

Santa Barbara Countywide
Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Cooperating Partners Meeting
March 13, 2007
9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Meeting Location
City of Solvang-City Council Chambers,
1644 Oak Street, Solvang

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Cooperating Partners

Robert Almy, Santa Barbara County Water Agency; Jeff Dameron, La Cumbre Mutual Water Company; Bill Ferguson, City of Santa Barbara Water Resources Division; Len Fleckenstein, SB County Water Agency; Gary McFarland, GWD; Autumn Malanca, City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division; Chris Dahlstrom, SYRWCD, ID #1; Kate Rees, CCRB and COMB; Susan Segovia, City of Lompoc; Bruce Wales, Santa Ynez RWCD; Joe Barget, Vandenberg Village CSD; Tully Clifford, City of Solvang

On the Conference Call

Bob McDonald, CVWD; Teresa Reyburn, City of Santa Maria

Others Present

Shruti Chandra, Santa Barbara County Water Agency/Dudek; Kathy Caldwell, CH2M HILL

Proceedings

The meeting was called to order at 9:20 by Rob Almy.

There were no public comments for items not on the agenda.

The minutes of the February 27, 2007 Cooperating Partners meeting were approved unanimously as written.

Status of Propositions 50 & 84

Rob Almy- The State has proposed to modify the Prop 50 process that would reduce the amount of money available for another round of funding. The County has written 3 letters of protest over the past 4 months on behalf of the Partners.

However, representatives of the planning regions in the Central Coast began to discuss the idea of allowing Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties to stand in line first for Prop 84 funds if (1) we could agree on principles for the Prop 84 process and (2) we would support the State's proposal for changes to the Prop 50 process. Principles for agreement

within the Central coast funding region were drafted. A letter to the State regarding these principles was signed by all entities on the central coast with the exception of Santa Barbara County.

The principles outline a consensus based process in which proposals to the State are coordinated within the central coast region and the region is able to knit the individual plans together to meet Prop 84 guidelines. If then approved by the State, the central coast region could then deal with fund allocations internally, because the State wants the local regions to figure things out and wants the regions to work together. The letter from the Central Coast agencies was handed out to the Partners at the meeting.

The County's Executive Office reviewed the letter but did not yet agreed to sign it based on uncertainties regarding fund allocations.

Discussion ensued on how the Partners would like to address this issue.

The Partners agreed to set-up a conference call for Friday (3/16) at 10:30am to check in on the status of the group's collective position.

Media Coverage

Rob Almy- So far, we have been getting good feedback from the media. The Lompoc Record and Santa Ynez Valley Voice both had articles in them. He called the authors and offered additional information to clarify some issues mentioned in the articles.

IRWMP Schedule and Contract Scope

The schedule with some new information was then passed out, and Len Fleckenstein reviewed the schedule and noted that it now includes some tasks which aren't in the County's contract with CH2MHill.

Len Fleckenstein- Extra public workshops and partners meeting have been added and they were not part of the original scope. CH2M Hill is going to work with the County and CH will minimize their hours where they can and the County is going to be careful on how they ask them to spend their time.

Kathy Caldwell- Luckily, the expansion of the schedule has been of benefit to the quality of the document.

Joe Barget- If a contract modification requires us to alter the inter-agency MOU, then each Partner would have to go to its own Board for approvals.

Rob Almy - The process has definitely taught the group about what to expect in working with the State on these kinds of funding opportunities. Next time, it will be good to find a way to incorporate a contingency amount.

Gary McFarland- In the future, maybe there is a way to allocate a portion of money like an escrow account of sorts that is not governed by a particular agency. This can be done by the direction of the steering committee.

Prop 50 Grant Application Process

A potential schedule for the Prop 50 grant application process was reviewed. We will probably see a proposed schedule from the State in mid-April.

Chris Dahlstrom- What happens if projects fall off the list, especially ones that were ready to proceed? Do we have a plan for that?

Rob Almy- Yes, if we model our process after Ventura's process, we can add other projects as some fall off. The State makes decisions and the local regions have to deal with contract negotiations, and put the project out to bid. Then the project has to be budgeted for construction and then proceed with environmental review. We need to figure out how to incorporate this process in budgeting these projects in their respective years.

Gary McFarland- How do the matching funds work?

Rob Almy- We have been told that the higher the matching funds available are, the better it is for the project to get funded by the State. If Proposition 84 is performance based, this would be a non-issue because the region would select funding internally, but it would still be of benefit to have the matching funds be equitable. We will know more about what to expect in a little over a week from today.

Prop 84 Process:

Kathy Caldwell- We have been getting mixed messages about the Prop 84 process and we don't have a clear idea of what to expect. The region may need a companion Flood Control Management Plan and we have been told that we would only need 1 grant application and that DWR will determine what pots of money you will qualify for. Legislators want to green the process and are steering the guidelines in that direction as well and planning grants will be available for Prop 84 plan preparation process. You will need to be able to clearly communicate to the State on how they grant funds will be managed, and how the IRWMP will be "governed".

Gary McFarland- We need to recognize that we need to come up with some sort of financial vehicle for "governance" of IRWMP implementation, without being under any one agency's limitations. Grants have brought us together and we will have to deal with this somehow.

Rob Almy- Another model to consider is a JPA at the central coast funding region level.

Kate Rees- The other regions within the Central Coast will be represented as "County" entities, so it makes sense that County of Santa Barbara administers the grant.

Bill Ferguson- A JPA may not be the best route. An MOU with the County may be better.

Rob Almy- The County would probably want the funds to be "pass-through" to agencies and districts. But there does need to be 1 single agency to work with the State and process the grants. The State is too big and the Counties are too small- that's the big picture. There needs to be an area between local government and State. SBCAG may be another model to consider. Within Santa Barbara County, the County Water Agency is a dependent special district. Their funding source is separate from the rest of the County.

Do any of the Partners know of other governance options that we have not mentioned yet? Monterey County Water Authority may be another good example. They are still part of the County but they have their own Board.

MOU's may be better for short-term. It would be better to have one that covers Prop 50 and Prop 84 processes, but there are time constraints which may not allow for that to happen. We need something developed in a June 2007 timeframe. We should ask Monterey and Ventura for copies of their MOU to see what they look like.

Draft IRWMP

Bruce Wales- There are several sections that need to be re-written .

Rob Almy- We need the Partners to use the comment form and provide comments on the Plan by April 2, 2007. We also need to identify areas that need to be re-written and do it before April 2nd. We need to set-up a working group so that someone can word-smith those sections that need to be re-written. There is going to be an internal final document. We need to spend the next 5 weeks getting these types of problem areas right.

Next Meeting

The next Partners meeting will be on April 12th from 9 AM to noon at the Goleta Water District.

Rob Almy adjourned the meeting at 12:10pm.