# Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Regional Water Management Group Meeting January 15, 2014 1:30 - 3:30 PM

Conference Call

#### **RWMG Attendees**:

Bridget Hoover – Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Elizabeth Krafft – Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Brian True – Marina Coast Water District
Julianne Rhodes – Watershed Institute, CSUMB
Sierra Ryan – Central Coast Wetlands Group
Monique Fountain – Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Karen McBride – Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Mary Fleming – Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Horacio Amezquita – San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
Rachel Saunders – Big Sur Land Trust
Paul Robins – Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
Colin Bailey – Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

## **Non-RWMG Attendees:**

Susan Robinson – IRWM Plan Coordinator Jeanette Pantoja – California Rural Legal Assistance Katie McNeill – Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Monica Reis – California Department of Water Resources

# **Meeting Minutes:**

### 1. Brief Introductions.

**2. Update on RCAC Assistance:** Karen McBride introduced Mary Fleming, a financial management specialist with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation. Mary has been with RCAC 14 years; she has recently moved from RCAC's housing division to the environmental division, where she is now working with Karen. Karen asked the RWMG to let her know if they knew of any communities needing RCAC's assistance.

Mary introduced herself as being a degreed accountant and a certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor with RCAC. She helps organizations set up and utilize QuickBooks, does analysis, e.g., five-year projections, and offers other similar financial assistance. She has not worked with any organizations/communities yet in Monterey County, and asked the RWMG to contact her if they knew of any organizations in need of financial management training. Horacio asked Mary about how to finance work being done where grant funds have been approved but not yet dispersed; Mary said she could help them with that.

Karen said that some feedback that RCAC had received during the Round 1 Implementation Grant was that quite a bit of money had gone to communities that didn't have a lot of resources in terms of administration (e.g., getting their invoices and accounting information back to the agencies). She commented to Monica that if she notices this problem, RCAC can help.

**3. Introduction to CEDEN:** Bridget provided a brief introduction to the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN – www.CEDEN.org). She directed everyone to the Data Management section in the IRWM Plan and explained that CEDEN is the data management system that all project proponents collecting surface water quality and biological measurements in the Greater Monterey County IRWM planning region will be required to use. CEDEN is an online database tool that offers an opportunity for project proponents to track their own monitoring data while enabling others to have access to it. Rusty Fairey, from Moss Landing Marine Labs, will be providing a full workshop on CEDEN at next month's RWMG meeting.

Jeanette asked what type of water quality information would get uploaded to CEDEN, and Bridget responded just surface water; GAMA (Groundwater Ambient Monitoring & Assessment Program – http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/) is used for groundwater data. Julianne asked if data from the Cooperative Monitoring Program for agricultural water quality (which Preservation Inc. is leading) follow SWAMP guidelines (Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program). Bridget responded that all Cooperative Monitoring Program data goes into CEDEN.

Susan suggested she send an email to all stakeholders in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region inviting them to attend the CEDEN workshop at the next RWMG meeting. Bridget agreed that was a good idea. Karen offered that perhaps RCAC could help project proponents gather information for uploading into CEDEN.

**4. Update on the Water Resource Project Coordination Process:** Sierra provided a brief re-cap on the WRPC process. She explained that the RWMG had received IRWM Planning Grant funds to develop and implement a process to reconcile/coordinate projects within a subwatershed region in order to resolve any conflicts between projects and to find opportunities for integration. The WRPC process focuses on the Gabilan watershed. The RWMG was awarded Planning Grant funds in 2010, and a WRPC subcommittee began meeting in 2011. The first stakeholder meeting was held in January 2012 to introduce the process, and a second major stakeholder meeting was held in January 2013, which focused on challenges in the watershed and suggestions for overcoming those hurdles. At that meeting, participants were asked to describe their "vision" for the Gabilan watershed as well as perceived hurdles for implementing that vision.

In June 2013, the subcommittee and working group leaders met to process the information that had been gathered at the January stakeholder meeting and worked on ways to move forward with top priorities. This resulted in the "Gabilan Watershed Blueprint." The Blueprint includes four sections: 1) Landscape Visions, based on drawings that participants at the January 2012 stakeholder meeting made to represent their "ideal vision" of the watershed; 2) On-Farm Solutions, a farmer-led effort; 3) Ag Industry Involvement, led by SureHarvest; and 4) Agency Coordination, which involves understanding agency mandates, permits, etc. in an attempt to create a simpler regulatory/permitting process.

The subcommittee plans to hold the final stakeholder meeting on May 28, 2014. At that meeting, the subcommittee will roll out the draft Blueprint and get feedback from stakeholders. The subcommittee will then process that information and make final changes to the Blueprint, and Susan will write up the process in the IRWM Plan. Rachel asked, what will happen after Susan writes up the process? Sierra responded that the Blueprint will be available on the IRWM website, on CCWG's website, subcontractors (e.g., ag industry representatives and SureHarvest) will share the information, and Susan will send out the information to the Greater Monterey County IRWM stakeholder list. Bridget added that there will need to be a discussion with the RWMG about the WRPC process *before* Susan writes up the process in the IRWM Plan. The Group decided that it would make sense to hold that discussion prior to the final stakeholder meeting, perhaps at the May 21, 2014 RWMG meeting. Susan agreed. Jeanette asked, if you're not already in a working group, is there a way to follow this process? Sierra said that any RWMG member can participate in the process, and reminded everyone which RWMG members had already volunteered for which working groups.

5. Update on 2014 Water Bond: Rachel provided a brief update on the proposed legislative bills and 2014 Water Bond. She began by thanking Susan for drafting the letter to Senator Monning and Assemblymember Stone on behalf of the RWMG with the Group's comments on AB 1331 and SB 42. Rachel then informed the Group that SB 42 has been replaced by SB 848, a bill introduced by Senator Wolk; the content of the current bill is essentially identical to SB 42, but introducing a new bill will give it more time to move through the legislative committee. Rachel commented that getting a 2014 Water Bond in place will be "a heavy lift." There will be a series of subcommittee hearings on both AB 1331 and SB 848; then the two bills will need to be reconciled and a new bill signed; the Water Bond that is currently on the ballot will need to be removed in order to get a new Water Bond on the ballot before November; and all of this adds up to "a heavy lift." It may be that the Water Bond gets on the 2016 ballot instead. The possibility exists that if the Water Bond doesn't go forward, a legislator may float a (much smaller) Park Bond instead.

Bridget asked Rachel what she thought the chances were of Senator Monning actually being able to act on our recommendations in the letter we just sent. Rachel said she thought there was a better chance of getting changes made through the Wolk bill. She added that the Big Sur Land Trust met with Assemblymember Stone last week and thanked him for bringing the Assembly Subcommittee to Seaside to take comments on the proposed Assembly bill. She noted that Sierra, Paul, and several other RWMG members gave great comments at that meeting. Paul said he was impressed by the support Assemblymember Stone showed for work that's been done through the IRWM Plan in our region.

- **6. Update on Project Solicitation Process:** Susan thanked everyone for voting on the suggested changes to the Project Ranking system. The changes were approved by the RWMG with 14 members voting: 11 approved the changes, 1 did not approve (City of Salinas), and 2 abstained. Susan said that she would update the IRWM Plan to reflect the changes and would begin working on finalizing the application forms for the next IRWMP project solicitation. The solicitation will begin on March 3, 2014 (as discussed at the last RWMG meeting). Susan will send out an early "heads-up" to stakeholders, mainly to give disadvantaged communities (DACs) and other small communities additional time to formulate project ideas. Karen noted that she has been encouraging Monterey County to apply on behalf of two communities. Bridget reminded Karen that the RWMG has resources available through the Planning Grant to help prepare projects and get projects listed in the IRWM Plan.
- **7. Other News/Business.** Susan noted that at the last RWMG meeting, the Group discussed the possibility of forming a nonprofit entity to act as lead applicant on behalf of the RWMG for the purpose of administering future IRWM grants. She informed the Group that Tim Carson from the Santa Cruz Regional Water Management Foundation will be joining us at the next RWMG meeting (February 19) to describe how the Santa Cruz RWMG has created such an entity. She encouraged everyone to attend that meeting.

Jeanette requested that we bring up for discussion once again the issue of tribal communities at a future RWMG meeting. She referred to an email sent recently by Louise Ramirez, Tribal Chairperson of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation. Jeanette said that part of the Scope of Work in the Planning Grant was intended to facilitate inclusion of DACs and tribal members into the RWMG governance, though there had been some debate as to what "inclusion" meant. Jeanette said it was inaccurate to say there are no tribal lands in the Greater Monterey County IRWM region (as Susan had written in her email response to Louise). She pointed to the history of Salinan, Costanoan, and Esselen tribes in the region. Susan asked Jeanette if in fact there were tribal lands in the region, because if there were, Susan would need to correct that statement in the IRWM Plan. Jeanette responded that there were no "federally recognized" tribal lands, and noted that the Esselen Nation has been fighting for federal recognition for quite some time.

Susan said that the issue of whether or not to include tribal representation on the RWMG had been discussed at length by the RWMG in the past, and a decision was made that tribal representation in the IRWM planning process would make more sense at the regional (Central Coast) or state level, not at the Greater Monterey County region level – particularly since there are no reservation lands in our region (i.e., where water supply or water quality projects would be relevant). Bridget agreed that this decision had been made at a Central Coast IRWM Regions meeting, and that Michelle Dooley (DWR) also expressed a desire for Native American involvement at the regional level. She added she wasn't sure that Louise *wanted* to be involved as a participating member of the RWMG. Susan said that she had asked Louise and several other tribal members in the past to review projects during the Project Review process to ensure that there were no potential impacts on Native American sacred sites or resources, but no one (including Louise) had volunteered to do so. Jeanette responded that perhaps if we had included her earlier in the process, she might have been more responsive. She requested that Louise be invited to a future RWMG meeting – perhaps the March meeting – to provide a presentation on Native American history in Monterey County. Bridget added that perhaps Louise could explain to the RWMG how she thought the IRWM planning process might benefit tribal members in the region. Susan agreed this was a good idea, and would mark it on the calendar.

Bridget announced that the Monterey Bay Sanctuary's Water Quality Protection Program Committee will be hosting a water quality forum on February 5, 2014 in Watsonville. There will be three panels (from 1:00PM –

5:30PM), including: 1) status and trends of water quality in the region, including marine and surface waters; 2) new innovative ideas, technology, and research; and 3) how to get involved, e.g., good stewardship, volunteer opportunities. Cat Kuhlman, Executive Director of the Ocean Protection Council, will be the keynote speaker. Following the panel session from 5:30PM – 7:00PM will be a resource fair – how to improve water quality at home, landscape management practices, how to volunteer, etc.

Monica asked Susan to remind Round 1 Implementation Grant project proponents to respond to the Doodle to meet with DWR regarding the Implementation Grant contract.

Next month's RWMG meeting is scheduled for February 19th from 1:30-3:30 PM at Moss Landing Marine Labs.