

Jurisdictional Runoff Management Program

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8.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This section describes the steps that will be taken to include public participation in the development and implementation of the County of San Diego's Jurisdictional Runoff Management Program (JRMP).

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The County continues to pursue a program development strategy which actively encourages the participation and input of stakeholders. The County has incorporated an additional requirement per 2013 MS4 Permit Provisions E.7.b (1) and (2), to provide a public participation process for development of the Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) priority water quality conditions, goals and water quality improvement strategies. The County utilizes a variety of means to encourage the public to share in the development and implementation of its JRMP. Many of the venues utilized offer the opportunity for public comment, direct interaction, and feedback.

These include the following:

- Stormwater Copermittee Meetings;
- Integrated Regional Water Management Planning;
- WQIP Development and Update;
- Workshops, Conferences, and Summits;
- Watershed Planning Groups;
- Partnerships with entities such as San Diego Gas and Electric, the San Diego County Water Authority, and the San Diego Zoological Society;
- Regional Stormwater Hotline;
- Project Clean Water website;
- Press Releases, email announcements, and newsletters; and
- Community Events.

Long-term success of the JRMP depends greatly on the degree to which stakeholders can effectively be brought together to reach common goals. Using these and other methods, public participation will continue to be strongly encouraged to ensure that stakeholder interests, concerns, and solutions are considered and addressed. Throughout the MS4 Permit cycle, stakeholder involvement will remain an ongoing priority for the County.

8.2 STORMWATER COPERMITTEE MEETINGS

The County chairs and provides administrative and technical support for the Regional Stormwater Management Committee (Management Committee). The Management Committee coordinates Copermittee activities, develops and implements regional programs, and promotes consistency between programs. Management Committee meetings provide a forum for the discussion of

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shared program development and implementation responsibilities. County staff or contractors produce detailed summaries for each meeting and post them on the Copermittee webpage, Project Clean Water (PCW), at www.projectcleanwater.org.

Each meeting is announced on the PCW webpage and by e-mail, usually two weeks prior to each meeting. The e-mail notification list for Management Committee meetings includes 259 Copermittees and interested parties. Each Management Committee meeting also includes scheduled open floor time to provide participants an opportunity to voice issues and concerns or to make general announcements.

To further facilitate public participation, the County and other Copermittees have voluntarily consented to follow the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act, which governs open meetings for local government bodies. Public participation issues specifically addressed by the Brown Act, contained in section 54950 et seq. of the Government Code, include the following¹:

- Public Testimony. The public may comment on agenda items for consideration by the Management Committee. Time must also be set aside for public comment on any other matters under the Management Committee's jurisdiction.
- Taping or Broadcasting. Meetings may be broadcast, audio-recorded, or video-produced so long as the activity does not constitute a disruption of the proceeding.
- Conditions to Attendance. The public may not be asked to register or identify themselves or to pay fees in order to attend public meetings.
- Public Records. Materials provided to a majority of the Management Committee which are not exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act must be provided, upon request, to members of the public without delay.
- Required Notices and Agendas. An agenda containing a brief general description (approximately twenty words in length) of each matter to be discussed must be posted at least 72 hours prior to each meeting. Additional requirements apply to special and emergency meetings. Exceptions are allowable in the case of emergency circumstances, or where a need for immediate action comes to the attention of the Management Committee after the posting of the agenda.

Brown Act compliance is specified in section III.B.10 of the Copermittees' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and is limited to meetings of the Management Committee², subcommittees, and workgroups. Other bodies established by the Management Committee are not subject to this requirement.

¹ Source: California Attorney General's 1994 pamphlet, "The Brown Act: Open Meetings for Local Legislative Bodies."

² Copermittees do not waive their right to take the position that the Brown Act legally does not apply, but voluntarily agree to follow Brown Act procedures for Management Committee meetings.

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8.3 INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning was formally established in California by the passage of Proposition 50 in November 2002. IRWM planning sets forth a process aimed at securing long-term water supply reliability by first recognizing the inter-connectivity of water supplies and the environment and then pursuing projects yielding multiple benefits for water supplies, water quality, and natural resources. Proposition 50 authorizes \$380 million in general obligation bonds to fund a variety of IRWM Plan-related projects. The IRWM Program is jointly administered by the California Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board.

In November 2004, the Copermittees authorized the County to represent the Stormwater Copermittees' Management Committee in the collaborative development of San Diego's IRWM Plan. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the County Water Authority, County of San Diego, and the City of San Diego formed the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG), which has since funded, guided, and managed the development of the IRWM Plan. In December 2006, a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) was established to assist in the finalization of the IRWM Plan and prioritization of regional projects for both the Plan and for funding applications. The RAC is comprised of 25 members with expertise in local water supply, wastewater, recycled water, stormwater and urban runoff, natural resources, and environmental stewardship. Members represent environmental groups, academia, agriculture, water quality interests, and regulatory agencies. The RAC meets every other month, and is noticed in the same fashion as the Copermittee meetings, in compliance with the Brown Act.

In 2008, the San Diego IRWM Region was awarded \$25 million of Proposition 50 grant funds for 19 local projects consistent with the IRWM Plan Objectives. In 2011 and 2014, the region was awarded \$34.5 million of Proposition 84 grant funds for 26 local projects, including water supply, water quality, and natural resources projects. With the passing of Proposition 1 in November 2014, an additional \$52.5 is potentially available for the San Diego IRWM Funding Area. Information on the IRWM Program and grants projects is available at <http://sdirwmp.org/>.

8.4 WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, AND SUMMITS

Stakeholder input continues to be facilitated through a variety of workshops and conferences. The County conducts workshops, such as those presented on low impact development (LID), Hydromodification, and advances in Best Management Practice (BMP) technologies to educate and obtain feedback from stakeholders. Future workshop topics may include: construction and land development programs, the 2013 MS4 Permit, and the revised Watershed Protection Ordinance. Additionally, over the past six years, an annual Clean Water or Water Conservation Summit has been held to discuss the latest issues in the water quality arena, new regulations, collaboration, and uniting the region on common goals. Focused workshops and conferences will continue to be a focal point of the County's overall strategy for ensuring public participation in the development and implementation of its water quality programs.

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8.5 WATERSHED PLANNING GROUPS

Currently, the County participates in all nine of the watershed planning groups that are operated in cooperation with the respective Copermittee jurisdictions. With the development of the WQIPs, the County works in coordination with the other Copermittee agencies in each watershed management area, as well as the consultation panels convened to assist with the strategies and priorities for each watershed's WQIP. There are also a growing number of private – non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that run watershed groups throughout the region. The County currently participates in many of these groups as well, including, the San Luis Rey Watershed Council, the San Diego River Coalition, the Carlsbad Watershed Network, the Binational Committee for the Tijuana River Watershed, the Santa Margarita Stakeholder group, among others. Watershed planning efforts provide forums for private citizens, government agencies, and business interests to unite in addressing shared concerns within the watershed(s). With public participation, the development of watershed and jurisdictional activities and programs can be focused to addressing the pollutants, water quality, and natural habitat concerns cooperatively. The relationship of these efforts to JRMP development and implementation cannot be overstated since they address complementary objectives and all rely on public participation for success. Through collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders, the County will continue to pursue funding for the development and implementation of activities and plans.

PCW is another venue which provides a means for stakeholders to share data and information regarding local water quality management efforts. PCW provides a means not only of supporting MS4 Permit compliance, but also for improving programs through partnerships and initiatives that reach beyond compliance. This inclusive forum brings the region together to explore water quality issues of regional significance. PCW is comprised of several working groups and advisory committees that discuss issues of shared concern, find consensus solutions to priority problems, and characterize water quality conditions within the region's watersheds.

8.6 PARTNERSHIPS

Aside from the collaboration and partnership among the region's Copermittees, the County has worked toward developing external partnerships in order to leverage the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs. Partnerships with the County Water Authority and the City of San Diego during the development of the IRWM Plan have opened many doors for increased collaborative efforts. New partnerships have been developed and others have been enhanced. Through the IRWM Plan, the County has come to work more closely with the tribal nations, San Diego Coastkeeper, San Diego State University, the Zoological Society of San Diego, and becoming involved with regional groundwater management planning and disadvantaged communities. Given the cross-cutting interests of these and other groups with similar interests, the County has come to realize many benefits including opening the lines of communication between agencies and NGOs. The County intends to continue building on its relationships with external parties and identifying additional opportunities to collaborate and maximize program efficiency.

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8.7 HOTLINE AND WEBSITES

A key element of the County's public participation strategy is to provide accessible resources for obtaining water quality information and reporting complaints. The County continues to operate several hotlines and websites to report complaints.

In accordance with 2013 MS4 Permit section E.2.b.(3)(a), the County will continue to operate a public hotline to facilitate public reporting of illicit discharges or water quality impacts associated with discharges from residences, businesses, and other sources. This hotline is capable of receiving reports in both English and Spanish 24 hours a day seven days per week. The hotline receives calls from a toll-free Regional Stormwater Hotline (1-888-846-0800). All calls are answered by hotline operators, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. A voice mail message is provided for 24-hour public access in both English and Spanish. Public reporting is also available by accessing the Project Clean Water website's Report Pollution page³, Accela Citizens Access web interface⁴, or by contacting the Department of Public Works (DPW), Watershed Protection Program directly (watersheds@sdcounty.ca.gov). A link to this email address (watersheds@sdcounty.ca.gov) is displayed on the DPW Watershed Protection webpage⁵. All complaint information received is forwarded to the Department of Public Works, Watershed Protection Program staff for routing to the appropriate departments or agencies for follow up and/or investigation.

This hotline number and the website addresses are distributed to the public via brochures, advertisements, and various other outreach methods to encourage them to report complaints. Through its education and outreach program, the County will continue to aggressively market the various contact methods to all target audiences.”

Household Hazardous Waste & Recycling (1-877-R-1-EARTH)

The County contracts with a local environmental non-profit organization that operates a hotline (1-877-R-1-EARTH) which provides residents with information about reuse, recycling, and safe disposal options for a variety of materials including used oil and household hazardous waste. Attendants also refer residents with urban runoff questions to the Regional Stormwater Hotline.

Websites provide an additional way for the public to learn about water quality issues, to report complaints, and to get involved. The County maintains numerous website pages that incorporate general and specific information about common issues, activities, and pollutants. Websites with particular relevance to watershed and water quality issues are listed in Table 8.1. Informational resources typically accessed on these sites include ordinances, educational materials, guidance documents, and links to other sites.

Project Clean Water Website

³ <http://www.projectcleanwater.org>

⁴ <https://publicservices.sdcounty.ca.gov/citizenaccess/>

⁵ <http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/watersheds.html>

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The Project Clean Water (PCW) website was designed to be a water quality resource for the San Diego Region. Its vision “Clean Water through Local Commitment and Action,” underscores the basic principle that clean water can only be achieved through dedication, commitment, and hard work if the people who live and work in the San Diego Region. This County-initiated effort provides the forum for information sharing to promote regional collaboration and consistency in outreach to maximize results. It also serves disseminate information on watershed and water quality topics. Copermittee workgroup web pages make meeting notices, meeting summaries, and relevant work products available to participants and the public at large. The PCW website also hosts the WQIPs for all watersheds. Lastly, the website provides general watershed information, programs and laws, water management plans, and links to the Healthy Garden / Healthy Homes and Integrated Regional Water Management Planning for the San Diego Region websites.

The County includes a Clean Water Toolbox (<http://www.projectcleanwater.org>) that provides residents and business with useful information on a variety of BMPs. The purpose of this addition was to provide a centralized resource that will support the consistent application of BMPs across the San Diego region. The site provides user-friendly and audience-specific BMP information to a variety of residential and business users. It has an end-user focus and can be searched in several ways. In addition to providing BMP profiles that are specific to users and activities, the site contains links and other resources that assist users in seeking out additional information. Visitors to the residential page are given a selection of BMP options for activities from power washing to lawn and garden care.

County Watershed Protection Website

The WPP website provides County residents with a variety of water quality and compliance resources at the following location: <http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/dpw/watersheds.html>. From the home page, visitors are invited to learn more about BMPs for activities related to horse and livestock care, pool and spa maintenance, yard and lawn care, home improvement, vehicle care, and pet care.

Table 8-1 - County Website Resources

Description	Link
DPW Watershed Protection Page	www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw/watersheds
Watershed Protection Ordinance (WPO)	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/dpw/watersheds/ordinance.html
DEH Pollution Prevention Page	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/hazmat/pollution_prevent.html
AWM Agricultural Water Quality Page	http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/awm/ag_water.html
County Green Business Program	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/deh/doing_business/chd_greenbus.html
DPW Recycling Program Page	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/dpw/recycling/index.html
PDS General Plan	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/pds/generalplan.html

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Description	Link
DPR Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Outreach & Education	http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/parks/ee.html
PDS Multiple Species Conservation Program	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/pds/mscp/
PDS Advanced Planning Division Page	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/advance.html
PDS Building Forms Page	http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/bldgforms.html
Project Clean Water	www.projectcleanwater.org

8.8 MEDIA

Other than the hotlines and websites, the County utilizes a variety of means to communicate with the public. This includes the use of press releases, news articles, television announcements, community newsletters, and voter guides (Registrar of Voter’s Sample Ballots). These mechanisms serve as a consistent and ongoing method that will continue to be utilized throughout the MS4 Permit cycle. The combination of these media outlets serves as a means of keeping the public and stakeholders updated on current events and opportunities to participate.

8.9 COMMUNITY EVENTS AND PUBLIC INTERACTION

Community events provide an opportunity for direct interaction with the public. The County participates in a variety of community events, fairs, festivals, etc., that help to inform and educate the public about stormwater pollution prevention, watersheds awareness, water conservation, and water quality concerns for the region. Tools such as tip cards, dust pans, pesticide measuring spoons, reusable shopping bags, and doggie bag dispensers are made available to assist the public with implementing pollution prevention best management practices. These types of events also provide a chance for the public to obtain a better understanding about water resource concerns, as they can ask questions, participate, receive guidance, sign up to receive e-mails for upcoming events, and watch interactive demonstrations such as the non-point source watershed model.

In the County’s day to day operations, County staff directly interacts with the public in a number of ways, providing a chance to raise awareness and encourage personal participation. Much of this interaction occurs as part of regular job duties including complaints, inspections, public presentations and neighborhood visits. These daily interactions that occur provide an important avenue for obtaining direct feedback from residents and business representatives.

8.10 WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

In accordance with the requirements of the 2013 MS4 Permit, the County has implemented a public participation process for the development of the WQIPs. Consultation Panels have also been formed to provide recommendations for the WQIPs. The intent of this process is to solicit data, information, and recommendations that can be used to develop the priorities identified in the WQIP. As part of this process, the public is notified of opportunities to participate and provide comments.