

County of San Diego Water Quality Working Group Meeting Summary

Tuesday, October 19, 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

Michael Beck, Endangered Habitats League

Chris Cate, San Diego County Taxpayers Association

Stephanie Gaines, County of San Diego

Kris McFadden, City of San Diego

Tim Murphy, City of Carlsbad

Jeff Pasek, City of San Diego

Mark Stadler, San Diego County Water Authority

Kim Williams, Geosyntec Consultants

Midori Wong, SANDAG

Marion Marrow, American Society of Landscape Architects

Eric Becker, San Diego County Regional Water Quality Control Board

Cid Tesoro, County of San Diego

Supporting Roles

Michael Drennan, Weston Solutions

Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates

Danielle Thorsen, Katz & Associates

Other

Nancy Gardiner, Brown & Caldwell

Introductions and Agenda Review

For today's meeting, the WQWG will review and give feedback on the presentation that will be given at the Oct. 20 Quality of Life SWG meeting. The group will then discuss the future schedule and tasks of the WQWG. Ms. Gaines and Mr. Drennan will also give a mock presentation of what they will be presenting at the California Association of Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) conference, time permitting.

Meeting Summary Review

The group approved the September meeting summary as is.

Draft Presentation to SWG

The presentation that will be made at tomorrow's SWG meeting is a progress report of the WQWG's work so far. The hope is to get feedback and direction from the SWG on how to finalize the Needs Assessment and Cost Estimate so that it presents policy choices that are useful for the SWG's consideration.

Ms. Gaines and Mr. Drennan reviewed the presentation with the WQWG. They noted that the cost estimates were scaled to reflect 2010 present-day dollars for consistency with the other three elements' cost estimates that the SWG is examining.

Review and Comment of Presentation and Report

The group offered the following comments and suggestions for the presentation:

“Background” slide

- List the WQWG members’ organization affiliations rather than the individual members’ names.
- Use the wording “The following groups participated in the process”; should not imply support by all those groups.

“Need and Cost Estimate” slide (1 of 2)

- Concerned that the SWG might say that if the entire proposed amount cannot be funded, why should any of it be funded if that is how much it will take to achieve compliance.
- Show the need for funding and that any funding can be effective in making progress towards achieving water quality.
- Should try to estimate how much federal, state and local money could be contributed to the proposed projects.
 - Mr. Tesoro said that the County may be able to provide their data.
 - It is mostly local funding that has been available for water quality.
 - Getting matching funds from federal, state or local sources would strengthen the appeal to SWG and addresses the SWG’s criteria for leveraging funds.
- Make the images larger.
- Make clearer the progression from “bad” to “good” in the water quality images.

“Need and Cost Estimate” slide (2 of 2)

- Note that a SANDAG-generated regional funding source would not supplant existing water quality funds being spent by local jurisdictions.
- The benefits of meeting water quality objectives should be emphasized beyond just the costs of compliance.
 - Non-compliance is far more costly than the cost of compliance.
- Clearly explain what the charts, tables, and cost estimates represent.

Q: What do the “Current Spending” and “40-year Estimate” represent?

A: The “Current Spending” estimate of \$4.9 billion is the projected cost of jurisdictions continuing to spend on water quality over the next 40 years at their current levels with no new programs or projects put into place. The “40-year Estimate” of \$24.9 billion is what is projected to fully cover water quality needs over the next 40 years based on what is known about future water quality standards and regulations.

Q: Does the \$24.9 billion meet water quality objectives or just compliance?

A: If funding continues at the \$4.9 billion amount, compliance will not be met when it comes to future TMDLs. The \$24.9 billion is expected to cover more than just permit compliance, but also water quality issues such as bacteria and heavy metals in the water that will be regulated by TMDLs.

Q: Would the “40-year Estimate” replace or add onto the “Current Spending” amount of \$4.9 billion?

A: Ms. Gaines said the proposed funding would supplement the existing water quality funding. Thus, the “gap” between current spending and projected funding needs is \$20 billion over 40 years.

“Prioritizing Process” slide

- Remove the graphic of the BMP buckets; it is too much detail for the audience.
- Instead, include three photos showing non-structural, structural, and restoration BMPs.
 - Include a title for each photo.
 - Use the photos as example BMP projects.
 - Use an agricultural photo for the structural BMP example.
 - Use example projects that the public supports.
- Use laymen terms for the examples.

“Leveraging Funding” slide

- Include examples of other funding sources such as Proposition 40 and the state’s 2012 Water Bond.

“Economy of Water Quality” slide

- Remove the “Jurisdictions Budgets” bullet point.
 - Still explain the issue of competition in the general fund.
- Include an illustration of a watershed.
- Move “Beaches and Tourism” to the top.
 - Explain that beaches are what people associate with San Diego.
- Add “benefits from regional efficiency” under the “Regional Need” bullet.

Closing

- There will probably be a lot of questions, so a summary slide is not necessary.
- Instead of a summary, the dual SWG/WQWG members could give amplifying comments during or after the SWG presentation explaining that any funding would be useful to reach water quality objectives, even if it does not meet the entire funding amount.

In the future, the WQWG may want to quantify some of the regional stormwater accomplishments to show what is already being done for water quality. It is also important to explain that stormwater agencies are continually achieving higher water quality standards, which contributes to the rising cost of reaching water quality objectives.

Update and Next Steps for WQWG

Based primarily on the needs of SANDAG, the purpose of the WQWG is essentially complete in December when it provides the final needs assessment and cost estimate. However, from the beginning of the WQWG there has been an understanding that it may be able to provide other benefits to the region independent of SANDAG’s Quality of Life initiative. Although it is not necessary for the WQWG to meet beyond December, it is the County that convened the WQWG and is its prerogative as to whether this group will continue, not SANDAG’s.

The group expressed interest in continuing to meet beyond December. The group will evaluate in December in what capacity the WQWG could continue to serve. For example, because the SWG members are not experts in all of the areas they are evaluating, including water quality, the WQWG members could advise the SWG and/or SANDAG on decisions about the water quality projects and ballot language, should SANDAG go forward with a funding measure. The WQWG has also talked about whether the needs assessment could be a first step in developing a regional master plan for water quality.

In the future, the WQWG could also consider working jointly with other allied SANDAG committees, particularly the habitat working group.

Draft CASQA Presentation

WQWG members were invited to preview the needs assessment presentation to be given at the California Stormwater Quality Association annual conference. Ms. Gaines and Mr. Drennan briefly previewed the presentation for the remaining members.

The remaining members provided the following feedback:

- IRIS should be spelled out.
- Present the WQWG's work as the needs assessment rather than trying to explain the Quality of Life initiative.
 - The complexity of the initiative may detract from the overall message.
 - SANDAG has its own speaking points
 - Classify the needs assessment as a regional effort.
 - If attendees have questions, provide them with a link to the QOL Web page.
- Remove all references to the Quality of Life.
 - Remove "Water Quality Framework" from the "Element Goal" slide.
 - Use "40-year Funding Strategy" instead of "Quality of Life Initiative" on the title slide.
 - Remove "element" and "SANDAG" from the "Ranking Criteria" slide.
- "Actual" is misspelled on the "Needs Assessment" slide.
- Change "criterion" to "criteria" on the "Ranking Criteria" slide.
- Remove "created" from the "Ranking Criteria" slide.
- Include the "after" image for the "Forester Creek" slide.
- Move the "Fits In" slide to the beginning of the presentation.
- Mention jurisdictions' general funds and the need for a reliable water quality fund.

The conference is a good forum to ask attendees what other counties/regions are doing, if anything, to regionally fund water quality.

Next Steps

WQWG members are encouraged to attend the Oct. 20 SWG presentation to observe their response and feedback and assist in answering any questions.

The BMP buckets should be fleshed out for the December presentation. Ms. Gaines will bring the SWG evaluation criteria to the next WQWG meeting.