



Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #94

December 1, 2021
9:00 am – 11:30 am

Zoom Meeting

NOTES

Attendance

RAC Members

Richard Whipple, County of San Diego (Chair)
Anne Bamford, American Water Works Association
Anne Middleton, ECOLIFE Conservation
Beth Gentry, City of Chula Vista
Brook Sarson, San Diego Sustainable Living Institute
Charlie de la Rosa, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
David Walker, San Diego Audubon Society
Donald Butz, San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association
Erick Del Bosque, Sweetwater Authority
Jennifer Hazard and Katrina Hiott, Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Julia Chunn-Heer, Surfriider
Julia Escamilia, Rincon de Diablo MWD
Justin Gamble and Tim Murphy, City of Oceanside
Kimberly O'Connell and Jennifer Gonzales, UC San Diego
Leslie Cleveland for Jack Simes, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Marisa Soriano, City of Chula Vista
Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association
Michelle Berens, Helix Water District
Mike Thornton, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority
Patrick McDonough, San Diego Coastkeeper
Rania Amen for Al Lau, Santa Fe Irrigation District
Rob Hustel for Phil Pryde, San Diego River Park Foundation

RWMG Staff and Consultants

Arthella Vallarta, Woodard & Curran
Chelsea McGimpsey, County of San Diego
Greg Johansen, City of San Diego
Karina Danek, City of San Diego
Lesley Dobalian, San Diego County Water Authority
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego
Nicole Poletto, Woodard & Curran
Rosalyn Prickett, Woodard & Curran
Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran

Interested Parties to the RAC

Anna Shepherd, Naval Base Coronado
Arash Afghahi, Viejas Natural Resources Department
Brian Hojnacki, City of San Diego
Carmel Wong, City of San Diego
Cristina Torres, Viejas Tribal Government
Gail Patton, San Diego County Water Authority
Jeff Stephenson, San Diego County Water Authority
Jim Rasmus, Carollo Engineers
Kelly Mooney, Hoch Consulting
Khadija Wade, City of San Diego
Linda Hood, Campo Band Tribal EPA
Mark Stadler, Public
Michelle Pombrol, Department of Water Resources
Ryan Krantz, Viejas Tribal Government
Soleil Develle, Fallbrook Public Utility District

Welcome, Introductions, & Land Acknowledgement

Mr. Richard Whipple, County of San Diego, 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.

Mr. Whipple 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 acknowledgement 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.

San Diego Regional Drought Update

Mr. Jeff Stephenson, San Diego County Water Authority, updated the group on water supply conditions in San Diego and on recent drought-related actions in the state. The North Sierra 8-Station Precipitation Index is above normal due to the early influx of storms in October. In the state reservoir system, there are many reservoirs that are below their historical average such as Oroville and Shasta reservoirs. The storage volume of Lake Oroville is at 30% of capacity or 60% of average as of November 28, 2021. Lake Oroville experienced an early boost due to the storms in October, but it may take years for it to reach a normal storage volume.

The San Diego region has experienced above normal temperatures for 24 of the last 25 months. The higher temperatures result in more demand and use of water in the region, which impacts the water trends. For local precipitation, the region is 81% normal at Lindbergh field and 58% normal at Ramona Airport for the water year to date (October 1 – November 28, 2021). Due to a dry November, the percentages are decreasing below normal. For Western United States, it is anticipated that December precipitation will be below normal precipitation, and the state may experience above normal temperatures in December.

Governor Gavin Newsom's drought emergency proclamations were extended statewide as of October 19, 2021. The proclamations also authorized the State Board to prepare emergency regulations to prohibit wasteful water practices and directed water suppliers to execute water shortage contingency plans (WSCP). Governor Newsom signed an Executive Order that targeted a voluntary 15% reduction in water use by retail water suppliers. Additionally, the decision on future mandatory restrictions is based on effectiveness of voluntary water conservation efforts and the outlook for winter precipitation.

The San Diego County Water Authority activated Level 1 of its WSCP in October 21. A Level 1 activation calls for voluntary actions for water shortages of up to 10% reduction. For the San Diego County Water Authority, the actions are a mix of water-use efficiency and communications. Storage withdrawals are not needed since there is no water shortage. As of December 2021, activation of Level 2 is not appropriate since water-use reductions are not mandatory.

Water agencies report their water use to the State Water Board each month. Governor Newsom mandated a 15% reduction compared to 2020 water use levels, which is difficult for the San Diego region because Southern California water use in 2020 was affected by rainfall, resulting in lower water use than normal. The State Water Board is evaluating whether to implement emergency regulations to increase savings to meet this mandate.

The San Diego County Water Authority has been advocating and reaching out to key decision-makers on benefits of targeted drought response. Key decision makers the Water Authority has targeted include:

- Wade Crowfoot – California Secretary for Natural Resources
- Nancy Vogel – Deputy Secretary for Water, Natural Resources Agency
- Karla Nemeth – Director, California Department of Water Resources
- State Water Board Members
- Governor's staff
- Offices of various state and federal elected officials

Additionally, there has been increased media coverage of the San Diego strategy. Drought outreach and education of the region have been focused on promoting rebates and WaterSmart resources on every platform, developing partnerships, and planning for 2022.

Questions/Comments

- Thank you for the update. How is normal being determined? There was normal precipitation and temperature. With our rapidly changing climate, I am wondering if those numbers were based on a 5-year or 10-year average?
 - For those numbers, they usually go back to the years we have record for. For example, it could be our 90-year record. We also pull those numbers from the Weather Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The San Diego County Water Authority does not calculate them.
- San Diego gets a lot of water supplies from the Colorado River. Are there any updates?
 - There is an issue with the Colorado River. Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico will be the first states to receive cuts next year. California may take cuts down the road. Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) will be the first agency in California to receive cuts. The Water Authority's Imperial Irrigation District (IID) water is higher priority than MWD. If any cuts were to occur, the San Diego County Water Authority will take a proportional cut based on IID's cuts.

- Are there any estimates on the likelihood of those cuts happening?
 - There was a presentation to the San Diego County Water Authority Board in October or November that mentioned this. I can get those numbers and send those out.
- How does the Colorado River status affect our water supply?
 - Question was answered previously.
- When we are looking at our long-term planning horizons, we assume an increase in water demand. All I constantly hear are these reductions (forced or unforced). Where are these conversations going and how are you reconciling demand and reductions?
 - If you look back at our Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) in 2000, we projected a certain demand. In every plan that has been completed since that time, the future demand trend line is decreasing. We are projecting lower demand than each previous UWMP. The trend line slightly rises over time due to growth in the region.
- What is the current status of the levels of our local reservoirs?
 - The numbers are available are on our website. In our last Board meeting, we do a monthly report called the “Water Resources Report” which includes the most recent reservoir status.

Statewide IRWM and Grant Updates

Ms. Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority, presented an overview of the statewide Roundtable of Regions Summit. The Roundtable of Regions hosted a 3-day virtual summit (November 15-17, 2021) that focused on Climate Resilience and Integrated Regional Management: Buildings Successful Partnerships. Day 1 of the virtual summit focused on climate science and resilience. Day 2 of the virtual summit focused on how regions are addressing climate resilience, tools, and resources. Day 3 of the virtual summit focused on working together for regional resilience. If interested, presentation slides and webinar recordings are available at <https://www.roundtableofregions.org/>.

Mr. Greg Johansen, City of San Diego, provided updates on Proposition 1, Round 2. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is expected to release the draft Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) at the end of 2021. There are two anticipated application deadlines: Spring 2022 and Fall 2022. The San Diego IRWM local process will start around the time the final PSP is released, pending DWR’s schedule. The San Diego IRWM Program is planning to target the Fall 2022 DWR application deadline.

Mr. Johansen also provided an overview of additional DWR grant funds that were authorized in 2021 through the Drought Funding Grant Program. \$500 million dollars was authorized by the California Legislature to provide drought relief financial assistance through the Small Community Drought Relief Program and the Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Program. The Small Community Drought Relief Program aims to provide immediate and near-term financial technical support to help small communities survive the current and future droughts. DWR plans to release awards in three rounds. Applications will be processed until funds are exhausted or until December 29, 2023, whichever comes first. Funds are expected to be exhausted quickly, so eligible applicants should apply as soon as possible.

There is approximately \$190 million dollars available in the Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Program including \$140 million dollars in general funds and \$50 million dollars set aside for Underrepresented communities (URCs) and Native American Tribes (Tribes). The set-aside will be distributed via IRWM programs across the state, and the San Diego IRWM Program was allocated \$5 million in set-aside funds for the Funding Area. The next deadline for the set-aside is Friday, December 17 and the San Diego IRWM Program will submit an application in partnership with the South Orange County and Upper Santa Margarita Watershed

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IRWM Regions. The general funds distributed through this program will be statewide competitive and dispersed through a rolling basis.

The San Diego IRWM Program's project selection process for the URC and Tribal set aside was streamlined due to DWR's expedited timeline. The local process was modeled after the 2016 Proposition 1 DAC Involvement Grant but was adapted for the expedited timeline. The Call for Projects was opened for two weeks (October 29 to November 12). A total of five projects were submitted, with a total grant request of \$9,655,000 in the San Diego IRWM Region. A Project Concept Form was used instead of the online Project Database (OPTI) and a Project Guide was provided to explain the revised project selection process.

A Project Selection Workgroup (PSW) was formed to advise the RWMG on projects to prioritize for inclusion in the URC and Tribal Set Aside for the Drought Relief Program. The PSW met for a total of 2 days, which was streamlined and accelerated compared to previous rounds due to DWR's grant application deadline. The PSW was composed of the RWMG agencies, one representative from the RAC Tribal Caucus, and one representative from the DAC/Environmental Justice Caucus. In the first day of the PSW, members reviewed the process, ground rules, and conflict of interest and focused on discussion on submitted projects. By the end of Day 1, PSW members selected all projects for interviews and finalized the list of questions to ask Local Project Sponsors (LPS). Day 2 included interviews of each LPS and discussion of each project. By the end of Day 2, the PSW finalized the project list which includes three projects in the San Diego IRWM Region. The South Orange County IRWM Region had a separate project selection process and submitted one project for inclusion in the Funding Area application.

Ms. Chelsea McGimpsey, County of San Diego, presented the final list of projects for inclusion in the Drought Grant including Lake Morena Oak Shores Mutual Water Company's Ballard Well Connection and Transmission Pipeline, the San Pasqual Band of Indian's Duro Community Waterline Project, Ramona Municipal Water District's The Acres Water Consolidation Project – Phase 1, and the El Toro Water District's R-2 Reservoir Interior Recoating Project. The RAC voted and approved the Drought Grant Project List:

- 19 voted Yes
- 0 Voted No
- 2 Abstained

Questions/Comments:

- None

Implementation of JEDI Recommendations Update

Ms. McGimpsey, County of San Diego, provided updates on the implementation of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) recommendations. One of the recommendations from the early 2021 JEDI Workgroup was to establish a URC Outreach Workgroup for Proposition 1, Round 2. The purpose of the URC Outreach Workgroup is to conduct outreach prior to the Call for Projects to increase participation of URCs in IRWM. Members for the Workgroup are currently being solicited and each RAC Caucus has been asked to nominate a Workgroup member. Non-RAC members may serve on the URC Outreach Workgroup if nominated by the Caucus. There will be two meetings and the Workgroup will engage in community outreach directly, as needed, in advance of Call for Projects.

Another JEDI recommendation was to follow up with project sponsors regarding any "fatal flaws" in submitted project applications. The RWMG evaluated a "Fatal Flaws" criteria list for this process. In order for projects to proceed, they must meet Objective A from the 2019 San Diego IRWM Plan (Encourage the development of integrated solutions to address water management issues and conflicts) and Objective B (Maximize

stakeholder/community involvement and stewardship of water resources, emphasizing education and outreach). However, if projects do not meet the minimum grant threshold, includes certain cost estimate concerns, is not an IRWM-type project, or includes operations & maintenance activities, projects may have the opportunity to revise or clarify these “fatal flaws” prior to scoring.

Additionally, the RWMG provided guidelines to success, which are not fatal flaws, but are intended to help each LPS structure their project for an easier project implementation and grant administration process:

1. Have a reasonable number of subprojects.
 - Too many subprojects can be challenging to administer or raise concerns from DWR.
2. Use recent data for benefit calculations and indicate age of data in project submittal.
3. Have a reasonable and realistic schedule for the tasks described.
4. Be aware of prevailing wage requirements.

The RWMG also evaluated the feasibility of the JEDI recommendation to provide stipends to URCs participating in the PSW and other IRWM activities. The RWMG analyzed potential eligibility requirements such as activities, sources of funding, organizations, and logistics and administration of funds. After the evaluation, the RWMG determined that stipends are not currently feasible, but will keep them in mind in the future should opportunities arise to address feasibility.

Questions/Comments:

- None.

Grant Administration

Ms. Burton, San Diego County Water Authority, presented updates on grant administration. In total, the San Diego IRWM Region has billed DWR over \$81 million dollars in grant funding out of the \$111.7 million dollars for 9 grant programs, equating to 73% billed. 50 projects are now complete out of the 74 projects funded, which equates to a 68% completion. The total reimbursements received by LPSs to date is \$75.9 million dollars. Proposition 84, Round 3 is almost complete (5 out of 7 projects complete). Two remaining projects under Proposition 84, Round 3 are Project 4: Regional Demand Management Project (98% complete) and Project 6: Rincon Customer Driven Demand Management Program (88% complete). Proposition 84, Round 4 is still ongoing. Two projects are complete, and the remaining projects are still in implementation phase with eight projects over 50% complete. The Proposition 1, DACI Program is about 95% complete. There are two remaining projects: Project 4 Groundwater Planning for Pauma Valley DACs (74% complete) and Project 7 Sediment Management for Tijuana River (80% complete). There are minor updates on the Proposition 1, Round 1 Program. Construction work on most projects in Proposition, Round 1 is underway. Project 5 Pure Water Oceanside and Project 7 San Elijo Stormwater Capture & Reuse are over 80% complete.

Additionally, Ms. Burton provided the RAC with information regarding the California Grants Portal (<https://www.grants.ca.gov/>) website. The website is managed and hosted by the California State Library as result of the Grant Information Act of 2018. The website is a central source of active funding opportunities across 56 state agencies and departments on a competitive or first-come basis. There are 125 active grant opportunities (424 total) on the site, and to date, there are about \$34 billion dollars in grants and loans posted. Interested applicants can search by applicant type, grant category type, or time frame.

Questions/Comments:

None.

Public Comments

- None.

Summary and Next Steps

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

Project Types	Deadline	Website
DWR: Drought Response Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Communities Drought Relief • Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief 	Small Communities Funding opened 8/6, rolling deadline; Urban and Multibenefit Drought Funding opened 10/28, next deadline 12/17	Small Community Drought Relief (ca.gov) 2021 Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Funding (ca.gov)
Bureau of Reclamation: WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects for Fiscal Year 2022	December 9 at 3:00 PM	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=335081
SWRCB: Prop 1 Technical Assistance Funding Program	Open: rolling	https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/proposition1/tech_asst_funding.html
DWR: Water Desalination Grant Program	Open: rolling	https://water.ca.gov/News/Public-Notices/2020/Sept-2020/Water-Desal-Grant-CAP

Next RAC Meeting:

- February 2, 2022 – 9:00-11:30 a.m. via virtual platform.

The meeting schedule for 2022 is included below. Please add them to your calendar:

- April 6, 2022
- June 1, 2022
- August 3, 2022
- October 5, 2022
- December 7, 2022