



**Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #88**

December 2, 2020  
9:00 am – 11:30 am

**Zoom Meeting**

**NOTES**

**Attendance**

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**RAC Members**

Richard Whipple, County of San Diego (Chair)  
Ann Van Leer, Escondido Creek Conservancy  
Rania Amen for Al Lau, Santa Fe Irrigation District  
Brook Sarson, San Diego Sustainable Living Institute  
Eric La Chappa, La Posta Band of Mission Indians  
Jennifer Hazard and Katrina Hiott, Rural Community Assistance Corporation  
Julia Escamilla, Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District  
Keli Balo for Surraya Rashid, City of San Diego  
Justin Gamble, City of Oceanside  
Elizabeth Lovsted for Kelley Gage, San Diego County Water Authority  
Kimberly O'Connell, UCSD Clean Water Utility  
Joseph Randall for Kimberly Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District  
Marisa Soriano, City of Chula Vista  
Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association  
Michael McSweeney and Wayne Rosenbaum, Building Industry Association  
Michelle Berens, Helix Water District  
Chris Trees, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority  
Patrick McDonough, San Diego Coastkeeper  
Phil Pryde and Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation  
Robyn Badger and Kelly Craig, Zoological Society of San Diego  
Ron Mosher and Erick Del Bosque, Sweetwater Authority  
Sandra Jacobson, California Trout  
Seval Sen, Padre Dam Municipal Water District  
Beth Gentry for Yazmin Arellano, City of El Cajon

**RWMG Staff and Consultants**

Chelsea McGimpsey, County of San Diego  
Karina Danek, City of San Diego  
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority  
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority  
Mark Stephens, City of San Diego  
Nicole Poletto, Woodard & Curran  
Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran  
Sarah Brower, City of San Diego  
Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego  
Roselyn Prickett, Woodard & Curran

**Interested Parties to the RAC**

Aaron Cook, Fallbrook Public Utilities Department  
Amy Reeh, Yuima Municipal Water District  
Anne Bamford, Industrial Environmental Association  
Anne Middleton, ECOLIFE Conservation  
Charlie de la Rosa, San Diego Zoo Global  
Christopher Paulino, Viejas Tribal Government  
Daniel Dugal, Viejas Tribal Government  
Gail Patton, San Diego County Water Authority  
Joni German, San Diego County Water Authority  
Julia Chunn-Heer, Surfrider Foundation  
Laura Walsh, Surfrider Foundation  
Maureen Curran, UC San Diego  
Michael Bolouri, City of San Diego  
Michelle Hallack, NV5  
Oscar Romo, Alter Terra  
Patricia Watkins, County of San Diego  
Sandra Carlson, City of San Diego  
Robert Leiter, American Planning Association / STAY COOL for Grandkids  
Tim Murphy, City of Carlsbad  
Thomas Ciaramitaro, Viejas Tribal Government  
Trish Boaz, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy

**Welcome and Introductions**

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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.

**RAC Membership**

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Mr. Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority provided the history of the RAC membership. Currently, there are 31 voting members that represent six caucuses. Approximately half of the seats turn over every two years in order to maintain continuity. This year 15 applications were submitted for the 13 open positions for the 2021-2024 term. Applications were reviewed by the RAC Member Selection Workgroup.

Of the 13 new RAC Members, three members are new to the RAC: David Walker, San Diego Audubon Society; Charlie de la Rosa, San Diego Zoo Global; and Anne Middleton, ECOLIFE Conservation. Five members are incumbents: Kim Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District; Justin Gamble, City of Oceanside; Brooke Sarson, San Diego Sustainable Living Institute; Sandra Jacobson, California Trout; and Kimberly O'Connell, UCSD Clean Water. Anne Bamford, American Water Works Association (CA/NV Section) and Julia Chunn-Heer, Surfrider were previously on the RAC in the past and are now returning. Oscar Romo, Alter Terra; Erick Del Bosque, Sweetwater Authority; and Beth Gentry, City of Chula Vista were previously on the RAC as Alternates and are now primary members. Thank you to all the RAC Members and their alternates that have served over the last four years!

In 2021, the RWMG is authorized to add a 32nd voting seat on the RAC in its MOU. The intention is to formally add the seat at the February RAC meeting. At the October RAC Meeting, we discussed who should be added as the new member, and there was a general consensus that the seat should either be focused on climate change or wildfires. Are there any other topics the RWMG should consider?

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Questions/Comments

- Climate change votes (9)
  - Climate change with emphasis on atmospheric rivers
  - Climate change or a combined option
  - Suggest climate change as a seat, with rotating focal points each year or two; wildfire could be one of those
    - I like that idea
- Wildfire votes (3)
- Both (7)
  - I like both of these. Could one of them address domestic terrorism?
  - I like both of the proposed seats, but if only one can be selected, the two suggested topics might be combined, as they are related
    - I concur, it would be nice to have a seat for climate change and fire
  - Climate change, droughts, including wildfire
  - They are related, how can they be combined?
  - It seems that wildfires could be considered a subset of climate change and so a climate change seat might represent both
  - I think that they are both important, a few people at Scripps could cover both of those or the idea of “climate change with emphasis on atmospheric rivers”
- I am curious how wildfire would be represented. Very important issue!
- Can we add two seats and keep the voting number odd?
  - The number of seats is specified in the MOU and it only added one seat to go to a maximum of 32. We have never come close to having a close vote on something in the RAC, we generally reach a consensus. If we ever tie on anything, then we will discuss it further.
- It seems like maybe we could find someone with expertise in both areas.
  - Someone said we could ask someone at Scripps, maybe they could represent both seats.
- Perhaps it would be good to have a presentation on wildfire and how it has impacted the local region and water supply
- The at-large that would open up if the seat was climate change then could be targeted to wildfires.
  - Good idea, we could move the people that are in the at-large seat right now to a specific seat and the at-large seat could be targeted to wildfires.
- Can we also have a presentation on how dams (not just the large ones) are protected?
  - Happy to help with the dams if we want someone from DWR to present
  - Happy to help find the right folks
- Thank you all! This was my last RAC meeting, ending my term as a RAC member. It was great to get to know you and be part of such a good productive group!

**Diversity and Inclusion**

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Ms. Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego continued the discussion of diversity and inclusion in the San Diego IRWM Program from the previous RAC Meeting. The purpose of this discussion is to learn more about what diversity, inclusion, and equity in relation to the San Diego IRWM program means to our stakeholders.

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It is possible to interpret diversity and inclusion in the San Diego IRWM Program through multiple lenses. This may include diversity of organizations or individuals on the RAC, geography of participants, or diversity of funded projects. Sixty organizations have participated on the RAC throughout the years. The Program is always looking to improve and make sure that we engage everyone that has some level of interest in water and resource management. We want to know if voices are equally distributed in our membership. Are we being as inclusive as possible?

Mr. Whipple shared a recent experience with the Flood Control County group of San Diego who participated in a panel for the Bay area counties and NAACP. The panel was focused on sea level rise and other flood control related items which included a cost benefit analysis. One of the inputs to the cost benefit analysis was property value. However, if you are only focused on property value, you are creating an unintentional bias that protects areas that may be wealthier instead of flood control projects that may impact the most people. The County of San Diego is using this lesson learned to altering its the ranking system to focus on people protected as opposed to property value.

#### Questions/Comments

- The colors are a little difficult for colorblind people. But that's always an issue so not much to do about it.
- It would be good to know which of those grant projects for URCs are implementation vs planning.
  - The 8 projects from the DACI Round are planning projects.
- It might be good to show the regional projects that might also have benefits to underrepresented communities.
  - I think it's safe to say that all of the regional projects offer benefits to URCs.
- The County of San Diego and several cities will be preparing and adopting Environmental Justice Elements in their general plans. These planning efforts should be coordinated with the work that IRWM will be doing in relation to equity issues.
- We are asking projects to consider adding criteria on their contract/subcontract selection processes related to minority-owned businesses. Adding points if consultants are minority/small business.

At this point, the attendees broke into small breakout rooms to discuss diversity, inclusion, and equity for the San Diego IRWM Region. Feedback from the discussion and the follow-up survey that was distributed to the RAC Member Stakeholder list are summarized below. A total of seven stakeholders participated in the survey, six of which did not participate in the discussion during the December RAC Meeting.

#### **For the San Diego IRWM Program, how do you define diversity?**

- Diversity of interests and organizations participating together – conservation, water, flood, tribal – “interdisciplinary.” Diversity will naturally occur if all are invited to participate and they choose to participate.
- Diversity of type of service area and geographic diversity
- A wide range of perspectives from different races, socioeconomic levels, ages, genders, and industries.
- Hiring and providing opportunities so that communities feel represented and respected
- In IRWM, need to focus on getting a variety of perspectives and points of view on water issues – we've done a good job of this!

- Some agencies have more homogenous populations – suggest partnerships with other agencies that do have DACs to serve a more diverse population.
- Diversity in thought but also in voice, people need to be heard.
- Diversity of funded projects and diversity of populations served to achieve as many IRWM Goals and Objectives as possible

**For the San Diego IRWM Program, how do you define inclusion?**

- Ensure contractors involved in the projects that have been chosen have qualifications to meet scoring criteria that is conscious of the work they do in DACs or URCs.
- If we have limited resources – whatever produces benefits for most people, that's the one we should fund. Life is difficult to make fair and it would be frustrating if the rankings favor a project that helps a tiny group just because they met some ranking criteria.
- Can we rethink multi-benefit requirement for small DACs that are trying to address critical water supply issues, but don't have the resources to implement a large-scale multi-benefit project? Can we waive that for DACs.
- Having materials in different languages would be a good start.
- Challenges include how to reach out to DACs in more rural areas, the time it takes to reach out and make good connections.
- Can we make IRWM more visible to URCs? We're trying to do this with URC outreach.
- How do we know who to partner with? Who to make connections with? Encourage more presentations at our RAC meetings?
- Flyers with contact info for the IRWM members?
- A lot of people don't participate in watershed management and water planning so how do we address inclusion?
- Inviting all stakeholders and anyone that desires to participate in the IRWM Program. There should be no "quotas" but there are no exclusions. People and organizations choose if they want to participate.
  - Encourage program engagement to achieve participation that reflects region demographics
- Actively practicing open-mindedness, constantly reaching out to underrepresented groups to ensure a diversity of voices are heard and represented.
- Inclusion is a process that ensure everyone's voice is heard and acknowledged. For the San Diego IRWM Program, it means having a system in place that removes biases and ensures everyone's opinion has the same value in the decision process.

**For the San Diego IRWM Program, how do you define equity?**

- State guidance from APG is focused on equity, particularly in public health and safety. If you have decision-making bodies that are well-represented by environmental justice/DACs, you are more likely to have positive outcomes.
- Small water systems don't have the funding to apply for grants, and if they can't apply, the process will never be equitable. Bridge loans are needed.

- RCAC has a pot of money they can loan at 0% interest. Maybe IRWM can do something like this.
- Use Healthy Places Index to inform some of the work.
- Important to consider a variety of things when thinking about equity in water (quality, rates, effect of habitat restoration, etc.)
- Equity is most important concept – not sure within the purview of RAC, but frequently engaged in programs that are tilted toward higher socio-economic groups – for example, environmental and permitting requirements that increase up-front costs. We cut out a whole group of community projects because they don't have the resources to come to the table. Folks that design the grants and/or regulations may not understand the full costs and consequences of their programs on the community.
- The IRWMP and its member agencies recognize that there are historic inequities in the San Diego Region that need to change by implementing programs, policies, and projects that lead to a more diverse and inclusive water management industry.
- Equity supports the communities who are the most disenfranchised, setting organizational commitments and actions as well as implementing strategies that engage the community members and promote equity practices.

### **General Comments**

- Focus on listening rather than educating – many communities already have ideas of how to address issues and want to be heard and supported.
- Review state goals or definitions of diversity and inclusion.
  - Focus definitions to water, climate change, and the region to make specific for IRWM. Look at what other IRWM Regions have done?
- Look at projects included in grant funding and determine how they provide benefits to all communities.
- Think about making this a priority for San Diego Region – discussion for a full RAC. Suggested to use a professional facilitator.
- Access to IRWM can be difficult. Travel to participate can be a barrier. A lot of people may not have the time or resources to participate. Remote meetings are a double-edged sword. May make it more possible for some but can worsen for some communities that don't have technological access.
  - Need to make access low barrier to entry. Stipends?
  - How do we get everyone to the same place so they can participate but also show that there's value and a purpose to their time.
- Create an institutional way to assist with URC applications – resources, subgroup that URCs can go to with questions/applications for assistance. Could address them before it goes to the selection workgroup
- We need to actively provide opportunities for and recruit people of color and underrepresented groups so that the management and implementation of the IRWM is equitable and diverse.
- Diversity, inclusion, and equity are complex issues that will take time to heal. It is important to keep equity as a core operating practice in IRWMP and allow an opportunity for our group to discuss and revisit this challenging issue. The IRWMP is a great venue to support positive change across agencies. I would support a deeper dive into the equity in water management topic with a professional facilitator.

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- Commend the IRWMP for thoughtfully engaging in this self-reflection and discussion on equity and inclusion. Recommend reaching out to groups that specialize in diversity/equity/inclusion and have them review the program and provide recommendations. This outside perspective may be more revealing than self-reflection.
- SD IRWMP has done a great deal to improve equitable outcomes in the program, specifically for DACs and tribes. This is a process that can always be improved. It has been a challenge to increase DAC engagement and success in the grant program, but this should be a focus moving forward. Equity outcomes could be improved and can be better integrated into how agenda items are selected for RAC meetings, projects selected for tier 1, project selection for funding, grant admin support during application phase and project design phase, etc. Recommend to review scoring criteria from equity lens. Also wondering if characteristics in the scale DAC projects impacts their success. For example, some DAC projects are really expensive (thinking of DAC project in Prop 1 Round 1) and so that limits # than can be funded. Alternatively, some DAC projects may be really small (and thus the proportional grant admin costs higher), such as water tank or treatment type projects in rural areas. The quantification of 'multi-benefit' for these types of projects will be low, even though the need is high. Could the RAC consider mechanisms of measuring "project need" in the scoring criteria so that these small projects don't automatically fall into tier 2? Or perhaps all DAC projects automatically get considered by PSW? This may help overcome some of the challenges with benefits calculations for DAC project, where some of the benefits are qualitative or focused in a single benefit category. Equity recognizes that groups come from different 'starting points' and this approach may help overcome that discrepancy.

# What is your key takeaway from the breakout room discussion?

Review scoring criteria through DI&E lens

Help URCs with challenges to project funding/implementation

review scoring criteria

Partnerships with other groups to ensure diversity

CEQA and permits are barrier

The RAC should define what we mean by DEI

engage with regulatory agencies early - during DWR workshop

Focus on listening instead of educating

There isn't a short answer to defining diversity and equity for IRWM. It seems we need to get more clear about how to define equity (use healthy places index) and how to ensure projects are rolled out equitably

Consider a bridge funding source for communities that can't front the funds for projects that are paid on a reimbursement basis.

Create an IRMW directory of members and other NGOs in the region, along with their jurisdiction, specialty, and contact info so we can partner.

Look at impacts of rates, pollution exposure, broader IRWM focus

Study prior project from last round (DAC area) that needed funding but was not able to receive it. What were the hurdles - how can we remove those hurdles.

Think about how to increase engagement/inclusion in RAC meetings

We should focus on "equity" and look at how other planning processes in the SD region are addressing equity.

Think about ways to promote IRWM messaging that is available to all communities - do we have a message or brand that connects us all

Coordinate with local government planners in EJ Element process.

Set goals to achieve for diversity, inclusion and equity

We should also look at State's Water Resilience Portfolio, which provides guidance on equity issues.



## **Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Presentations**

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### *San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin*

Ms. Sandra Carlson, City of San Diego PUD has been working on SGMA for the past five years. SGMA, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, became law in 2014 by the State of California. Prior to SGMA, there were no regulations for groundwater use and people were abusing the system and were extracting more water than what was being recharged. Because of that, some basins were running out of water and therefore SGMA increases accountability for these basins and gives control of managing the basins to local agencies.

In 2017, the City of San Diego and County of San Diego formed the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) and began drafting the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in 2019. The plan is due in January 31, 2022. All medium priority basins must complete a GSP. The San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin is located near the Safari Park and there is a well that supplies the water for their wildlife needs. The Basin is 90% owned by the City of San Diego and 10% County jurisdiction. The City Council passed a policy that made the area an agricultural preserve and all of the land is leased out of agricultural purposes, and the Basin is 100% reliable on groundwater.

The GSP includes a lot of collaboration and outreach to stakeholder with virtual workshops that are open to the public. All of the recordings from the virtual meetings are on the website. The Advisory Committee serves as a resource to the GSA and provides input on GSP development. They do not have voting authority and operate under bylaws. The members were approved by the GSA. The Technical Peer Review is reviewed by an independent party and experts in the field. If the GSP is not adopted, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) would intervene and the basin would become probationary.

### Questions/Comments:

- A lot of great information. The collaboration to make it happen is something else. In developing the Advisory Committee and those solicitations, how did you go about selecting those?
  - There are several people that are known in the basin for being very active that reached out to us and there were a few members that we reached out to as well. We wanted to make sure that the Advisory Committee was well rounded, and we didn't really have any trouble finding people.
- In developing the GSP, did you need to consider climate change in terms of replenishment?
  - Yes, for the groundwater modeling underway now we are developing assumptions for climate change, which we have found to be challenging.
- What is the volume of water in the basin?
  - That is unknown at this time.
- Does Lake Hodges dam contribute to the SP groundwater?
  - The water from the basin flows into Hodges Reservoir. It is located downstream of the basin.
- Thank you Sandra, great presentation!
- I know it is a lot of work Sandra, great job!
- Will your study address possible impacts of upstream water pollution to the basin?
  - Yes, that is a big issue. It impacts the quality of water coming into the basin and the groundwater quality of the basin. How to deal with that is a key issue that we are trying to address.

### *Upper San Luis Rey Valley Groundwater Basin*

Ms. Amy Reeh, Yuima Municipal Water District presented information on the Upper San Luis Rey Valley Groundwater Basin. The Basin covers approximately 19,000 acres of land. Originally the Basin was much smaller and was only half that amount when the basin ended at Frey Creek because there is a subterranean dam at this location. The state of California determined the upper part of the Basin was groundwater and the water to

the west is considered subterranean stream. Then the Pala Reservation was added to the west. The Pauma Valley GSA was established in 2017 in order to establish the GSP for this basin.

The Basin is a sustainable basin now and is not in overdraft status. The Basin has a connection to imported water and does not rely 100% on groundwater. Yuima serves 13,000 acres of land and 97% of the customer base is agriculture, 30% of the water is from groundwater, and 70% is imported water. The Pauma Valley GSA is composed of the Yuima Municipal Water District, Upper San Luis Rey Resource Conservation District, Pauma Valley Community Services District in addition to the Pauma Valley Municipal Water District as an ex-officio member.

The Basin boundary is made up of unique beneficial uses and users including five municipal water districts, six mutual water companies, five tribal reservations, private agricultural producers, and 192 private wells permitted in Yuima's service area only (not including Yuima's wells which has 24 producing wells and 28 well agreements).

Ms. Reeh wants stakeholders to have a voice throughout the entire process, and agriculture is a huge part of the Basin. There are about 900 people in the Basin with only 341 customers, so it is difficult to gather everyone. The GSP is currently in the data collection phase of the project. Because there are so many private well owners in the Basin, the project team is trying to get as much data as possible and develop relationships with the stakeholders.

The GSA received \$800,000 from the SDIRWM program to develop the GSP. The GSP must meet Sustainable Management Criteria and continue the plan implementation.

Questions/Comments:

- Amy, will your study also address possible impacts of upstream water pollution in the basin? Is this a significant issue in this particular basin?
  - Yes, this is a requirement and because we are a largely agricultural basin that is a concern because there can be nitrates in the water. All the public agencies in the Basin have to monitor water quality for the groundwater that is extracted. Yuima conducts weekly testing for nitrates. This is a concern and will be addressed and will continue to be monitored.
- If you have to reduce basin withdrawals have you thought through some options to address existing water rights?
  - Water rights are a large concern in our basin. We don't feel that it is appropriate for a GSA or GSP to do any water right adjudication. Therefore, we won't be addressing water rights but we will be addressing the amount of water that is pumped out of the basin but won't legally adjudicate water rights.
- How does the GSP address potential irrigation efficiency tech upgrades, and changes to water supply/diversification?
  - The farmers in the basin are already doing everything they can to be efficient with the water that is used. We will offer different programs for them to work on their efficiency.
- Another great presentation, thank you!

**Grants 101**

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Due to time constraints, this topic will be reserved for the February RAC meeting.

**Grant Administration**

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Ms. Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority presented updates on grant administration. In total, the San Diego IRWM Region has received \$111.7 million dollars and 49 projects have been completed. 64% of the grant award has been billed to DWR (\$71.1 million). Proposition 84, Round 3 is almost complete (5 of 7 projects completed). This contract was extended to 2021 to continue to allow projects 4 and 6 to continue their implementation (both projects are over 83% complete). Proposition 84, Round 4 was also allowed to be extended through 2024 and projects will now be completed at the end of December 2023. A few of these projects are still in the planning phase. One recent milestone was a virtual meeting for Prop 84, Round 4 where we updated Local Project Sponsors on November 20, 2020.

The Proposition 1, Disadvantaged Community Involvement program has 6 projects complete. There are minor updates on the Proposition 1, Round 1 program. The grant award was received on June 26, 2020 and the grant agreement is expected to be executed in January 2021. Upon the funding agreement execution, we will kick off the local process with the sub-funding agreements with local project sponsors.

Questions/Comments:

- Thanks Loisa, great update!
- Thanks Loisa for all you do!
- Nice Job, Loisa!
- Loisa does an amazing job

**Public Comments**

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None.

**Summary and Next Steps**

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

Project Types	Deadline	Website
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>
Water Desalination Grant Program	October 15	<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>
Proposition 68 Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program	Anticipated December 2020	<a href="https://water.ca.gov/Work-With-Us/Grants-And-Loans/Sustainable-Groundwater">https://water.ca.gov/Work-With-Us/Grants-And-Loans/Sustainable-Groundwater</a>
2021 Nonpoint Source Grant Program	December 18	<a href="https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/319grants.html">https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/319grants.html</a>

Next RAC Meeting:

- February 3, 2021 – 9:00-11:30 a.m. via virtual platform.

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The meeting schedule for 2021 is included below. Please add them to your calendar:

- April 7, 2021
- June 2, 2021
- August 4, 2021
- October 6, 2021
- December 1, 2021