau San Diego County  
Jack Hartman, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (and Alternate Leslie Cleveland)  
Jennifer Sabine, Sweetwater Authority  
John Flores, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians  
Joni Johnson, Rural Community Assistance Corporation  
Julia Escamilla for Greg Thomas, Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District  
Justin Haessly, Rancho California Water District  
Kevin Miller for Brian Olney, Helix Water District  
Kimberly O'Connell, University of California – San Diego Clean Water  
Leigh Johnson, University of California Cooperative Extension (and Alternate Loretta Bates)  
Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association  
Mark Stadler for Toby Roy, San Diego County Water Authority  
Mo Lahsaie, City of Oceanside  
Oscar Romo for Jennifer Hazard, Alta Terra  
Phil Pryde, San Diego River Park Foundation  
Ramin Abidi, County of San Diego (and Alternate Stephanie Gaines)  
Robyn Badger, Zoological Society of San Diego  
S. Wayne Rosenbaum for Michael McSweeney,  
Travis Pritchard, San Diego CoastKeeper

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

Alexis Brand, RMC Water and Environment  
Amber Rogers, County of San Diego

Crystal Benham, RMC Water and Environment  
Goldy Herbon, City of San Diego  
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority  
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego  
Sally Johnson, RMC Water and Environment  
Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego  
Vicki Kalkirtz, City of San Diego

**Interested Parties to the RAC**

Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association  
Antonia Estevet-Olea, LWA  
Bob Leiter, UCSD  
Catherine Rom, City of San Diego  
Charles Busslinger, County of Orange  
Deanna Spehn, Assembly Member Toni Atkins  
Garth Engelhorn, Alta Environmental  
Ghina Yamont, Alta Environmental  
Janice DuVall, SDCOE  
Lorraine Frigolet, Water Conservation Garden  
Meagan Wylie, Center for Collaborative Policy  
Rand Allen, County of San Diego Flood Control  
Ryane Moss, San Diego River Park Foundation  
Rob Roy, La Jolla Band of Indians  
Sheri McPherson, County of San Diego  
Steve Steinberg, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project  
Terrell Breaux, City of San Diego

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Lan Wiborg, City of San Diego, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

**Proposition 50 Project Report: San Dieguito Watershed Management Plan**

Mr. Vipul Joshi presented the San Dieguito Watershed Management Plan to the group. The purpose of this project was to determine what natural treatment system (NTS) option would be the best option to reduce nutrient loading to Hodges Reservoir. A distributed system versus a centralized system was considered. The life cycle cost of the distributed system best management practices (BMPs) were high. The centralized approach was modeled with two different options. The first option consisted of a 500 acre constructed wetland and two smaller (50 and 70 acre) detention basins. The second option consisted of three small constructed wetlands (0.5, 2, and 6 acres) located at the Kit Carson, Felicitas, and Green Valley tributaries. This second option was found to be more feasible. An in-reservoir treatment option was considered, where water was pumped into a treatment wetland from the reservoir.

Questions/Comments:

- Did you consider reduction of loading from BMPs upstream?
  - Did not do any modeling, but we did a literature review and research, and found they are effective.
- Did you model the situation that currently exists?
  - Yes.
- This project looks like alternative compliance. Have you looked into private funding for alternative compliance?
  - Yes, it was identified as one of the projects but we have not looked at equivalency.
- Did you cost them out?
  - Yes, we have a rough estimate. It is in the final report.
- How does this project relate to the City of San Diego's Natural Treatment System project in the Proposition 84 Round 4 grant?
  - This is the same project.
- Are there any regulatory issues or challenges?
  - A larger constructed wetland in main stem has more hurdles. It is located in the Habitat Conservation Plan area, so we need to work with the City to avoid impacts.
- Are there any flooding issues with high peaks in short bursts?
  - We did not find this in our research

**Proposition 84 Project Report: Regional Water Data Management Project**

Ms. Amber Rogers, County of San Diego, and Mr. Steve Steinberg, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, presented the Regional Water Data Management Project. Data management is a requirement of IRWM Plans; this project is included in the 2013 SDIRWM Plan. The purpose of this project is to simplify access to existing data sources, direct access to San Diego IRWM-generated data, provide user-defined interactive access to key data sets, efficient sharing of data resources, and effective integration and use of data resources. A wide variety of data systems/portals were looked at to determine the underlying architecture and if they address what we want in our regional Data Management System (DMS). The California Geoportals and West Coast Governors Alliance Ocean Data Portal systems had most of the desired components, but no existing system covers all components desired for our regional DMS. The tasks for the DMS are: 1) DMS should serve a wide variety of stakeholders, 2) DMS needs interoperability – the data needs to be able to be used in the same way, 3) DMS should build on ability to optimize, 4) DMS should be user-friendly.

Recommendations for DMS design and structure include not building a new data system, but leveraging existing systems using federated architecture/web services, that there be a portal for a searchable catalogue that then reaches out to individual databases – standards for metadata make this process easier. Recommendations for governance include a staff person be designated with the responsibility to conduct system maintenance and updates, that Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) be developed between participating organizations, and that regular system reviews occur

every 3-5 years to evaluate the effectiveness and future priorities of the DMS. The full recommendation report is available at [www.projectcleanwater.org](http://www.projectcleanwater.org).

Mr. Bob Leiter, UCSD, participated in the Advisory Workgroup (AWG) for this project. Mr. Leiter presented what came out of the AWG to the RAC. The DMS needs good GIS data and needs to track good alternative compliance. The DMS would benefit Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) organizations and the implementation of WQIPs. Water resources planning and integrated conservation programs and other projects with water quality goals such as habitat or ecosystem projects could also benefit from an integrated DMS.

Lan Wiborg discussed the potential next steps for this project. The options for next steps are: 1) build the regional DMS, 2) continue to maintain the existing website and system (WaterGIS), or 3) provide recommendations to the State. This project is not a financial priority for the local agencies, thus a local project sponsor would need to step forward to take the project on. The third option would work toward improvements to California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN).

Ms. Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego discussed statewide data and its relationship to the DMS project.

Questions/Comments:

- In the AWG recommendations, was there an interest in a demonstration project or was that considered unnecessary?
  - A demonstration project is always a good idea. You can focus on a small subset of data to test out how the project would work. A local project sponsor could start with a pilot project to target specific data that is currently needed, then phase in the larger project.
- Are we going to do a demonstration project or full-fledged project?
  - Our desired goal is watershed health and community, but we need to narrow down the project first.
  - The next step is to decide if any project warrants building a DMS.
  - We have some assumptions about Local Project Sponsors (LPS); this was based on LPS, who are the focus and target of the DMS project.
- It is a disappointment that this project is not a priority for the local agencies. Jurisdictions are struggling to connect stormwater, water quality, etc. in their WQIPs. WaterGIS is separate from a DMS, and is not comparable. WaterGIS just includes maps, and does not have water quality or other non-map data. Maintaining WaterGIS does not implement the requirements of the report. I am hesitant that state-level data management would be good, because they are likely to focus on Delta management. Finding an LPS to take on this effort is recommended in order to implement this project. A university could be a potential LPS. Moving forward with a regional system is strongly recommended.
  - Can Travis Pritchard (San Diego CoastKeeper) work with Bob and Amber to present the project to SDSU's Watershed Science Institute?
  - If a federated system is implemented regionally, it can be integrated with State data and vice versa?

- It is surprising that this project is not an agency priority. Habitat people do not understand water quality, and water quality people do not understand habitat. Why is this not a priority? How does this relate to Orange County and other cities or regions?
  - The San Diego region is ahead of the rest in talking about this. This approach is being considered because of other collaborations occurring in the region; ideas are happening in parallel. San Diego has the opportunity to be at the forefront if they choose.
- The project needs a local project sponsor, but how much will it cost? The region needs the DMS and data accessibility. I do not know how to provide substantial evidence under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) without this data set. This project should be the highest priority of the agencies.
- Can this project be funded through grants?
  - That is probably where we are going with this.

### **Tri-County FACC Panel**

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Mr. Mark Stadler, SDCWA, presented an introduction to the Tri-County Funding Area Coordinating Committee (Tri-County FACC) and how the group came to be. With the passing of Proposition 84 in 2006, 10 funding areas were created. The funding was then to be distributed to each funding area based on land mass and population. The San Diego Funding Area includes three IRWM Regions: the San Diego Region, the Upper Santa Margarita Region, and the South Orange County Region. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) wanted the three regions in the San Diego Funding Area to combine into one region. The three regions came together to discuss the issue and decided that they would remain separate regions within the funding area, but agreed that it would be beneficial for them to work together. They then developed an MOU for planning and funding between the three regions. Through the MOU, they agreed to split the funds based on land mass and population, the same way DWR allocates money to the funding areas. The San Diego funding area is a model for the state. No other funding area in the state has had an agreement that has held through funding opportunities. Some areas are too challenging, but others could benefit. DWR has honored the Tri-County FACC MOU so far. This is what IRWM should be.

Ms. Marilyn Thoms, South Orange County IRWM, spoke about how the South Orange County IRWM was formed. The South Orange County IRWM was formed in 2004. Previously, the 13 watersheds in Orange County had all been individually managed. Denise Landstedt helped to write the IRWM Plan very quickly and South Orange County took the lead. South Orange County Wastewater Authority and Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) came together as well. The region has 21 agencies in South Orange County, and the program is funded through a cost-share by all agencies, split evenly, \$3,000-\$5,500 annually. The Executive Committee includes one person elected from each agency and a supervisor. The Management Committee is composed of senior level staff from each agency and they meet once a month; this is the Working Group. The Stakeholder Group holds three workshops per year. The Region recently added a public member to the Management Committee at the request of the Stakeholder Group. South Orange County's water is 99% imported so they try to use every drop of water three times.

Mr. Justin Haessly, Upper Santa Margarita IRWM, spoke about the Upper Santa Margarita Region. The Upper Santa Margarita Region contains the Santa Margarita watershed and the San Mateo Watershed. The Region has an RWMG and an 18 member Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

Questions/Comments:

- How did you get Homeowners Associations (HOAs) to go along with recycled water retrofit and plant conversions?
  - We showed them the different water rates and provided a cost analysis.
- What are the priority projects in the next 5 years?
  - For South Orange County, we have a strategic visioning process to decide as a Region the projects we need to do. The biggest issue is drinking water supply. We are trying to start at the top and use that to decide first what do we need, then what types of projects do we want? Groundwater recharge of high quality drinking water is a priority for the region.
  - For the Upper Santa Margarita Region, indirect potable reuse (IPR) is a priority.
  - The last two rounds of funding were focused on water supply because of DWR's priorities those rounds, but we are hoping for more diversity of projects (including water quality and habitat) under Proposition 1. We want more money to go to non-profit projects, as well as projects for DACs and tribes.
- What are the priorities for South Orange County's DACs?
  - We have one tribe within our jurisdiction, but they do not own any land. Because they do not own any land, they are not technically considered a DAC.
- What are DAC priorities for Upper Santa Margarita region?
  - The priority for Upper Santa Margarita DACs is to identify the status of groundwater supply. Groundwater supply is the only source of water but there is very limited data. A groundwater study is in progress and we hope to identify projects for the future.
- Are there any ideas for collaboration beyond the Tri-County FACC?
  - Does it make sense to expand the DMS to the Funding Area or to do something similar?
  - For the Stormwater Resource Management Plan, can we do it Orange County-wide? Could we incorporate Santa Ana watershed?
  - For the San Diego Region, we need more advanced planning for Proposition 1. Maybe a headwater improvement project.
  - In Upper Santa Margarita, we have regulators to the north. Some of them have jurisdiction in the Upper Santa Margarita Region. We have collaborated on turf removal through those relationships.
- Justin discussed funding for agricultural efficiency. Are you taking advantage of the USDA Conservation Officer?
  - The Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) pays for retrofits. When people were able to participate, many did both programs, but farmers are skeptical of that program because of the information the NRCS asks for.
- Did you address individual priorities for each county? Is the purpose of the Tri-County FACC the ability to do joint projects?
  - The regions retain the ability to work individually.

## **IRWM Grant Program**

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Mr. Stadler gave an update on Proposition 1. There is \$510 million available statewide. A scoping meeting was held on September 18, 2015 and the RWMG submitted a comment letter (which was also distributed to the RAC). The draft Guidelines and PSP are anticipated to be out in December. Public meetings on the draft Guidelines and PSP are anticipated in February 2016. San Diego tentatively anticipates receiving approximately \$38.3 million. San Diego IRWM wants DAC implementation to be incorporated as a part of larger implementation grant (or simultaneously). Otherwise, DAC implementation is anticipated to happen before the larger IRWM Implementation grant.

Loisa Burton presented an update on administration of the Region's grants. Six projects have been completed and nine more projects are approximately 90% complete.

## **Summary and Next Steps**

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The IRWM Program Summit will be held on February 29, 2016 to celebrate 10 years of the San Diego IRWM Program.

### Next RAC Meeting:

- December 2, 2015 – 9-11:30am

### 2016 Meeting Schedule:

- February 3, 2016
- February 29, 2016 – IRWM Summit
- April 6, 2016
- June 1, 2016
- August 3, 2016
- October 5, 2016
- December 7, 2016