



**Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #97**

May 24, 2022

9:00 am – 11:00 am

**Zoom Meeting**

**NOTES**

**Attendance**

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**RAC Members**

Amanda Loeper for Kimberly O’Connell, UCSD Clean Water Utility  
Ann Van Leer, Escondido Creek Conservancy  
Anne Bamford, American Water Works Association  
Brian Olney for Michelle Berens, Helix Water District  
Brook Sarson, San Diego Sustainable Living Institute  
Connor Leone for Anne Middleton, ECOLIFE Conservation  
David Walker, San Diego Audubon Society  
Jennifer Hazard, Rural Community Assistance Corporation  
Julia Chunn-Heer, Surfrider  
Julia Escamilla, Rincon de Diablo  
Justin Gamble, City of Oceanside  
Patrick McDonough, San Diego Coastkeeper  
Phil Pryde, San Diego River Park Foundation  
Oscar Romo, Alter Terra

**RWMG Staff and Consultants**

Andrea Araujo, County of San Diego  
Arthella Vallarta, Woodard & Curran  
Chelsea McGimpsey, County of San Diego  
Jane-Marie Fajardo, City of San Diego  
Julie MarLett, 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**

Andrew Funk, City of San Diego  
Arash Afghahi, Viejas Natural Resources Department  
Brandon Busnell, San Diego Water Board  
Chris Brzezicki, San Diego Zoo Global  
Cristina Torres, Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians  
Daniel Kay, Groundwater San Diego – Chollas Creek

Goldy Herbon, Hoch Consulting  
Jim Harry, City of San Diego  
John Carnegie, Olivenhain Municipal Water District  
Joni German, San Diego County Water Authority  
Kirstin Skadberg, Groundwork San Diego – Chollas Creek  
Kyrsten Burr, Hoch Consulting  
Leland Womack, Tory Walker Engineers  
Leslie Reynolds, Groundwater San Diego – Chollas Creek  
Lindsay Leahy, City of Oceanside  
Maggie Aleksic, San Diego Zoo Global  
Mark Stadler, Mark Stadler Consulting  
Nathan Garcia, Public  
Ryan Krantz, Viejas Tribal Government

### **Welcome, Introductions, & Land Acknowledgement**

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Ms. Lesley Dobalian, San Diego County Water Authority, 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 name on Zoom.

Ms. Dobalian 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.*

### **Proposition 1, Round 2**

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Ms. Dobalian presented updates on Proposition 1, Round 2. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) released the final Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) and Guidelines on May 17. The final PSP extended the deadline for project completion, including closeout and retention, to September 30, 2027. The SDIRWM Project Selection Workgroup (PSW) for Proposition 1, Round 2 is scheduled to kick off on May 25<sup>th</sup>. The PSW is composed of 16 members, one from each RWMG and caucus and their alternate.

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, the RAC voted to authorize the PSW to select the suite of projects to submit to DWR for the San Diego IRWM Region. The PSW will follow the San Diego IRWM process outlined in the IRWM Plan to evaluate submitted projects and will consider projects individually and as a suite of projects for the proposal. The PSW will meet five times in the next few weeks and spend approximately 35 hours evaluating projects. The final project list will be presented to the RAC on August 3<sup>rd</sup> and the grant application will be submitted to DWR on August 19<sup>th</sup>.

All comments about the projects for PSW consideration must be provided by May 24<sup>th</sup>, as PSW members will begin deliberation on May 25<sup>th</sup>. Any communication PSW members have with outside stakeholders will be disclosed at the start of each PSW meeting.

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Ms. Julie MarLett, City of San Diego, provided an overview of the scores of projects submitted for funding consideration. Projects were scored in accordance with San Diego IRWM's scoring process and policies outlined in the San Diego IRWM Plan. Following the initial screening, the scoring team conducted the fatal flaw review. The fatal flaw review was added to the scoring process in 2021 by the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workgroup in order to allow project sponsors the opportunity to fix any fatal flaws in their project application prior to the finalization of project scores.

All projects were scored and ranked by a third-party using scoring criteria from the San Diego IRWM Plan and adjusted and approved by the RAC on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Most projects received full points on addressing multiple objectives, involving more than one entity, and resiliency to climate change. Projects lost points on creating new applied water or offsetting potable demand, stormwater as a resource, and enhancing infrastructure.

A total of 12 projects were submitted for a grant request of \$35.6 million. With approximately \$15 million to disburse in the region, the RWMG recommends funding seven to eight projects. The RWMG also recommended including all submitted projects in Tier 1 for PSW consideration due to the small number of project applications submitted and projects scoring similarly.

Ms. MarLett presented the project scores and benefits for submitted projects. Additional information including project descriptions can be found in the San Diego IRWM OPTI project database. The RAC discussed project scores and local project sponsors and the public provided comments summarized below.

Questions/Comments:

- Groundwork San Diego – Chollas Creek requested to reevaluate the “Stormwater as a Resource” criterion for the Federal Blvd. De-channelization and Trail Construction Project. The project will replace over 1,000 feet of concrete channel with soft, pervious surface, allowing infiltration. The design includes native vegetation that will further enhance infiltration and improve water quality. Additionally, invasive species will be removed and replaced with native riparian habitat, allowing the use of stormwater as an environmental resource. The project will set the standard and be a model that will impact stormwater as a resource regionally.
- The City of Oceanside requested to reevaluate “Stormwater as a Resource”, “Invest in DAC/EJ Communities and Systems”, and “Involves More Than One Entity” criteria. The construction includes a bio-buffer between the lift station and the Loma Alta Creek and a bio-retention for stormwater, which can be considered as stormwater as a resource. The project is not located in a disadvantaged community (DAC), but it will serve the City of Oceanside's entire service area, which includes DACs. The City of Oceanside needs the project to bolster local water supplies and to maintain lower rates. If requested, the City of Oceanside can provide their partners for this project. They did not include their partners in their application because DWR unbundled the projects in Prop 1, Round 1.
- The process is moving quickly. The RAC will not have further input on the projects that are selected for DWR. In the past rounds, there have been more robust discussion. It is quite difficult to read about the projects in the future. In the future, I suggest a brief presentation to give reasoning for these initial scores. There needs to be scoring justification with the entire RAC before selecting projects for funding.
  - Given the timeline, we did not give a summary of the projects. We will consider giving an overview of the projects in future funding for IRWM. If you did have any questions about the scoring criteria, we will be happy to provide that information for you.
- I agree with the comment above. I notice that the highest scores are projects from the San Diego County Water Authority and the City of San Diego. It would be nice to emphasize the smaller projects that emphasize diversity and smaller entities doing things differently.
  - The scoring is a piece of the process. The PSW considers aspects outside of the scores. For example, they look at how many DAC projects were submitted and funding across the region. The PSW evaluates projects individually and as a regional suite of projects.

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- Can you please elaborate on the 2027 project completion extension? If projects had planned to be completed by September 2026, will there be the opportunity to adjust scopes/applications accordingly?
  - We found out about this change a few days before the Call for Projects ended. If your project is selected, the PSW may ask you to adjust your project accordingly.
- I agree with the comment above because getting more information about these projects would help alleviate some of these questions. Some of the projects are requesting a high amount. For example, City of Oceanside is requesting \$9 million for their project. Can the PSW adjust the requested grant amount?
  - Yes, the PSW asks local project sponsors about the scalability of their project.
  - During Round 1, we were asked to present scaled-down versions of our project if we were not able to get 100% of our grant request.
- I agree with the previous comments about needing more time following the submission of proposals to thoroughly read through all of them before convening the first PSW meeting.
  - It is a tough timeline, and we did request DWR to give us more time to complete the applications.
- In the future, it might be beneficial to have more than one third-party scorer to score the projects. I am not convinced that two people will score the projects the same way.
- What are the next steps for the PSW? When will folks be notified when they get an interview?
  - LPS should hold interview days on their calendar. If you are selected for an interview, you will get an email with an interview slot on June 2nd.
- Have applicants been made aware of the interview dates?
  - Yes, the information was included in the Call for Projects materials. If you have any known conflicts, please let us know as soon as possible.

#### **Public Comments**

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- 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
<b>SWRCB:</b> Prop 1 Technical Assistance Funding Program	Open: rolling	<a href="https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/proposition1/tech_asst_funding.html">https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/proposition1/tech_asst_funding.html</a>
<b>DWR:</b> Water Desalination Grant Program	Open: rolling	<a href="https://water.ca.gov/News/Public-Notices/2020/Sept-2020/Water-Desal-Grant-CAP">https://water.ca.gov/News/Public-Notices/2020/Sept-2020/Water-Desal-Grant-CAP</a>
<b>USBR:</b> WaterSMART Drought Resiliency Projects for Fiscal Year 2023	June 15	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/#/news-release/4147">https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/#/news-release/4147</a>
<b>USBR:</b> WaterSMART Water Energy Efficiency Grant for FY 2023	July 28, 2022	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/weeg/">https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/weeg/</a>
<b>National Fish and Wildlife Foundation:</b> America the Beautiful Challenge Grant	July 21, 2022	<a href="https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge">https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge</a>
<b>OPC:</b> Coastal Resilience in California	June 13, 2022	<a href="https://www.opc.ca.gov/2022/05/call-for-proposals-to-build-coastal-resilience-9-5-million-available/">https://www.opc.ca.gov/2022/05/call-for-proposals-to-build-coastal-resilience-9-5-million-available/</a>

Next RAC Meeting:

- ~~June 1, 2022~~ – cancelled
- August 3, 2022 – 9:00-11:00 a.m. via virtual platform.

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

- October 5, 2022
- December 7, 2022