

Otay River Watershed Management Plan (WMP) and Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) - Working Group Meeting Notes

August 4, 2004, 6:30 p.m.
John Lippitt Public Works Center
1800 Maxwell Road in Chula Vista

Attendees:

County of San Diego: Ron Kelley (District 1 Board Office), Tom Oberbauer (DPLU), Trish Boaz (DPLU), Tracy Cline (DPLU), Bethany Yamanaka (DPLU)

City of San Diego: Rick Fox, Bob Collins

City of Chula Vista: Josie Gabriel (first and last part of meeting), Khosro Aminpour

Regional Board: Bruce Posthumus

Audubon Society: Jim Peugh, Don Peters

OVRP CAC: John Willett, Wayne Dickey,

McMillin Communities: Todd Galarneau, Mike McCoy

EDAW: Meredith Speicher

Native Plant Society: Cindy Burrascano

Wildlands, Inc.: Mark Tucker, Tim Huntley

Aspen: Michelle Mattson

Citizen: Theresa Acerro

San Diego National Wildlife Refuge: Victoria Touchstone

Handouts:

- Draft Minutes from 07-07-04 Working Group
- Excerpts from Proposition 40
- Excerpts from Proposition 50
- WMP Schedule of Completion Dates
- SAMP organization chart
- WMP organization chart
- WMP deliverables and Draft WMP Outline

- WMP goals and objectives from 06-22-04 Working Group Meeting, Consolidated WMP goals and objectives
- Guidelines for the Otay Watershed Working Group

1. **Call to Order**

Introductions were made

Minutes Reviewed

2. **Project Director Report**

Discussion re: Vision of Plan

Trish Boaz introduced herself as the new Project Director of the Otay River Watershed Management Plan (WMP) and shared her vision of the Working Group's role in the WMP effort. She stated that the goal of watershed management is to plan and work toward an environmentally and economically healthy watershed that benefits all those who live, will live or work in the community. Priorities and strategies for protecting and restoring natural systems of groundwater recharge, native vegetation, water flows, riparian zones, beneficial uses of waters and overall water quality need to be identified. She mentioned that watershed plans have the potential to coordinate existing planning efforts and to provide the framework to share resources. Collaboration with people who live and work in the watershed is a key component so that the plan will be in the public interest. Partnerships are the easiest way to develop and implement a successful watershed management plan because everyone is involved from the beginning. That means the ultimate plan will truly have the consensus of all parties who have a stake in the watershed. To be most effective, this plan must be considered a "living document" subject to ongoing revisions and updates. As new information is developed the plan and priorities should be revised to reflect the best available data. The plan simply identifies the direction that the next steps must take and why. Future funding for watershed and parkway projects that can be used for implementation give priority to projects within adopted/approved watershed management plans.

Trish Boaz asked that the Working Group focus on the WMP and that if need be, a separate Working Group meeting could be arranged to discuss the Otay River Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) if the group felt it was necessary. No one responded that that a special meeting was necessary

John Willett stated that he feels the watershed plan needs to be broken down into sections and issues should be broken down by geographical

areas. He mentioned the Chula Vista's JURMP and a Creekside planting program. He wanted to have these documents incorporated into the ORWMP.

Trish Boaz stated that all plans would be incorporated into the ORWMP.

3. **Consultant Discussions and Working Group Feedback re: Goals and Objectives**

Michelle Mattson of Aspen provided 2 handouts:

- WMP Goals and Objectives Identified During and After the June 22, 2004 Working Group Meeting
- Consolidated Working Group ORWMP Goals and Objectives

Aspen asked for feedback on the categorization of goals and objectives.

Bruce Posthumus stated that the Regional Board's goals and objectives from the June 22, 2004 Working Group meeting were missing from the lists. Michelle Mattson indicated that she would make sure those items were added to the list.

Jim Peugh wants language emphasizing restoration and enhancement of the watershed in the goals and objectives and not simply protection of. Michelle Mattson indicated that she would make sure she added restoration and enhancement.

Trish Boaz requested that comments on the goals and objectives handout be sent directly to Michelle Mattson of Aspen before the next Working Group meeting on September 1, 2004.

Michelle's e-mail address was pointed out on the WMP mailing list.

Jim Peugh was concerned with goal #3 to Maximize Program and Plan Integration because the jurisdiction general plans don't consider watersheds. He suggested that the WMP should influence the general plans as well as being influenced by the general plans. He also voiced concern that "streamlining" should not mean less requirements and protection for the watershed.

Todd Galarneau noted that city general plans have a broader context than the WMP and a lot of public input and stakeholder participation and hearings were held before the city general plans were adopted.

Tracy Cline stated that the WMP should provide a bridge between the general plans of each of the jurisdictions and should provide a mechanism to integrate

each plan and determine if there are any gaps between the plans that could be addressed in later phases of the WMP.

There was a good discussion on this topic and it was agreed that the WMP should have a role influencing how future plans are developed.

John Willett suggested that water quality and preventing contaminants from entering San Diego Bay be included as the number one goal.

Trish Boaz emphasized a healthy watershed includes enhancement of all natural resources, including water quality. It was noted by Michelle Mattson that the goals on the handout were not listed in any particular priority order.

Bruce Posthumus stated that this effort doesn't need to repeat what has been done with other programs. It should connect the dots and that water quality is only one of many indicators of a healthy watershed.

Bob Collins noted that SANDAG's 2030 RCP plan provides a basis to identify priorities. He suggested that the watershed without changes, with existing use plans, should be considered and the WMP should provide opportunities to make the watershed what the stakeholders want it to look like. Aspen

4. Consultant Discussions and Working Group Feedback re:

Watershed Assessment

Michelle Mattson of Aspen provided brief discussion on GIS data layers, pointed out maps.

Dr. McCoy stated that there should be a reference that development be a sustainable and compatible use rather than just multiple uses. Sustainability would need to be defined and integrated with the pattern of development. These ideas need to be communicated to policy makers and incorporated into general plans.

Rick Fox pointed out that the City of San Diego's Source Water Protection Guidelines and County of San Diego Planner's Handbook both address sustainable development integration into new developments. Rick stated he would provide the County with a copy of the Guidelines to pass onto Aspen. Tracy Cline would look into the Planners Handbook.

Cindy Burrascano had a question regarding percentage of impervious cover relating to water quality, whether impervious cover could become a goal as an indicator of water quality.

Aspen stated that there is relation of water quality and % impervious cover and a discussion of this would be included in the Watershed Assessment.

Information is needed on existing and projected percentage of impervious cover to determine what the impact is to water quality.

Michelle Mattson directed the Working Group's attention to the GIS map which Aspen identifies sub basins. Aspen plans to break down the entire watershed into sub basins and determine what is best to protect, enhance and restore in each of those areas. The next step is to identify the goals and objectives for the sub basins.

Wayne Dickey suggested that other watershed plans should be considered in the WMP. Wayne suggested that we incorporate knowledge from existing watershed management plans into the program and not reinvent the wheel.

Tom Oberbauer stated that a unique plan is needed for the community and the direction of the stakeholder group is important. Items such as definitions of terms can be from other watershed management plans.

Jim Peugh stated that the WMP should anticipate floods like those in the San Diego and Tijuana watersheds and take proactive measures to ensure that the Otay River Watershed does not flood in a similar manner.

Todd Galarneau had a question as to whether there will be indicators to measure the progress of the WMP. Trish Boaz responded that there would be performance indicators and that without them; we would not be able to measure how well implementation measures are working in the watershed.

Aspen is developing indicators that will be used to determine the effectiveness of the WMP.

Schedule of Upcoming Deliverables

Aspen provided and Schedule of Upcoming Deliverables and a Draft outline for the Otay River Watershed Management Plan.

The Watershed Assessment documents and GIS maps will be available to the County on Friday August 6, 2004 and immediately posted to the Project Clean Water website.

J. Willett noted that the SANGIS database is not compatible with the City of Chula Vista.

Michelle Mattson pointed out that an interactive GIS system that is accessible to the public is one of the WMP products. There was a discussion on the different ways an interactive GIS system could be used by the public, decision makers and project managers.

The Working Group reviewed the list of documents used by Aspen in developing the first section of the WMP. It was suggested that the group provide Michelle with titles of any existing plans or documents that not on the list pertaining to the watershed so that they may be considered in the formation of the WMP.

John Willet questioned whether or not BLM lands are included. Aspen has had discussions with BLM managers and will be incorporating their information into the WMP.

Cindy Burrascano asked if Michelle had obtained information from Fish and Game. Michelle indicated that yes, she has been talking with Fish and Game and will be including information in the WMP.

Aspen and Mark Tucker of Wildlands, Inc. will work together to update maps with new Wildlands information.

Upcoming deliverables include the Function and Values Report, which is a series of small products such as GIS maps, and reports that will lead to the development of management strategies and water quality monitoring.

Comments will be finalized and incorporated into the report, which will become the first section of the WMP. This document will be available to Project Team and Working Group members on Friday.

5. Regional Board Correspondence

Trish Boaz informed the Working Group that on July 28, 2004, the Regional Board Executive Director sent a letter to the State Water Quality Control Board (SWQCB) recommending that the contract with the County for the Prop. 13 Otay River grant be terminated. She also indicated that the County had received a formal letter late on the afternoon of August 4, 2004, from the SWQCB stating the it agrees with the Regional Board's recommendation. The County has 30 days to appeal this decision. Trish Boaz also stated that the County is committed to moving forward with the WMP whether or not they have the State funding and will continue working toward the March 1, 2005 completion date, so that implementation projects within the Otay River WMP will be eligible for future funding.

Trish Boaz made a recommendation to combine the Project Team and Working Group meetings in order to provide for optimum input. She stated that basically,

they are doing that already, as the Project Team is present at the Working Group meetings. She also mentioned that there might be some instances when the Project Team will need to meet separately to discuss items related to the JEPA agreement. The working group supported this recommendation.

A concern was raised by Working Group members about a recommendation included in the County's letter dated July 29, 2004, written in response to the Regional Board's letter of July 28, 2004. After some discussion it was decided that in order to obtain optimum input from the Working Group in the timeliest fashion, deliverables (or portions of deliverables – such as draft chapters of the WMP) will be posted to the Project Clean Water website as soon as they become available. Project Team and Working Group members will immediately be notified by email that these deliverables are posted. Comments received by Michelle Mattson on the deliverables will be shared and discussed at the next regularly scheduled Working Group meeting, with additional meetings held on an as–necessary basis.

6. The next Project Team/Working Group meeting is Wednesday, September 1, 2004, same time, same place.

7. Upcoming Events/Public Announcements

- Wetlands Recovery Project, August 23, 2004 “Designing and Implementing a Water Quality Monitoring Strategy” Contact Suzanne Michel at (619) 334-3072 or smichel@scwrp.org

Weeklong Conference in San Diego hosted by the Watershed Management Council, November 15 through 19 “ Watershed Management on the Edge – Scarcity, Quality and Distribution” www.watershed.org

Trish Boaz adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.