

County of San Diego Water Quality Working Group Meeting Summary

Tuesday, June 29, 2010

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100, San Diego

Members Present

Casey Anderson, San Diego Farm Bureau
Stephanie Bauer, Port of San Diego
Michael Beck, Endangered Habitats League
Chris Cate, San Diego County Taxpayers Association
Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego
Tim Murphy, City of Carlsbad
Shannon Quigley-Raymond, San Diego River Park Foundation
Todd Snyder, County of San Diego
Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority
Laura Walsh, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Midori Wong, SANDAG

Supporting Roles

Anthony Cotts, Weston Solutions
Lisa Kay, Weston Solutions
Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates
Danielle Thorsen, Katz & Associates

Introductions

The facilitator explained that the meeting will be a two-hour meeting rather than three hours as previously considered. Since new people were in attendance, attendees introduced themselves.

Ms. Gaines explained that the meeting's focus would be on the needs assessment approach, developing draft criteria and discussing example programs and projects. Today's meeting will develop ground criteria for the July meeting, which will be a three-hour meeting. [Later in the meeting, the July meeting was changed back to two hours.]

Meeting Summary

The facilitator asked for comments and clarifications on the May 2010 draft meeting summary. The meeting summary was approved by the members in attendance.

Needs Assessment Progress & Update

Ms. Gaines explained the top-down and bottom-up approaches being used in the needs assessment. The group will aim to finish the report by September, although the report deadline is most likely delayed until October.

The facilitator briefly explained the difference between the purposes of the SWG and the WQWG and how each operates.

Review Process and Approach – Chollas Creek TMDL Example

Ms. Gaines reviewed the feedback from the last meeting. Since the last meeting, members from the City of San Diego participated in a subcommittee of the WQWG to evaluate whether there are opportunities for large-scale projects. The meeting focused more on strategy than large-scale projects. The City of San Diego provided feedback on costing and used the Chollas Creek TMDL as an example of a process.

Review Scaling Assumptions for Region

Ms. Kay from Weston Solutions gave an overview of the proposed BMP strategy and the costs associated. For the proposed strategy, a less costly BMP meant it cost less to implement, but does not represent its cost effectiveness. Examples were provided of non-structural, structural, and restoration and treatment BMPs. The non-structural strategies are analogous with the Chollas Creek BMPs.

The group discussed whether new development needs are going to be met as part of these water quality efforts. In previous meetings, the group had determined that it is pay-as-you-go for development. The following issues are to be considered for new development:

- Subsidize water quality enhancements that go beyond existing regulations.
- How medium- and large-BMPs may create efficiencies.

Developer interests were included in the discussion at the beginning of the QOL process, and there was concern that the cost for water solutions was being placed on new development. Developers do not want to carry the entire burden and cost for resolving water issues.

The group approved of applying non-structural, structural, and restoration and treatment BMPs to the model watershed instead of small-, medium- and large-scale BMPs. This categorization was determined to be better from a cost standpoint. Each of the new categories can include small, medium and/or large BMPs.

A “Scaling Up” strategy was developed, grouping areas by the ratios of urban acres to agricultural acres compared with the percentage of watershed developed. Using this strategy, the three watershed classes (Pueblo, San Diego, and San Luis Rey) were compared. The group questioned the classification of some of the areas. The following suggestions were made:

- After analysis, classify Santa Margarita as part of San Luis Rey Class.
 - Camp Pendleton’s classification should reflect its undeveloped area.
- Keep Tijuana River as an outlier
 - Tijuana River issues of trash and bacteria do not fit with other classes
 - Tijuana River needs are driven more by Mexico than San Diego County

Comment [CA1]: Developers? I think that we just agreed, as in the past, that our cost estimate does not include future development & redevelopment that is covered by SUSMP. A brief discussion of what happens if a large/regional BMP is placed downstream of new development. This would be special case and poses an interesting question that is way beyond the scope of the WQWG objectives.

Comment [SG2]: Agree w/CA

With this approach to classification, watersheds with similar land use are grouped together into one of three classes. This approach will help develop a cost per acre for the regional cost estimate based on these three classes. The costs will be scaled up for each class based on an example watershed. For example, the San Diego River Watershed cost estimate will be applied to the other watersheds in the San Diego Class.

Since this is a regional funding strategy, the funding must be used within San Diego County only, even though some of these watersheds overlap on other jurisdictions.

Agreement on Terms

Having a limited timeframe to develop the cost estimate, this approach saves time in developing cost estimates while maintaining a level of fidelity. The group agreed to use this approach.

The group questioned how non-structural BMP costs would be determined for legislative issues, education and outreach. Example projects can be used to determine a cost estimate for those types of non-structural BMPs. Additional concerns included how these example programs can be extrapolated and whether ongoing costs would be considered.

In response to these concerns, Mr. Snyder from the County of San Diego explained that the cost effectiveness of outreach is difficult to determine, but assumptions can be made about how far funding will take a program. Assumptions will be made based on example watersheds and will be applied to the other San Diego County watersheds. The City of San Diego expects to be able to model the early effectiveness of implemented outreach programs by extrapolating data from pilot studies and applying it towards the future implementation of the program.

Q: How does the unit rate fit with time if is supposed to be per acre?

A: The unit rate is supposed to be physical and refers to the land.

The group discussed ranking education and that a percent of the funding from each proposed strategy needs to be allocated for education. Non-structural BMPs will encompass education. It will take all types of approaches to achieve compliance.

The group discussed how projects should be cut depending on the budget. This is something to be addressed after the prioritization process. In that process, the group will determine whether lower-ranked programs are excluded or whether the funding is scaled down across the board. After the cost estimate is presented in October, the WQWG will continue to meet to flesh out the details of the projects to discuss how funds may be allocated.

Criteria Discussion and Development

The facilitator reviewed the element and program criteria developed by SWG. Element criteria are which elements should be included in the SANDAG Quality of Life Funding Strategy, and program criteria are for prioritization of activities within the four elements (water quality, habitat, shoreline preservation, and transit operations and maintenance). The SWG may potentially use the individual groups' prioritization, but the prioritization must take into consideration the regional perspective.

Review IRWM Planning Process for Ranking and Selecting Projects

Ms. Gaines presented IRWM selection process and criteria as an example. Ms. Gaines explained that the IRWM has a three-step process for identifying projects to fund. If a project does not meet certain key criteria based on the IRWM objectives, it is not considered. Ms. Gaines reviewed the IRWM's three steps of screening, project scoring and ranking.

Issues considered as part of IRWM discussion:

- The process required consensus from diverse 32-member planning committee.
- Remove "Is NOT a follow-on phase of another project" from screening criterion.
- Under Proposition 84, 25% matching is mandatory.
 - DWR can waive it for projects that benefit disadvantage communities.
 - Allocated by population in funding areas

Develop Draft WQWG Criteria

Ms. Kay asked the group to brainstorm about water quality criteria and should there be two levels as the SWG developed. The group agreed to the two levels and will exclude any projects that do not fit.

Issues considered during the Draft WQWG Criteria discussion:

- Projects can only be developed on current figures.
 - Example projects can help "ground-truth" the realities of high-cost projects.
 - Cost estimates are supposed to be developed by scaling up from the San Diego River watershed.
 - Consultant team already has some projects with costs associated.
- Whether the criteria are necessary.
 - Criteria determine what are the best example projects to use for the cost estimate.
 - Criteria show SANDAG the process for determining the relative value of projects.
 - Criteria would help develop costs.

- Criteria and prioritization support how funding should be divided for the watersheds.
- The SWG criteria could be used for the WQWG.
- Developing criteria is just the next step following the framework.
 - The framework may be adequate enough for filtering projects.
- Whether criteria need to be developed before or after presenting the needs assessment report to SANDAG.
 - Group agreed to that WQWG should develop criteria through a subcommittee.
 - Criteria and process for determining criteria will be used in Report.

The group proposed the following when discussing the needs assessment report:

- Part of the report is about how much money is needed.
- The next step after the cost estimate is determining what will be done with less money using the criteria and prioritization.
- The facilitator recommended using the City of San Diego's projects.
 - The WQWG criteria subcommittee will use the SWG criteria in the process of creating WQWG specific criteria.
 - Refine and justify the projects based on the WQWG's BMP structure.
- Use example projects from members for realistic cost estimates beyond just the San Diego River watershed.
 - One member provided example projects from L.A. that included references, benefits and costs.

The next step is for members to bring examples of projects and their water quality benefits along with graphics/illustrations to be used as part of the bottom-up approach:

- The SWG criteria should be used as a measuring tool for the projects.
 - Will focus on determining whether the projects should be funded rather than ranking them.
 - The SWG criterion for the high cost-benefit ratio will be the hardest criterion to meet.
 - That cannot be determined quantitatively, but it can be evaluated on a scale.
- Projects should fill areas not already covered by the existing City of San Diego projects, including Chollas Creek.
 - Can use provided example projects that overlap with example projects we currently have.
 - Do not need to be from this region.
 - Agricultural project examples are needed.

The county/consultant team will determine what types of projects are missing based on what projects they already have.

The group agreed to create a subcommittee to adapt the SWG criteria and make it more granular to water quality issues/projects. Stephanie Gaines volunteered to participate in and recruit four to five members for the subcommittee. Mark Stadler also volunteered to participate in the subcommittee. Michael Beck said he will see if he can participate depending on the meeting date and time. They will also see if Jeff Pasek, Eric Larson, and a member of the San Diego River Park Foundation staff can participate.

Workshop “Bottom Up” Approach

Presentation of Example Projects

Since there will be more targeted criteria for next meeting, Ms. Gaines did not go through all of the example projects and only showed the agriculture example for education and outreach.

Stakeholders “Homework”: Provide Project Examples for Cost Analysis

- *Include Project Description, Water Quality Benefit(s), Cost Information and Graphics*
- *Due by July 14, 2010*

Projects need to be submitted by July 14. A list will be developed of what projects the county/consultant team already has and what may be missing. Projects that overlap or projects that do not fill gaps are still welcome. If members have other ideas on what may be missing, they should let Ms. Gaines or Ms. Kay know.

Next Steps

Members should submit example projects for the next meeting on Tuesday, July 20. Based on today’s meeting discussion, the next meeting will most likely be another two-hour meeting rather than three hours.