

Meeting Minutes

Santa Barbara Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Cooperating Partners Meeting

May 29, 2007
1:00pm – 4:00 pm

Meeting Location:
County Public Works Bldg. 620 W. Foster Rd., Santa Maria

Attendees

Cooperating Partners

Robert Almy, Santa Barbara County Water Agency; Joe Barget, Vandenberg Village CSD; Chris Dahlstrom, SYRWCD, ID #1; Jeff Dameron, La Cumbre Mutual Water Company; Bill Ferguson, City of Santa Barbara; Len Fleckenstein, SB County Water Agency; Janet Gringas, COMB; Charles Hamilton and Robert McDonald, Carpinteria Valley Water District; Gary McFarland, GWD; Ruben Moreno (on phone for part), City of Guadalupe; Craig Murray (on phone), Carpinteria Sanitary District; Teresa Reyburn, City of Santa Maria; Michael Riley, Mission Hills CSD; Susan Segovia, City of Lompoc; Bruce Wales, Santa Ynez River WCD; Kathleen Werner, Goleta Sanitary District; Marty Wilder, Laguna Sanitation District.

Others Present

Kathy Caldwell, CH2MHILL (on phone)

Proceedings

The meeting was called to order at 1:05pm by Rob Almy

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

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the May 14th and May 18th meetings were not yet recommended for approval. Instead, the attendees decided to allow more time for review, especially due to the lengthy minutes from the May 14 meeting. The minutes will be discussed and voted upon at the next meeting.

Distribution of Final IRWMP

Paper copies and CD's of the final Integrated Regional Water Management Plan were distributed. Additional CD's will be mailed to those requesting them. Requests were given to Len. Copies of the Plan will be mailed to those Cooperating Partners who are not in attendance.

An email will be sent to our stakeholders list, informing them of the availability of the IRWMP from the County Water Agency. The IRWMP is also posted on the County Public Works Department's IRWMP website.

IRWMP Approval Schedule

Rob Almy noted that approval of the IRWMP will be on the County Board of Supervisors agenda for its June 19 meeting. Other Cooperating Partners are scheduling approvals from their Boards.

Consultant Contract Amendment

Rob Almy reminded the group that CH2MHILL has completed its work under the existing contract. The County Water Agency has received the consultants' proposal for additional work to submit the Plan and supplemental information to the State as part of the Prop 50 Round 2 step 1 submittal - - due August 1st. The Water Agency has sent invoices to the Cooperating Partners to cover the costs of this new work. Rob asked the Partners to send their payments as soon as possible, or to send him a letter of intent to pay, so the County can be assured of having sufficient funds to cover the costs of the contract amendment. The Water Agency needs to submit the amendment to the Board of Supervisors for approval at its 6/19 meeting, so the consultant has enough time to compile information needed for the August 1 submittal deadline. Len Fleckenstein will send the Cooperating Partners an email and attach a copy of CH2MHILL's proposal.

Comments to State on Prop 50 Guidelines

Rob stated that the Water Agency had sent an email on 5/24 to DWR and SWRCB with only a couple comments on the State's proposed grant guidelines for Prop 50 Round 2. The comments were: (1) the submittal deadline should be delayed beyond 8/1; (2) the State's date for call back should be retained (as November). Len will forward the comments via email to the Partners.

DWR & SWRCB Meeting on May 25

After the 5/24 deadline for commenting on the Prop 50 grant guidelines, DWR staff and SWRCB staff met in Sacramento to discuss comments received. Rob Almy joined them for part of that meeting, primarily to solicit feedback on Santa Barbara County's IRWMP and our draft project list. Rob was able to take copies of the final IRWMP with him and give them to DWR & SWRCB staff. Meeting participants included DWR's Tracie Billington and Natalia Deardorff and SWRCB's Sheila Farahnak, among others. Rob walked them through our Plan and they discussed the grant application schedule.

Some key points from Rob's meeting with the State staff included:

- State is under pressure to commit Prop 50 funds by mid-2008.
- Likely to retain 8/1 deadline for step 1 application; & January for step 2.
- State is looking for a commitment to Plan implementation and governance.
- State is likely to refrain from dictating which projects should be funded; leaving that decision up to the locals. They seemed to like our short list of 17 projects.
- But step 1 submittal needs to identify total grant request and percent of match (therefore we need to decide which projects will be in our list for the step 2 submittal).
- Staff expressed favorable opinions regarding: our inclusion of Emergency Planning as a priority; our use of a "logic flow chart" in Section 8; the separation of detailed data in a separate appendix; variation in priorities across watersheds.
- Staff noted that the City of Santa Barbara's Lower Mission Creek project seemed like an excellent fit for Prop 84 funding, when it becomes available.

- Competitors for the Southern California share of Prop 50 Round 2 funds are the IRWMP regions of: Santa Barbara County; San Diego County; Antelope Valley; and Coachella.

The State staff also discussed the need for Groundwater Management Plans if projects will affect groundwater, and staff encouraged us to look into the State's "Local Groundwater Assistance Program". Rob handed out some information on the program and Len said he would send an email with a link to the State GW program site. Bob McDonald said that Carpinteria Valley Water District had received a grant for about \$250k under this State program.

We still need to ask the State staff whether grant funds can be requested for a project which has already started the construction phase, or will have started by the time a grant is awarded. Rob said he would pose this question to the State.

Project Selection Process

Rob provided a brief re-cap of the Partners' previous meeting (5/18) when decisions were made on top priority projects. At that meeting, several people agreed to re-consider whether project costs could be reduced, or submitted in partial phases, or whether the match amount could be increased.

Attendees had a wide-ranging discussion of issues for consideration as people identify new cost, match, or other information for their projects. Issues included: whether to re-visit the "themes" inherent in our top priority projects; how to ensure the Plan remains a plan; the importance of having public safety projects among our project mix; whether the State has a preference for certain types of projects; how to determine real need for grant funds; how to determine project eligibility and readiness.

New or revised information for projects was presented as follows:

- City of Santa Barbara: Bill Ferguson: Can scale down the project to a smaller portion of the waterway; will ask for \$2.5 M out of \$5M total.
- City of Guadalupe: Ruben Moreno: will ask for only phase 1: \$4.75 M request with a \$3.5M match. Project will still upgrade to tertiary treatment. Recycled water will be paid by developer.
- Carpinteria Valley Water: Bob McDonald and Charles Hamilton: keeping same grant request at \$2M and same match at \$1M, but reducing total cost to \$3M, so the match percentage is now higher.
- County Flood Control: Tom Fayram: will limit Santa Maria Levee grant request to only the design phase: \$200k request with another \$100k County match. Later phases will be \$9M to construct. Rob Almy noted that the State Guidelines (in Section C on "Eligible Proposals" allow for planning for flood control.
- Vandenberg Village CSD; Joe Barget: will reduce its request from \$5M to \$4M.

Several other Partners explained that their projects could not be further reduced, at least not at this time.

Reconsideration of Project Ranking

Attendees discussed whether to re-vote and re-rank the projects, either in part or for all the projects. Discussion included the issue of whether and how to conduct an “audit” of project eligibility and readiness for implementation. After considerable discussion and several votes, the Partners decided the following:

- to use the “Sort A” project ranking list from our previous meeting - -as revised by new information submitted today;
- to include the Santa Maria Levee project due to its greatly reduced request amount (\$200k) and its focus on public safety;
- to move down the project list, marking projects for inclusion in our short list for step 1 - - down through the Carpinteria Sanitary, Goleta Sanitary, and Carp Valley WD projects along with the above-mentioned SM levee..

Next steps

We agreed on the need to meet again to ensure we have whatever information and support we need to submit the Step 1 application; and also to begin discussing our process and tasks for the Step 2 application. Len will schedule a date and location in South County.

Rob Almy adjourned the meeting at 4:15pm.