Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #92
August 4, 2021
9:00 am – 11:30 am

Zoom Meeting

NOTES

Attendance

RAC Members

Richard Whipple, County of San Diego (Chair)
Anne Bamford, American Water Words 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 Global
Chris Trees for Mike Thornton, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority
David Walker, San Diego Audubon Society
Elizabeth Lovsted for Kelley Gage, San Diego County Water Authority
Jennifer Hazard and Katrina Hiott, Rural Community Assistance Corporation
John Flores, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians
Julia Chunn-Heer, Surfrider
Julia Escamilla, Rincon del Diablo, MWD
Keli Balo, City of San Diego
Kimberly O'Connell and Jen Gonzales, UCSD Clean Water Utility
Marisa Soriano, City of Chula Vista
Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association
Michelle Berens, Helix Water District
Oscar Romo, Alter Terra
Patrick McDonough, San Diego CoastKeeper
Phil Pryde and Rob Hustel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Rania Amen for Al Lau, Sante Fe Irrigation District
Sandra Jacobson, California Trout
Tim Murphy for Justin Gamble, City of Carlsbad

RWMG Staff and Consultants

Arthella Vallarta, Woodard & Curran
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
Rosalyn Prickett, Woodard & Curran
Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran

Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego

Interested Parties to the RAC
Arash Afghahi, Viejas Natural Resources Department
Bob Leiter, American Planning Association
Cristina Torres, Viejas Tribal Government
Don MacFarlane, AECOM
Gail Patton, San Diego County Water Authority
Joni German, San Diego County Water Authority
Laurie Broedling, LB Organizational Consulting
Meagan Openshaw, City of Imperial Beach
Michelle Pombrol, Department of Water Resources
Michelle Stern, United States Geological Survey
Potts, La Posta Band of Mission Indians
Shannon Quigley-Raymond, Tetra Tech
Soleil Develle, Fallbrook Public Utility District
Susan Reckker, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians

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 introduced the Tribal Land Acknowledgment to the group, which was written to be delivered in a virtual setting.

The San Diego County is home to 18 federally recognized Tribal Nations. The ancestors of today's Tribal members have lived here and worked the land for at least 10,000 years. The San Diego IRWM Program strives to meaningfully engage the region's Tribes and acknowledge their traditional environmental stewardship in our activities.

As part of this effort, the Regional Water Management Group has decided to open each RAC meeting with a land acknowledgment – a formal statement that recognizes and respects the enduring relationship that exists between indigenous peoples and their traditional lands. Acknowledging the land is Tribal protocol that establishes a respectful routine and the habit of supporting reconciliation.

To develop the land acknowledgment, the RWMG consulted several local Tribal leaders, including Erica Pinto, chair of the Jamul Indian Village and a RAC member, and Tishmall Turner, vice-chair of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians. The RWMG also consulted a toolkit on land acknowledgment developed by the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center and the American Indian Studies Program at Cal State San Marcos, with comprehensive Tribal consultation and the approval of the Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association. Text from the toolkit was adapted when developing the SDIRWM land acknowledgment, which is as follows:

> "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 **(***Coo-me-eye*) and Luiseño (*Loo-sin-yo*) 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 Pasqual Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update

Ms. Sandra Carlson, City of San Diego, presented an update regarding the San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). In 2014, the State of California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA ensures sustainable use of groundwater resources and requires the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) by local water and land use agencies. GSAs are required to prepare a GSP for each medium and high priority groundwater basin by January 2022.

The San Pasqual Valley groundwater basin was declared a medium priority basin. It is located at the middle of San Diego County, south of the City of Escondido. The City of San Diego (the City) has jurisdiction in San Pasqual Valley groundwater basin. The City purchased the land in the 1960s and implemented a policy to make the basin an agricultural reserve, leasing land to various farmers.

The City went to council in 2016 to form a GSA. In June 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was approved between the City and the County of San Diego (the County) to create a GSA and develop a GSP. The City owns 90% of the jurisdiction while the County owns 10%. In November 2017, the City and the County were approved to apply for the Department of Water Resources (DWR) grant to develop a GSP, and in July 2019, the City and the County approved a cost sharing agreement to pay for the GSP.

The basin is currently sustainable. The City and County are committed to collaboratively implementing a single GSP for the basin. The GSP considers interests of all groundwater uses and users. There are two management areas based on the City and County jurisdiction boundaries. Each agency will implement the GSP within its own jurisdiction. The GSP incorporates extensive information from existing reports, studies, and data. It describes geography and land uses, which is primarily agricultural with some residential land uses. A groundwater model was also developed for the basin. Ms. Carlson stated that stakeholders were extremely interested in the groundwater model.

Ms. Carlson briefly went over the characteristics of the basin. Groundwater flows east to west in the San Pasqual Valley groundwater basin. The eastern part of the basin is higher in elevation. The groundwater levels fluctuate in the eastern part in response to drought periods, but it recovers quickly. More groundwater is drawn from the eastern part, which has more storage.

A requirement of the GSP is to discuss the water budget, which accounts the total groundwater and surface water entering and leaving a groundwater basin. Two different models were used within the groundwater flow model. Within the basin, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) One-Water Hydrologic Flow Model was used. In the watershed, the USGS Basin Characterization Model was used as a companion rainfall runoff model. The water budgets include historical, current, projected water budgets for the basin using the San Pasqual Valley GSP model with the combined codes of the two models. The groundwater flow model projects minor depletion of groundwater storage in the eastern side of the basin.

DWR developed six undesirable results, which are the conditions to avoid in the basin. The undesirable results are chronic lowering of groundwater levels, reduction of groundwater storage, land subsidence, degraded water quality, sweater intrusion, and depletions of interconnected surface water with impacts on beneficial uses, including groundwater dependent ecosystems. If the six undesirable results are not present in the basin, then the basin will be sustainable.

Ms. Carlson reported that the GSP crossed out two of the undesirable results (land subsidence and seawater intrusion) because they do not apply to San Pasqual. There is no historical evidence of inelastic subsidence and no major infrastructure that could be damaged if subsidence occurred. There are a few clays present in the alluvium which limits the possibility of future subsidence. Seawater intrusion does not apply because the basin is more than 20 miles from the Pacific Ocean.

To make sure the basin does not develop any undesirable results, the GSAs created thresholds and management actions. If the basin is in the green threshold, that means that the groundwater elevation is at a sufficient level. The yellow or planning threshold acts as an early warning system that allows the GSAs to plan prior to reaching minimum or red threshold. If the basin is in the minimum threshold, it could lead to an undesirable result.

The project and management actions are separated into three tiers. Tier 0 (green) may be implemented by the GSA at any time after GSP adoption, which include monitoring groundwater levels and quality, public and core team meetings, numerical model updates, and etc. Tier 1 (yellow) may be implemented when planning thresholds are exceeded, which include well inventory, developing pumping restrictions and enforcement plan, basin-wide metering program, and groundwater dependent ecosystem study. Tier 2 (red) may be implemented when minimum thresholds for groundwater levels are exceeded, which implements pumping restrictions and enforcements.

The GSP is in draft form which can be read on the County's website. Once the GSP is adopted, DWR requires a list of requirements for implementation. Those requirements are monitoring, reporting, updating the GSP, maintaining the website and database, implementing the projects and management actions, and managing the costs, schedule, and funding sources.

The stakeholder engagement and outreach were an integral component of the GSP, which comprised of on an advisory committee and a technical peer review group. A formal conflict resolution process was developed. There was a 60-day public review period prior to City Council and County Board of Supervisors adoption. There will also be a 60-day public review after the GSP is submitted to DWR.

The cost to implement the GSP ranges between $5.9 million to $11.3 million over a 20-year period. There is a cost sharing agreement between the City and County, and they are exploring grant opportunities and cost recovery mechanism pursuant to SGMA.

The next steps are a 60-day public comment period from June 13 to August 14, City Council and County Board of Supervisors Adoption in fall 2021, submit to DWR by January 31, 2022, and a 60-day public comment period hosted by DWR. Additionally, the GSAs will continue to monitor at representative groundwater wells in the basin, maintain GSP website for future reports and updates, maintain stakeholder email list for announcements, host public workshops to present annual reports or report changing basin conditions, and maintain online data management system with monitoring data.

Questions/Comments

- What happened with the basin during extended droughts?
    - The groundwater levels went down, especially on the eastern side. Some of our wells went dry as well. Once we got precipitation, the groundwater levels rebounded.
- You mentioned a couple of times that the City and County would be primarily responsible for the implementation of the actions and the costs. It seems like the City of Escondido sits directly adjacent to the basin. The City of Escondido can impact the basin through development or other actions, so they might have some responsibility to protect the basin and to shoulder some of the costs. Was this considered in the GSP?
    - At this time, we have not considered that. SGMA states that it is only within the basin where we are allowed to consider the costs. We will definitely keep this in mind, but as if right now we are not considering that.
- Did you analyze in your study whether there is water running from portions in either the City of Escondido or future annexations areas of the City of Escondido that does connect to the basin?
    - Do you mean stormwater runoff?

        - Yes.
    - No, that is a good point. We are going to include stormwater runoff in our upcoming studies. I started examining that yesterday, so it is in the future.
- Can you define sustainability in this context?
    - The formal definition is included in the GSP. I would define sustainability has having no undesirable results or our groundwater levels within the basin are remaining steady.
- The San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin is in a good situation if you are currently sustainable. I reviewed the GSP for Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin and it is such a huge difference.
- Is there an opportunity to recharge the basin with recycled water from the City of Escondido or Pure Water San Diego?
    - We evaluated the City of Escondido's recharge, and it was not financially feasible. We did not look at Pure Water San Diego because we would have to build a long pipeline.
- The actions outlined in yellow tier seem to be all data gathering activities. Are there any curtailment actions that would be taken at yellow tier to prevent the situation from deteriorating into the red tier?
    - That is an interesting question. Metering is what is probably going to prevent deteriorating into the red tier. By metering, people are going to know how much water they are using, and they are probably going to stop pumping. If that does not work, we will implement the pumping restrictions.
- Slide 12 shows a strong decline. Is that long decline strictly the result of the drought?
    - Yes, that was the drought.
        - I was curious because sometimes shifting crops to more water intensive farming produces a shift. The basin was able to rebound after the region got precipitation. Was it a quick rebound or did it happen over a couple of months?
    - I believe this was in the eastern side of the basin, which rebounds very quickly. The eastern side contains the most storage area.
        - From a water quality perspective, I think you mentioned that nutrients are a big concern. I think you said that you addressed that issue with public outreach about agricultural activities. Have the methods of outreach been effective in improving water quality?
    - Water quality changes very slowly for groundwater. If we change farming practices, that is not going to show up in the groundwater for a long time.
- Has there been a way of looking at the outcomes of this study and how they might lead to better outcomes in the watershed management area, which is being implemented in the County and cities in the San Diego River Watershed?
    - Yes, we are coordinating. We reviewed the draft of the Water Quality Improvement Plans (WQIPs). In our report, we stated that we will continue to coordinate.
        - I think the actions of the WQIP will affect the success of the GSP more because of the loading coming in from surface waters and then percolating in the groundwater basin. There is a need to coordinate, and the intent is written in the project management actions.

  - Thank you both for the clarification. I do think it is a two-way street because climate change is going to have a significant impact on water quality within our watersheds. I think the WQIPs are intending to monitor those impacts closely. At the same time, I think some of the issues you are looking at in this study are time sensitive. I would hope there would be good coordination back and forth.

- It appears on the graph in slide 12 that the extended drought reduced levels by 80 feet. You mentioned that the basin recharges quickly, so that brings the groundwater levels back up. This kind of goes against the idea that groundwater quality changes slowly because you are replacing a lot of water with stormwater runoff. I do not know how easily you can say that groundwater quality is changing slowly.
  - When we implement the farming best management practices, the changes will not reflect in the groundwater quality quickly.
    - I am talking about the nutrient load coming in via stormwater runoff. The recharge of the groundwater basin is going to happen quickly in short periods of time when there is a lot of precipitation.
  - That is a good point. I am curious about examining our hydrographs of the water elevation against the graphs of water quality to see if there are any spikes during the refill. This goes back to the topic of coordination of the WQIP because there are loading activities within the basin and direct correlation with loadings coming from the surface waters. I will go back and compare those two graphs.

Project Completion Report: Groundwater Planning for DACs and Tribes in the Anza Valley

Ms. Susan Reckker, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians, and Ms. Michelle Stern, California Water Science Center USGS, presented a project completion report of the Groundwater Planning for Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) and Tribes in the Anza Valley and worked with DWR, San Diego County Water Authority, and the USGS on the project. Ms. Reckker opened the presentation with an overview about the experiences of the Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians. The Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians are a federally recognized tribe. The reservation encompasses about 568 acres of Tribal Lands. The Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians were first time participants in the IRWM grant program. They had challenges in ensuring the balance of access and opportunities for Tribal participation. The Tribe did not get 100% advanced funds due to existing policy, which made it somewhat challenging to work with the USGS in terms of scheduling payment. Overall, the Tribe is pleased with the grant program. They were able to receive partial 50% grant payments and Ms. Reckker hopes that other Tribes consider participating in the IRWM program.

Ms. Stern went over the details of the project. The benefit of the project is developing unbiased local estimates of natural water balance variables, which is an important first step to sustainably managing groundwater resources. The model outputs will be used to drive a local groundwater model to complete the hydrogeologic characterization of the Cahuilla and Terwilliger Valley groundwater basins. The publication of results is open access. The USGS released the data model outputs and publication in the Journal of the American Water Resources Association is currently under peer-review.

The water balance modeling is to assess the recharge patterns. In arid and semi-arid environments, annual potential evapotranspiration exceeds annual precipitation. Excess water due to seasonal precipitation results in runoff and recharge in some years. The recharge and runoff only occasionally occur on the valley floors due to the thick alluvial deposits. Some runoff may become recharge in losing streams.

The Basin Characterization Model (BCM) is a grid-based model at 270 meters-resolution. The BCM is monthly water balance calculations, which calculates recharge, runoff, actual evapotranspiration, climatic water deficit, snow accumulation and melt. The potential evapotranspiration (PET) was used, which was calculated using the

Priestly-Taylor equation. Ms. Stern stated that the USGS calculated hourly solar radiation model, topographic shading, and cloudiness are used to calculate the energy balance and PET, and it accumulates monthly to drive water balance. The snow accumulation and melt were based on NWS Snow-17 Model. The soil water storage was based on soil maps (SSURGO). The bedrock permeability was based on geology, and climate data was from meteorology stations, PRISM, or future projections.

The BCM uses gridded climate data downscaled to fine spatial scales (historical and future). It incorporates detailed soil properties and estimates of bedrock permeability. The BCM calculates spatially distributed water supply as recharge and runoff and calculates climate water deficit as estimate of demand.

Ms. Stern presented a map of the study area. The BCM recharge basin was the main study area. The streamgages the USGS used where outside of the actual groundwater footprints, so the agency expanded the model domain outside in order to calibrate the streamgages and have more confidence in the results.

The BCM is calibrated or validated regionally to many sources of data, both point measurements and remote sensing, including streamflow, soil moisture, potential and actual evapotranspiration, as well as estimates of recharge on the basis of post-calibration MODFLOW models. The local variables used for calibration include streamflow and actual evapotranspiration to constrain the water balance. The calibration parameters that were adjusted include bedrock permeability, soil storage capacity, vegetation type k-factor (monthly percentage of total PET that is actual ET), root exploration depth below soil depth, and proportion of runoff that may become recharge or vice versa, representing gaining and losing streams.

Ms. Stern showed a map of average precipitation from 1981 to 2010. There is not much recharge happening directly on the Cahuilla Valley and Terwilliger Valley groundwater basins. The basins are relying on the surrounding areas for recharge. She also presented a map of the geology of the study area. Most of the area is granodiorite and sandstone-shale. The vegetation of the area is mostly chamise-redshank chaparral with other vegetations mixed in the area.

Ms. Stern explained how the PRISM data set compares to the local gage station. One the Vail Lake Gage, PRISM is either overestimating or the station data is underestimating by about half. Ms. Stern pulled another nearby gage to see if the data is representative of the area. She found that the Vail Lake Gage is highly underestimating the precipitation, which has significant implications. If this gage was used to drive the water balance model, there would be half as much precipitation for the recharge and runoff for the 18-year period.

The USGS also examined actual evapotranspiration. The agency used the BCM evapotranspiration and USGS's remote sensing product to estimate the actual evapotranspiration. Each vegetation type was calibrated because they all have different signals of how vegetation transpires, depending on the how much precipitation there is and how deep the roots are.

The agency also compared two streamgages in Temecula Creek and Wilson Creek. Ms. Stern stated that USGS did an excellent job matching the month stream flows in an area. The USGS compared many local data to any published estimates to validate their estimates.

The BCM can take estimates from 1973 and provide estimates from 1896 to the present. Runoff and recharge are highly variable. The relationship between runoff and recharge is non-linear. In the last 20 years, the runoff and recharge has fallen below average. There were only about 4 years where runoff and recharge were above the average value. Ms. Stern stated that it was difficult to gage an average value due to the variability of the runoff and recharge.

The spatial distribution of the recharge shows that there is hardly any recharge happening on the groundwater basin itself. Most of the recharge is coming from the higher elevations in the basin. Ms. Stern also stated that the 2011-2018 period was drier than the 1981-2010 period.

There were limitations to the study. Uncertainty exists in all components including climate data, streamflow measurements, other calibration data, model parameterization, and model outputs. The BCM calculates natural net infiltration and should not be interpreted as direct recharge to the aquifer. A groundwater model, such as MODFLOW, is required to understand how much water makes it through the unsaturated zone and to the aquifer and how it is distributed.

The conclusions of this study are that water balance modeling can be used to characterize hydrologic conditions, including recharge in the Anza region. Average annual recharge in the Anza region may contribute to the groundwater basin is about 4,500 acre-feet per year. However, recharge does not occur every year, and in some years, it can exceed 10,000 acre-feet. Watersheds surrounding the Anza groundwater basin contribute water, either by surface or subsurface processes, to the basin. The BCM has been locally calibrated and can be used to provide time series of historical boundary conditions to a groundwater model and evaluate impacts of future climate conditions on recharge in the region. Future work or studies include running climate scenario and land use changes.

Questions/Comments

- Are one of the basins a priority for DWR? If so, are they going to move to the SGMA process?
    - It is adjudicated right now. I cannot explain it too much since we are at the end of a water rights litigation. Adjudicated basins are not subject to SGMA, so they do not have to go through the process that Ms. Carlson went over in the previous presentation.

Statewide Updates

Ms. Chelsea McGimpsey, County of San Diego, provided an overview of updates regarding the 2021-2022 State Budget. Governor Gavin Newsom released a May Revise on the California State Budget, which includes $5.1 billion budget for water infrastructure, drought response, and climate resilience. In June, SB 129, Budget Bill Jr., passed, which included $200 million for multi-benefit projects, including IRWM. This may be distributed via the drought funding. The details on how the budget will be allocated are still forthcoming. There is a potential for future budget-related bills to include additional water-related funding. The Roundtable of Regions distributed a survey regarding the State's climate resilience budget. Please refer to the email that was sent on August 3 for more information.

For Proposition 1, Round 2, DWR's schedule is still tentative. The draft proposal solicitation package (PSP) was expected to be released this summer and the final PSP will be released by the end of 2021. However, recent State Budget updates and drought declarations may delay Proposition 1, Round 2 from this timeline. The San Diego IRWM Program's schedule is also tentative. The local process is anticipated to start around the time the final PSP is released, pending on DWR's schedule. Additionally, DWR is conducting a survey to inform the timing of Round 2 and drought funding.

Questions/Comments:

- None.

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Workgroup Outcomes

Ms. Brook Sarson, San Diego Sustainable Living Institute, presented the outcomes of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Workgroup. The JEDI Workgroup has met four times, and there were 17 volunteers representing a diverse group of agencies, tribes, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). During the first meeting, the Workgroup framed JEDI in the context of the San Diego IRWM program and defined JEDI. In the second meeting, the Workgroup finalized JEDI definitions, drafted goals and metrics, and evaluated the Project Selection Process. In the third meeting, the Workgroup set goals and metrics, recommended Project

Selection process revisions, and evaluated the scoring criteria. In the final meeting, the Workgroup recommended scoring criteria revisions, reviewed the goals and metrics, and determined the San Diego IRWM program's next steps and recommendations.

For the Project Selection Process, the JEDI Workgroup recommends adding an Underrepresented Community (URC) Outreach step prior to the Local Call for Projects. This step will create a Workgroup tasked with community outreach to bring more people to the table prior to the Local Call for Projects. Additional Project Selection Process Recommendations are following up with project sponsors regarding any "fatal flaws" in submitted project applications, including unconscious bias training for the Project Selection Workgroup, and exploring opportunities for stipends to URCs participating in the Project Selection Workgroup and other IRWM activities. The implementation of recommendations will be evaluated by the RWMG for feasibility.

The JEDI Workgroup developed two options to implement in the Project Scoring process. Option 1 will include all qualifying URC projects automatically in Tier 1. All submitted projects will be scored per the scoring criteria and tiered with the top 50% in Tier 1 and the bottom 50% in Tier 2. URC projects that scored in Tier 2 will be moved to Tier 1. Tier 1 may be more than 50% of projects once URC projects have been moved. URC project status is based on the project benefit area. Option 2 is the same approach as Option 1, but projects in Tier 2 must have a URC organization as a project sponsor or project partner to be moved to Tier 1, not just provide benefits to URCs. All projects, including URC projects, must meet the pass/fail criteria to be scored which are Objective A (Integration) and Objective B (Outreach/Education).

Additionally, Ms. Sarson went over the JEDI goals for San Diego IRWM. In IRWM Planning and Program, the JEDI goals are to clarify the definition of URCs, prioritize the needs of the URCs in IRWM Planning, increase participation of grantees and consultants in JEDI, and make RAC and Project Selection Workgroup more reflective of communities served. In IRWM Funding, the JEDI goals are to increase funding program awareness, understand and address hurdles for URCs in accessing grants, build capacity in URCs to effectively participate in planning and grant processes, and provide more equitable evaluation of projects.

The RAC discussed and voted to put forward these recommendations to the RWMG.

Questions/Comments:

- How would you define a URC organization, or do you have any thoughts on how you would define a URC organization? For example, would the physical office location determine an organization's URC status, or would an organization need a certain threshold of involvement in URCs?
    - We have not established firm thresholds of what would qualify as an URC organization. In some cases, it is relatively straightforward. For instance, if it is a city or an agency, they have a physical jurisdiction. You can look at the population within the service area boundary and make a URC designation. For NGOs and other organizations without a jurisdiction boundary, it is more challenging. We can let organizations justify why they are a URC because there are some organizations that devote their entire mission to serve URCs or work in specific areas. There are some nuances that need to be discussed by the RWMG.
        - The San Diego River Park Foundation is an NGO. Our office is not in an URC area, but we have worked with many communities for over 20 years. I hope we would qualify as an URC organization. A physical office in an URC area does not mean an organization works with URCs. Additionally, there are nuances. People can latch onto a partnership, but that partnership needs to be meaningful. I also have a follow up question. The dollar amount threshold for organizations working in URCs is very high. If you have a $500,000 minimum for a grant, organizations will need about $150,000 to carry the cash burden of the grant. Did you have any discussions about that?
    - We did not discuss dollar limits. $500,000 has been established as the threshold due to the amount of time and costs it takes to administer projects.

        - I understand, but I think we must be creative. We could package some awards or look for other opportunities. Someone could have a good idea, but it is not at the $500,000 threshold. It should not be rejected. It should be bundled and someone else could take on the burden to reduce the administrative costs.
    - That is a good point, and we strive to get partnerships like that. One of our goals in the JEDI Workgroup was to understand the hurdles and roadblocks for URCs in accessing grants.
- I will be voting for Option 1. I think the addition of URC organizations will happen naturally and in a meaningful way and having that flexibility will give us the truest picture of that. Meaningful relationships are important, but it should not be forced.
- I have a procedural question. Is there an iterative process to measure or improve the recommendations we adopt?
    - Great feedback. We would want to have some sort of recurring assessment.
    - A part of the exercise of developing the goals and metrics was to help us think about how we are going assess and evaluate the recommendations we adopt. We want to make sure that we are going into the right direction. The idea is that we want to implement something now and see how that goes. If we are heading towards the right direction, the goals and metrics are there to help us evaluate our process. We are always revisiting our process and implementing changes with every funding cycle. It is something we are evolving, and we are going to continue to evolve.
- The Workgroup has done a tremendous job. My only concern is that Option 2 can lead to fewer projects being submitted because of the additional steps involved. Can you respond to that?
    - The options are reflective of the later step in the project submittal process. You do not have to come to the table with a URC organization as a partner to be considered. If you want to be elevated, you can find a URC partner. I do not understand how that would limit the number of projects being submitted. We want more projects coming in, and that is why we recommended adding an outreach step prior to the call for projects.
        - I think I misunderstood. I guess it does not limit the number of projects being submitted, but it could potentially add a hurdle for projects moving to Tier 1.
    - Under Option 2, all the projects will get scored and tiered based on the initial score. Projects can score into Tier 1 without having a URC organization as a partner. What Option 2 does is that if projects are scored in Tier 2, they can move to Tier 1 automatically if they have an URC organization as a partner. You would not be taking a spot away.
    - It is another way to encourage URC organizations to sponsor projects and other sponsors to partner with URC organizations.
- Is there a way URC organization can be pre-approved? If organizations want to be considered as an URC organization, they could submit an application, and someone can review their qualifications and approve them? This will make it easier for project sponsors to look for an URC organization.
    - I like this idea.
    - I think this is a great idea. We would have to immediately define a flexible term of what a URC is, but I think we can do that.
    - How would we pre-approve organizations? There are many organizations that work in URC areas and non-URC areas. I think the project itself is important because we can see if it will bring benefits to URCs. There are certain organizations that are fully dedicated in serving URCs, so it makes sense to pre-approve them, but there are other organizations do not completely work with URCs. I understand the administration benefits of pre-approving organizations.
    - I do not disagree with you. I am thinking about the short period of time between tiering and the grant review process.

    - One of our goals is to clarify our definition and understanding of a URC. We have our own ideas about what a URC is. For example, there are organizations and projects that serve URCs. I think having guidelines or criteria on what qualifies organizations and projects as URCs will help. We have a goal of clarifying that definition. We need to put all these pieces together.
- I think Option 1 is safer. Partnerships will happen naturally.
- Would Option 2 increase the probability of the URC project be funded by the State?
    - I do not see how. DWR looks more at who benefits from a project as opposed to who sponsors it.
- I understand the idea of a pre-approved list to make the process easier. As a consultant, we have a requirement to provide small business participation. We look for businesses who can provide meaningful input to our team. However, it becomes "checking a box." That is something we want to avoid. Are we making it too easy to find a URC partner so organizations can check that box? There are unintended consequences if we make it too easy. How can we ensure that partnerships are meaningful? Are they incorporating the URC organization to the project? How are URC partners going to be participating and what are the benefits? We need to ensure that the partnership is meaningful and not just something to check off the box.
- How are we ensuring these projects are helping an actual URC?
    - In our scoring criteria, we have a criterion that scores the direct benefits to URCs. One of the elements we discussed in the Workgroup is what is the URC engagement in deciding to move forward? Is the engagement meaningful or is the organization just putting a project in a URC area? There were many conversations about that, and the addition of the outreach step is to address the concern of engaging communities in the process. Ultimately, we are looking at the physical benefits to URCs.
    - We are going above and beyond what DWR is requiring in their grant application for designating a project as DAC, which is the term they are required to use. Depending on our definition, a URC would not have to legally qualify as a DAC. DWR gives partial credit to a project that is regional, so that includes some DACs in the benefit area. What we are talking about here is that a project almost entirely benefits a URC as opposed to a regional project that encompasses DAC areas.

Motion to support the recommendations of the JEDI Workgroup for the Project Selection Process.

Yes: 23

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 2

Motion to support Option 1 or Option 2 of the scoring criteria.

Option 1: 20

Option 2: 4

Abstained: 1

Grant Administration

Ms. Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority, presented updates on grant administration. In total, the region has received $111.7 million in grant awards for 9 grant programs and 50 projects are now complete. 68% of the grant award has been billed to DWR ($76.1 million). Proposition 84, Round 3 is almost complete (5 of the 7 projects complete). The two remaining active projects under this round are Project 4 Regional Demand

Management Project and Project 6 Rincon Customer Driver Demand Management Program. Most of the projects under Proposition 84, Round 4 are still in the implementation phase with 10 active projects over 50% complete.

The Proposition 1, Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) program has 7 complete projects. The DACI program will be completed by February 2022. All projects reported significant planning work under Proposition 1, Round 1. Most projects will be in construction and implementation next period. Pure Water Oceanside is now 92% complete and scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

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*	Small Communities Funding opens 8/6, rolling deadline	TBD
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
WaterSMART Grants: Water and Energy Efficiency Grants for Fiscal year 2022	November 3 at 3:00 PM	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=335103
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

*If San Diego County is included in Drought Proclamation

Next RAC Meeting:

- October 6, 2021 – 9:00-11:30 a.m. via virtual platform.

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

- December 1, 2021