



Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #111

December 10, 2025

9:00 am – 11:30 am

Virtual Meeting

NOTES

Attendance

RAC Members

Anne Bamford, American Water Works Association
Bronti Cash and Tim Murphy, City of Oceanside
Chris Trees for Mike Thornton, San Elijo JPA
Erica Ryan, San Diego Water Board
Eylon Shamir, Hydrologic Research Center
Joey Randall for Kim Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District
Kelly Craig, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
Kimberly O'Connell and Amanda Loeper, UCSD Clean Water Utility
Marissa Potter, Santa Fe Irrigation District
Michelle Berens, Helix Water District
Oscar Romo, Alter Terra
Patrick McDonough, San Diego CoastKeeper
Tory Walker, Floodplain Management Association
Wbaldo Arellano, City of Imperial Beach

RWMG Staff and Consultants

Andrew Funk, City of San Diego
Annica Ly, City of San Diego
Arthella Vallarta, Woodard & Curran
Ernesto Rios, City of San Diego Public Utilities Division
Lisa Prus, San Diego County Water Authority
Katie Huston, City of San Diego
Gail Patton, San Diego County Water Authority
Neil Searing, County of San Diego
Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran
Samantha Chaidez, City of San Diego
Sarah Favrot, County of San Diego
Summer Adleberg, San Diego County Water Authority

Interested Parties to the RAC

Alvina Mehinto, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
Brook Sarson, San Diego Sustainable Living Institute
Bri Martin, NV5

Catherine Rom, City of San Diego
Katelyn Thomas, Vista Irrigation District
Kerri Denhalter, Bureau of Reclamation
Kumiko Hayazaki, City of San Diego
Mark Stephens, Public
Peejay Tubongbanua, Padre Dam Municipal Water District
Suzanne Saksa, San Diego County Water Authority
Tina Fransson, Tory Walker Engineering

Welcome, Introductions, & Land Acknowledgement

Ms. Summer Adleberg, San Diego Water Authority (SDCWA), welcomed everyone to the virtual RAC meeting. Ms. Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran, reviewed the virtual meeting process, including how to use the virtual controls and chat feature. Meeting participants were encouraged to enter their name and organization into the chat for roll call and to update their names on Zoom.

Ms. Adleberg read the Tribal Land Acknowledgment to the group, which was written to be delivered in a virtual setting:

We acknowledge that this virtual meeting of the San Diego IRWM Program Regional Advisory Committee is taking place in the traditional lands of the Kumeyaay and Luiseño people. As we begin this meeting, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of our region. A land acknowledgment is a critical step toward working with native communities to secure meaningful partnership and inclusion in the stewardship and protection of their cultural resources and homelands. We respect these ancestral grounds where we are collectively gathered and support the resilience and strength that Indigenous people have shown worldwide.

Wildfires and Stormwater Quality Panel

Ms. Erica Ryan, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB or San Diego Water Board) provided an overview on permit considerations after a wildfire to protect receiving waters. Prior to the January 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, several of the largest fires in California occurred in Region 9. For example, the 2003 Cedar Fire destroyed 280,278 acres, 2,820 structures, and resulted in 15 deaths. The most recent fire was the 2017 Lilac Fire, which burned more than 4,100 acres and destroyed 157 structures. The three primary permits to consider in Region 9 after fires are the 2022 Construction General Permit (CGP), the Regional MS4 Permit, and the Conditional Waivers Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for Low Threat Discharges.

The 2022 CGP was adopted by the San Diego Water Board in 2023. Land disturbances of one acre or more is required to enroll in the CGP, including demolition activities. Under the Public Emergency provision (III.A.3), Region 9 must be notified within 5 calendar days, and enrollment must be completed within 30 calendar days. The San Diego Water Board will provide additional considerations on February 14, 2025 for construction sites enrolled under the 2022 CGP in areas identified in an emergency proclamation. Executive Order N-13-25 was issued in response to the Los Angeles Fires. The annual application fee was suspended until April 20, 2025 for emergency response activities conducted by federal, state, or local agencies, or by individuals or entities performing activities at those agencies' direction, that are necessary to prevent, contain, or otherwise reduce the impacts of flooding, landslides, mudslides, debris flows, or similar hazards. The permit coverage was not required for cleanup, debris removal activities, or construction activities disturbing less than one acre of the activities are not part of a larger common plan of development or sale disturbing an acre or more.

The Regional MS4 Permit regulates stormwater discharges into and out of an MS4 system. Local agencies (Copermittees) are enrolled and implement the Regional MS4 Permit. Fire-fighting activities are addressed for emergency and non-emergency firefighting (Provision E.2.a(5)). Best Management Practices (BMPs) are required but emergency response and public health and safety are the priority. Rebuilding structures after the fire may require structural BMPs (Provision E.3.c) if impervious area thresholds are triggered. The current Regional MS4 Permit does not provide exemptions for losses due to emergencies. Projects that trigger impervious area requirements, typically 5,000 square feet, must include low impact development BMPs for all permitted projects and designed post construction BMPs to mitigate for water quality and flow control.

The Conditional Waivers WDRs include a list of discharges to land the San Diego Water Board expects to pose a low threat to water quality. Dischargers who comply with the general and specific waiver conditions may become eligible for enrollment. For each type of Conditional Waiver, management measures are required to mitigate low-threat discharges of waste to land. Management measures are required to mitigate potential impacts associated with stormwater run-on and runoff, groundwater, wastes, and wastewater discharges to land. Waiver No. 10 applies to discharges of wastes resulting from a regional emergency or disaster when the Governor of California issues a proclamation identifying a portion of the San Diego Region as being in a state of emergency. To be eligible for the Emergency Waste Waiver, discharges must comply with both the general and specific waiver conditions in Waiver No. 10. The waiver remains in effect until the state of emergency declared by the Governor expires, the San Diego Water Board takes action to terminate enrollment or six months has elapsed since the Governor issued a declaration of the state of emergency. A signed and completed Notice of Intent (Attachment A) must be submitted to Region 9 no later than 30 days after initiation of the discharge. In addition, a Notice of Termination (NOT) must be submitted within 10 working days after completing discharge activities and restoring the site to its original condition. All sites must be restored by the expiration date of this waiver, as specified in Attachment D.

Ms. Alvina Mehinto, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), presented an overview of the Los Angeles Post-Fire Monitoring Network. The Palisades and Eaton Fires are among the top three most destructive wildfires in California history. A Post-Fire Monitoring Network was formed after the fires, comprising of more than 30 organizations from government, non-profit organizations, industry, and academia. The monitoring network manages the impacted waterbodies, collects and analyzes samples, and provides expertise on fire impacts, human health, and ecological health. The goals of the network are to coordinate monitoring activities, develop best practices guidance, and facilitate data sharing and integrated assessment.

Information gathering included identifying key players, such as agencies responsible for sampling and analysis. Sites and analytes monitored, study designs, and timeframes were documented, and data gaps as well as duplicated efforts were identified. Subcommittee meetings focused on identifying relevant fire-related parameters. Recommended parameters included metals, turbidity, PAHs, nutrients, flow, and pH, while additional parameters such as PFAS, benzene, and asbestos were also considered. These efforts aimed to fill gaps by adding more sites and analytes and to facilitate discussion of findings.

Over 200 sites were documented, and the majority of the sites were in Santa Monica Bay. The sites were a mix of routine monitoring stations and sites targeted after the fires. The parameters measures are not consistent across all sites because agencies had different constituents of interests. Best practices included recommended analytical methods, data quality objectives, and standardized data entry templates to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection and reporting. Interpretation involves evaluating human exposure scenarios and thresholds as well as aquatic life exposure and thresholds. Data sharing included a data portal for submission and retrieval and integrated site assessment. The SCCWRP is developing a data portal to compile all available data, visually display the results and identify impacted sites, facilitate

exploration of the data by site or contaminant over time, and access all documents produced for and by the network. The portal will be available soon to the public.

Lessons learned from post-fire monitoring efforts show that multi-agency monitoring improved spatial and temporal coverage; however, significant questions remain regarding biological effects and their persistence, the impact of fire on emerging contaminants, and the recovery trajectory of different system types. While the Post-Fire Monitoring Program is valuable, it should leverage existing efforts to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

Questions/Comments:

- Can you provide the contact information for each of the permits?
 - Contacts for the 2022 CGP and Regional MS4 Permit are Erica Ryan (Erica.Ryan@waterboards.ca.gov or 619-521-8051) or Ben Neill (Ben.Neill@waterboards.ca.gov or 619-521-3376). Contacts for the Conditional Waivers WDRs is Roger Mitchell (Roger.Mitchell@waterboards.ca.gov or 619-521-3008).

Program Completion Report

Ms. Loisa Burton and Ms. Gail Patton (SDCWA) presented a program completion report for Proposition 84, Round 4. Proposition 84 was passed in 2006 and its goals were to advance integrated, multi-benefit regional water management, strengthen drought preparedness and water conservation, improve water reliability and quality, restore ecosystems and support disadvantaged communities (DACs), and encourage regional collaboration. The San Diego IRWM goals were to improve the reliability and sustainability of regional water supplies, protect and enhance water quality, protect and enhance our watersheds and natural resources, and promote and support sustainable integrated water resource management.

Proposition 84, Round 4 took over 10 years to complete. The Proposal Solicitation Package was released in 2014. San Diego IRWM submitted the grant application in 2015 and approximately \$31.1 million was awarded to 13 projects. Eight projects focused on water supply benefits, three projects focused on water quality benefits, and two projects focused on watershed and natural resources benefits. However, all 13 projects had multiple benefits, delivering a wide range of significant benefits. In total, the projects generated 22,600 acre-feet of water supply annually, restored 584 acres of habitat, and achieved measurable reductions in multiple water quality parameters. All projects also benefit tribes and DACs by expanding clean reliable drinking water access, providing bilingual workforce training in sustainable landscaping and water efficiency, reducing potable water use and improving resiliency, and educating 171,100 students on water conservation.

The grant administration team provided support in reporting to the Department of Water Resources. In total, the grant administration team prepared 53 funding and local project sponsor (LPS) agreement amendments, 386 progress, completion and post-performance reports, submitted 606 deliverables, 477 billing and LPS payment invoices, and completed 10 site visits. Challenges experienced included varied LPS and project partner capacities and staff turnover, unanticipated administrative support needs, major project changes and site relocations, completion date extensions, prolonged issue resolution timeframes, COVID-19-related delays, costs, and supply chain impacts, as well as insufficient budgets, including limited grant funding. Key lessons learned included the importance of training and technical support, consistent communication, collaboration, adaptability, maintaining a positive attitude, and attention to detail.

Questions/Comments:

None.

Federal and State Updates

Ms. Samantha Chaidez, City of San Diego, presented federal and state updates. For federal updates, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) staff has resumed work on applications following the reopening of the federal government. State updates focused on Proposition 4, which was passed in November 2024 authorized \$10 billion in statewide climate resilience. Of the \$10 billion approved by voters, approximately \$3.3 billion in Climate Bond funds were authorized in Fall 2025 through the Budget Act. This includes \$181 million in early action funding already being used for wildfire prevention and forest resilience projects across the state.

The California Legislature passed the budget bill containing appropriations from Prop 4 and Governor Newsom has signed the bill. There is an increased amount of funding for drinking water projects through the State Water Board and the acceleration of \$28 million for groundwater projects. Most of the bond measures in Proposition 4 include language exempting the distribution of funding from the Administrative Procedures Act. This requires an extensive rulemaking process for many of the state actions. The budget bill requires funding distribution to go through an emergency rule making process, which is a lengthy process. Most state agencies distributing Proposition 4 grant funds must first route their funding guidelines through the Office of Administrative Law, which takes about six to 12 months. Governing bodies may need to award construction contracts without having secured the promised funding.

The State has not yet released the Proposition 4 IRWM guidelines. To date, only limited Proposition 4 funding has been released. Development of the IRWM guidelines has been delayed due to the Emergency Regulation process within the Office of Administrative Law. Under the Storm Water Management Planning Act of 2014, any stormwater or dry-weather runoff capture project funded by a voter-approved bond after January 2014 must be included in an adopted Storm Water Resource Plan. Agencies must also comply with statewide eligibility requirements. A common issue is incomplete or missing Water Loss Audits. Sponsors should verify all required submissions or coordinate with the Water Use Efficiency Branch to confirm compliance.

Ms. Sarah Favrot, County of San Diego, provided an overview of a recent update regarding the RAC Membership. The Water Conservation (NGO) seat within the Natural Resources and Watersheds caucus is open. San Diego Sustainable Living Institute, the organization that currently holds the seat, is no longer considered a non-profit, thus, it is no longer an eligible organization based on the requirements listed in the RAC charter. According to the RAC Charter, a RAC member must represent an agency, non-profit, tribe, or academia. Earlier this year, we approved updates to the streamlined RAC structure requiring organizations to designate a replacement if a RAC member departs. Because the San Diego Sustainable Living Institute is no longer an eligible organization, the RWMG is requesting the RAC to solicit a new member. The RWMG will be sending an email to begin the replacement process. If any RAC members have any recommendations, please respond to that email directly. The RWMG will then review and approve the selection.

Questions/Comments:

None.

Grant Administration

Ms. Loisa Burton, SDCWA, presented updates on grant administration. Total grant funding awarded to the San Diego IRWM Program is \$132.8 million for 84 regional projects. To date, \$19.4 million in grant

funding remains to be allocated. One project is already complete in Proposition 1, Round 1, while two projects are more than 90% complete and three projects are more than 70% complete. An amendment request to extend the program and minor project changes will be executed soon. Two active projects remain in the Urban and Multi-Benefit Drought Relief program. There are six active projects under Proposition 1, Round 2. One project is over 81% complete. Four projects have recently requested additional time to complete work.

Questions/Comments

None.

State and Federal Funding Opportunities

Ms. Johnson presented a list of upcoming state and federal funding opportunities. They have been included in the table below.

Project Types	Timing	Website
SWRCB: Prop 1 Technical Assistance Funding Program	Open: rolling	https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/proposition1/tech_asst_funding.html
USBR: Small Storage Program	Second round due July 15, 2025	https://www.usbr.gov/smallstorage/index.html
USBR: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Grants	Under development	https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/350845
USBR: WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program	Under development	https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/aquatic/index.html
USBR: WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Program	Under development	https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/ewrp/index.html
DWR: Proposition 4 - Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024.	TBD	https://water.ca.gov/News/Public-Notices/2025/Jul-25/Prop-4-Grant-Funding-Update?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Questions/Comments

None.

Public Comments

- In the future, it would be good to know which projects advance the State 2022 Stormwater Capture and Reuse Goals.

Summary and Next Steps

The 2026 meeting schedule is below. All meetings are tentatively scheduled and are subject to change.

2026 Meeting Schedule

- March TBD
- May 6
- August 5
- November 5

Regular meetings to be held quarterly in 2025, alternating between virtual and in-person meetings.