



## **Pueblo, Sweetwater, Otay and Tijuana Watershed Workshop**

### **Notes**

September 27, 2012

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

City of Chula Vista, Public Works Center

1800 Maxwell Road, Chula Vista, CA 91911

### **Attendance**

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Alicia Glassco, Port of San Diego  
Bill Tippetts, The Nature Conservancy  
Bryn Evans, URS  
Charles Mohrlock, Bureau Veritas  
Chris Helmer, City of Imperial Beach  
Christina Mokhtarzadeh, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Dave Gibson, Regional Water Quality Board  
David Neubert, River Partners  
Deanna Spehn, Office of State Senator Christine Kehoe  
Diana Bergman, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County  
Don Chadwick, San Diego County Water Authority  
Emily Michaelson, Katz & Associates  
Emma Sakaguchi, Quantum Ozone, Inc.  
Genene Lehotsky, City of San Diego  
Greg Mendez, U.S. Geological Survey  
Jennifer Hazard, Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team/California Water Boards  
Jennifer Sabine, Sweetwater Authority  
Jill Terp, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge  
Jim Peugh, San Diego Audubon Society  
Joe Kuhn, City of La Mesa  
Joseph Burgos, City of Chula Vista  
Kirk Ammerman, City of Chula Vista  
Lauma Jurkevics, California Department of Water Resources  
Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates  
Maria Herrera, City of Coronado  
Marisa Soriano, City of Chula Vista  
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority  
Marsha Cook, County of San Diego, Department of Public Works Watershed Protection Program  
Melissa Valdovinos, Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Natalie Roderick, AMEC

Rosalyn Prickett, RMC Water and Environment  
Rudy Bilan, City of San Diego Trans/Storm Water Department  
Ruth Kolb, City of San Diego  
Samantha Russo, I Love a Clean San Diego  
Slader Buck, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge  
Stephanie Bauer, Port of San Diego  
Tracie Nelson, California Department of Fish and Game  
Tracy Cline, County of San Diego  
Vipul Joshi, Dudek  
Wesley Danskin, U.S. Geological Survey

## **Welcome and Introductions**

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Mr. Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates (facilitator), welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room. Mr. Michaelson explained the necessity for obtaining qualitative input at the workshop to use in developing the San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan Update. The purpose of the workshop is to characterize the watersheds in the San Diego Region and identify water management issues and priorities for each of the watersheds.

## **IRWM Overview**

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Mr. Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority, provided an overview of IRWM planning, the San Diego IRWM Plan Update, the current Proposition 84-Round 2 grant opportunity and project submittal process, and types of project integration. Mr. Stadler explained that IRWM planning is an innovative way to increase reliable water sources, improve water quality, and protect natural resources through cooperation among public agencies with different jurisdictions and nonprofit public interest organizations. IRWM planning is also a mechanism through which the San Diego Region is eligible for substantial grant funding from Proposition 84 and Proposition 1E. The IRWM Plan Update will revise and improve the 2007 IRWM Plan and meet new California Department of Water Resources (DWR) IRWM program requirements. The input received at the watershed workshops will be used to amend the existing IRWM Plan to characterize resources on a watershed-scale.

Mr. Stadler stated that DWR recently announced Round 2 of Proposition 84 implementation grant funding. There is approximately \$10.3 million available for the San Diego Region in Round 2, which is expected to fund five to seven projects. To improve a project's likelihood of being selected to receive IRWM grant funding, a project should integrate multiple benefits and multiple project partners. An integrated project is one that contains at least one of the following components:

- **Partnerships** – Partnerships between different organizations
- **Resource Management** – Employing multiple water management strategies within a single project
- **Beneficial Uses** – Project supports several different beneficial uses
- **Geography** – Implementing watershed- or regional-scale projects
- **Hydrology** – Addressing multiple watershed functions within the hydrologic cycle

## **Pueblo Watershed**

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### **Watershed Characterization**

Ms. Rosalyn Prickett, RMC Water and Environment, listed the references that are currently being used to characterize the Pueblo watershed.

- 2002 Chollas Creek Enhancement Plan
- 2011 San Diego Bay Integrated Natural Resources Plan
- DWR Groundwater Bulletin 118
- 2010 Urban Water Management Plans (UWMPs)
- Watershed Urban Runoff Management Plans (WURMPs)
- Multiple Species Conservation Plans (MSCPs)
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Basin Plan and 303(d) List

Ms. Prickett asked for input on additional references to consult. Workshop attendees suggested the following references:

- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans
- U.S. Geological Survey water quality data
- Navy references

Ms. Prickett presented the current characterization of the Pueblo watershed. The workshop attendees suggested that the following features also be used to characterize the Pueblo watershed:

- Reflect water quality issues and solutions developed in TMDLs
- Shipyard sediment – “toxic hot spot” is outdated reference
- Specify source(s) of imported water
- Groundwater basin water quality is quite good
- Significant surface water quality issues – pollution from runoff
- Natural drainages are largely channelized
- Aerial deposition – large contributor to water quality issues

### **Water Management Issues in Watershed**

Ms. Prickett listed key management issues for the Pueblo watershed and asked for input on additional significant management issues the watershed faces. Workshop attendees shared the following management issues:

- Bacteria TMDLs – Chollas Creek and Shelter Island
- Sea level rise impacts – excessive flooding
- Surface water TMDLs – clarify Shelter Island versus Sediment TMDLs
- Natural sources of bacteria, e.g., wildlife, bacteria regrowth
- Big source of litter – San Diego Bay
- Effectiveness of public outreach to educate public

*Questions/Comments*

- Could projects that address impacts from sea level rise be funded?
  - *Yes. If the project was a water infrastructure project that addressed impacts of sea level rise (e.g., moving an outfall higher to avoid storm surges).*

**IRWM Priorities for Watershed**

Given the types of projects that IRWM is designed to fund, Mr. Michaelson asked the workshop attendees to think about what priorities in the Pueblo watershed could be addressed through an IRWM-based project. Workshop attendees suggested the following Pueblo watershed priorities:

- Upgrade stormwater system to address flooding without impacting natural resources and water quality
- Watershed could yield more groundwater – storage and extraction
- Low Impact Development (LID) to address pollution and infiltration
- Web-based watershed portal for the 11 hydrologic units to share data region-wide

**Sweetwater Watershed**

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**Watershed Characterization**

Ms. Prickett listed the references that are currently being used to characterize the Sweetwater watershed.

- 2011 San Diego Bay Integrated Natural Resources Plan
- DWR Groundwater Bulletin 118
- 2010 UWMPs
- WURMPs
- MSCPs
- RWQCB Basin Plan and 303(d) List

Ms. Prickett asked for input on additional references to review. Workshop attendees suggested the following references:

- Sycuan Land Management Plan
- Implementation Plans – CA State Parks and CA Department of Fish and Game

Ms. Prickett presented the current characterization of the Sweetwater watershed. The workshop attendees suggested that the following features also be used to characterize the Sweetwater watershed:

- Sweetwater Marsh and other important natural resources throughout watershed
- Potential to be heavily impacted by fire
- Transition – linear channels
- Spring Valley – underserved communities
- South San Diego Bay Natural Wildlife Refuge with connection to San Diego Natural Wildlife Refuge
- Relatively few jurisdictions – good opportunity for partnerships
- Urban runoff diversion system at reservoir

*Questions/Comments*

- Recommend collaborating with the Spring Valley Community Planning Group

**Water Management Issues in Watershed**

Ms. Prickett listed key management issues for the Sweetwater watershed and asked for input on additional significant management issues the watershed faces. Workshop attendees shared the following management issues:

- High demand for public use and recreation
- Historic mouth of Sweetwater River still functional – Need to maintain
- Unnatural flows – loss of species and lack of natural flood and scour (e.g., Arroyo toad)
- Upper Sweetwater Reservoir water quality – need to address and manage
- Invasive species

**IRWM Priorities for Watershed**

Given the types of projects that IRWM is designed to fund, Mr. Michaelson asked the workshop attendees to think about what priorities in the Sweetwater watershed could be addressed through an IRWM-based project. Workshop attendees suggested the following Sweetwater watershed priorities:

- Significant habitat improvements possible – sand mining lands
- Land swap by Port could provide opportunities for positive changes for wetlands/habitat (Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan)
- Acquisition of floodplain

**Otay Watershed**

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**Watershed Characterization**

Ms. Prickett listed the references that are currently being used to characterize the Otay watershed.

- 2006 Otay River Watershed Management Plan
- Otay River Special Area Management Plan
- 2011 San Diego Bay Integrated Natural Resources Plan
- DWR Groundwater Bulletin 118
- 2010 UWMPs
- WURMPs
- MSCPs
- RWQCB Basin Plan and 303(d) List

Ms. Prickett asked for input on additional references to consult, and workshop attendees suggested the following references:

- Otay River Watershed Special Area Management Plan
- Otay River Valley Regional Park Master Plan

Ms. Prickett presented the current characterization of the Otay watershed. The workshop attendees suggested that the following features be used to characterize the Otay watershed:

- Large restoration potential in lower Otay – heavily channelized
- MSCP – includes Bureau of Land Management lands; Otay Mountain Wilderness
- Highly affected by wildfires
- Significant portions are dry (below reservoir), posing water quality management issues
- Unnatural flows – Barrett Lake to Lower Otay; invasive species
- History of sand mining – lower river bottom
- Invasive species throughout
- Fairly high water table in mid-section of watershed
- Presence of Otay Landfill

### **Water Management Issues in Watershed**

Ms. Prickett listed key management issues for the Otay watershed and asked for input on additional significant management issues the watershed faces. Workshop attendees shared the following management issues:

- Dams withhold water – need intentional releases for habitat
- Substantial development plans throughout watershed
- Road management issues in upper watershed without resources to address, even in MSCP/conserved lands
- Opportunity to address hydrological issues with new development
- Rapid development – inconsistent application of Low Impact Development; requires maintenance agreements to maintain Best Management Practices and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System construction permit
- Developable area within Chula Vista jurisdiction
- Ordinance – Special Area Management Plan
- Use of recycled water – Chula Vista/Otay Water District/City of San Diego

### **IRWM Priorities for Watershed**

Given the types of projects that IRWM is designed to fund, Mr. Michaelson asked the workshop attendees to think about what priorities in the Otay watershed could be addressed through an IRWM-based project. Workshop attendees suggested the following Otay watershed priorities:

- Low Impact Development
- Land acquisitions

## **Tijuana Watershed**

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### **Watershed Characterization**

Ms. Prickett listed the references that are currently being used to characterize the Tijuana watershed.

- Binational Watershed Vision
- 2010 Tijuana River National Estuary Management Plan

- 2011 San Diego Bay Integrated Natural Resources Plan
- DWR Groundwater Bulletin 118
- 2010 UWMPs
- WURMPs
- MSCPs
- RWQCB Basin Plan and 303(d) List

Ms. Prickett asked for input on additional references to review. Workshop attendees suggested the following references:

- Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team – Recovery Strategy
- City of Imperial Beach – Bacteria Source Identification Study
- Los Laureles Sub-watershed Plan
- San Diego County River Park Management Plans
- Cleveland National Forest Plan
- Bureau of Land Management – South Coast Resource Management Plan
- Mexican government references
- 1994 Treaty with Mexico

#### *Questions/Comments*

- Could projects that reach into Mexico be funded?
  - *No, State water bond funding cannot be spent in Mexico.*

Ms. Prickett presented the current characterization of the Tijuana watershed. The workshop attendees suggested that the following features be used to characterize the Tijuana watershed:

- South of border – unplanned development
- Sedimentation and trash deposition in lower portion of watershed
- Eastern portion has high water quality and habitat, but increasing development pressures
- Tijuana Estuary – not bisected; resilient to climate change
- Marron Valley – biologically unique

#### **Water Management Issues in Watershed**

Ms. Prickett listed key management issues for the Tijuana watershed and asked for input on additional significant management issues the watershed faces. Workshop attendees shared the following management issues:

- San Diego Bay and Tijuana connectivity
- Address issues/sources in both U.S. and Mexico; Need to understand entire watershed to manage issues
- Pollution in surface water affects ability to use groundwater
- Equestrian pollution – impacts to water quality
- Heavily affected by fire
- Need to collaborate with Mexico
- Mexico river diversion system impacts U.S. flows – completely dry (summer) to wet (winter)

- Homeland Security – water quality exemptions
- Finding mechanism to fund trash/pollution control in Mexico
- Strong military presence – Naval Outlying Landing Field
- Solar/wind power farms in eastern portion – increase in erosion

### **IRWM Priorities for Watershed**

Given the types of projects that IRWM is designed to fund, Mr. Michaelson asked the workshop attendees to think about what priorities in the Tijuana watershed could be addressed through an IRWM-based project. Workshop attendees suggested the following Tijuana watershed priorities:

- Ideas developed in the Recovery Strategy
- Binational collaboration and advocacy
- Research opportunities for addressing plastic loading in Mexico and endocrine disruptors
- Clean sedimentation basins – currently flooding issues and habitat destruction

### **Next Steps**

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Mr. Michaelson explained that the input provided at the workshop will be used to complete the Pueblo, Sweetwater, Otay and Tijuana watershed characterizations. The draft characterizations will be distributed to the workshop attendees in March or April for review.