

Watershed Planning Guidance Group (WPGG) Minutes
June 23, 2005
Metro Wastewater, Kearny Mesa

In attendance:

Craig Adams (San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy), Chuck Badger (San Diego County Farm Bureau), Lilian Busse (Scripps Institute of Oceanography – TAC), Bob Collins (City of San Diego), Melanie Craig (Weston Solutions), Joseph DeStefano II (County of San Diego, MSCP Division), Peggy Goldstein (County of San Diego), Ted Griswold (Procopio Cory Hargreaves & Savitch, LLP – TAC), Maeve Hanley (San Diego County Parks - TAC), Susan Hector, Ph.D. (ASM Associates – TAC), John Ingalls (Santa Fe Irrigation District), Rosanna Lacarra (City of Del Mar), Dave Meyer (Rancho Bernardo Planning Board), Suzanne Michel (So. Calif. Wetlands Recovery Project), Chris Nyce (Cleveland National Forest), Jeff Pasek (City of San Diego - TAC), Bruce Posthumus (RWQCB), Phil Pryde (River Park JPA), Freda Reid (San Dieguito Lagoon Committee), Bill Simmons (San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy/WPGG Vice Chairman), Dexter Wilson (Dexter Wilson Engineering – TAC), Jacqueline Winterer (Friends of San Dieguito River Park), Matt Witman (San Pasqual Valley Planning), Richard Wright (San Diego State University – TAC), David Younkman (Volcan Mountain Preserve Foundation)

Meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Chairman Mark Whitehead.

A) Introductions:

Bob Collins welcomed everyone to the joint meeting of the Watershed Policy Group and the Technical Advisory Committee, and asked that each person introduce him/herself and that the TAC members mention their field of expertise.

B) Announcements:

Richard Wright brought in copies of the Tijuana River watershed atlas for anyone who wanted a copy.

Bob Collins announced that the County was having its third symposium on Project Clean Water. More information is available on their web site.

Mark Whitehead asked if everyone had read the minutes of the April meeting and if there were any comments or changes. It was mentioned that Maienschein's name was misspelled, it will be corrected. Bill Simmons moved that the minutes be approved with one correction, Matt Witman seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

C) Issues of Concern Matrix

The Issues of Concern matrix was e-mailed to all members. Jeff Pasek distributed large color copies of the matrix and the key.

The committee went through the matrix cell by cell and asked the question, is this a concern in this watershed? They came up with four answers to that question which determined the cell colors. The gray areas are not issues of concern. The pink areas are direct issues; they had notes or created new notes to explain or give an example of the concern. Some pink areas do not have numbers in them; the group thought they were an issue but had no written notes in support. The committee took specific examples and put them into general boxes.

Items No. 1-30 came from group comments and discussions. Items No. 31-49 the Issues of Concern Committee (Bruce, Cathy, Melanie, and Jeff) came up with. Mark Whitehead asked if any new items had been added from the TAC field trips. Jeff said that he did not think so.

Jacqueline Winterer asked when to let the group know if she felt some issues were mis-assigned. Bruce Posthumus said to let Jeff, Bruce, Cathy, or Melanie know by e-mail.

The third category of cells were the light gray areas which were considered not direct issues, not as definite as the pink cells. The fourth category was the white areas which was for things not yet considered/discovered.

Jeff Pasek advised that some items were combined to make better sense. Also, some key comments were moved to make more sense. They put "Other" in the left column to leave room for any additions.

Mark Whitehead thanked the committee for their hard work coming up with a great product. He asked if this new format satisfied everyone.

Craig Adams said that nothing is perfect but that the matrix will be a great comprehensive tool. Craig suggested that concerns (negatives) and opportunities (positives) should be included on the same list. Mark Whitehead commented that this was brought up at the last meeting and that opportunities (ways to improve things) were considered ""action items"" and that positives (what is good about the watershed) would be included in the Existing Conditions Report.

Rosanna Lacarra said that opportunities fall somewhere between issues and existing conditions. Bruce Posthumus said that the matrix is a tool to help the group think about priorities; is an issue of high, medium, or low concern? It will help to strategize and create action items.

Mark Whitehead said that he thought he had heard mention of an Issues of Concern document that was to be prepared by July. Bob Collins said that the matrix was a vehicle to prioritize where the group wants to spend funds on in Phase II and III. Mark asked if it would appear in the watershed plan. Bob advised that he hoped it would.

Jeff Pasek advised that the matrix was not finished yet. They could regroup all the pink areas together to better see where the problems are.

Mark Whitehead said he would like to see everything on one page so you could see at a glance what the problems are and not have to look up the meaning of the numbers on a second page. Maybe put an abbreviated description directly on the matrix with complete descriptions on an additional page. Bruce Posthumus said that some items were very specific, they could provide examples but it might be hundreds per cell. Mark would like it to be clear when looking at a cell, just what the problem is. Mark also asked if a cell with a lot of numbers indicated more pressing issues. Not necessarily; it is the number of pink cells rather than number of numbers that indicate pressing issues.

Bill Simmons noted that there were some pink areas with no numbers and some gray areas with numbers. Even though gray areas were not considered direct issues, if there was a comment made by someone, the committee did not want to lose that, so put a number in a gray cell when necessary.

Dexter Wilson felt that the format was good but that the numbers were confusing everyone. He suggested they use a footnote in the lower right corner in small type for indirect issues and use the middle of the cell for more significant issues.

Bruce commented that the most important thing was the color of the cell, not the numbers in the cells. Mark Whitehead said that the reason a cell is pink has real meaning because these are the issues that will drive the watershed plan. Comment numbers may be more narrowly defined items, pink cells are a broader view. Numbers are meant to be examples of the type of issues within the category of the pink cells.

Mark Whitehead suggested that everyone use this matrix as a way to organize their thoughts, it can be constantly updated. Keep it with you and think about things that might need to be added, deleted, or changed. The group can spend about ten minutes at each meeting discussing any new items or changes.

Rosanna Lacarra suggested that the matrix would be a living document, to be used beyond the plan implementation, 5-10 years down the line for whoever continues to work with the watershed.

Suzanne Michel asked what standards were used to create the matrix categories. Bruce Posthumus advised that the list was more or less casual observations, that someone in the group expressed concern about. Others were just things that the committee discussed and felt either were issues or not. Mark Whitehead asked about pink areas with no numbers for things that the committee thought were possibly issues. Jeff said that if everything was pink the matrix would have no value. Cell colors can be changed if all agree.

Bill Simmons said that lack of coordinated planning by governmental agencies was an issue that seems to have been lost. Jeff said that some issues were combined, but it may have been lost from key. Peggy Goldstein said that communication and coordination are very different things. You can have lots of communication but no coordination.

Joseph DeStefano commented that different agencies plan very differently. There is a difference between coordination of effort and agreement. Agencies do coordinate their efforts but cannot always come to an agreement.

Bob Collins asked members to send comments and/or suggestions to Jeff Pasek, Bruce Posthumus, Cathy Cibit or Melanie Craig and thanked the committee for their hard work on the matrix.

D) Draft Vision Statement

At the last meeting it was agreed that we needed a vision statement. Many members sent in suggestions for the draft vision statement. Bob Collins said that he, Dave Meyer, and Cathy Cibit (the Vision Sub-committee) reviewed the suggestions. The vision sub-committee considered each suggestion received and used parts of the suggestions to come up with a theme and one vision statement hopefully acceptable to the group, preferably in 20 words or less. The draft is not necessarily the final statement, but the committee came up with the following draft vision statement "San Dieguito Watershed, where working together preserves, protects and enhances a healthy and resilient landscape from coast to crest." Bob mentioned that he has been involved with groups without a common vision and that they were really suffering.

Dave Meyer suggested that the group also come up with guiding principles to measure progress toward our vision. These principles would be a compass to guide the group now and down the road. Having each organization involved with the development of the watershed plan sign off on the vision statement would show a documented commitment.

Mark Whitehead asked for an example of guiding principles. Bob said that if the group was interested in creating guiding principles that the committee would go back and work on some examples. Dave Meyer said that we could get examples from other watersheds. Certain elements are basic for all watersheds.

Freda Reid worried about the term “work together.” How many different and varied stakeholders are there?

Jacqueline Winterer said that it should read “crest to coast” instead of “coast to crest” as water comes from the top of the mountains going to the coast.

Mark Whitehead said that he was troubled by the fact that the words “water quality” do not appear in the draft vision statement and the word “landscape” does. He was also bothered by the word “resilient.” Resilient implies that we are going to arm something against onslaught.

Chris Nyce said that he liked the statement, not just because it used a lot of words from his suggestion. We are arming the watershed against growth.

Suzanne Michel thought that if you took the statement to a group of high school students that you would get blank stares. She felt that it needs to be more specific for people to get the picture of the goals/vision.

Mark Whitehead felt that the vision statement should be an inspirational message to get people on board with our vision.

Jeff Pasek suggested including two more words, “water” and “natural.”

Rosanna Lacarra suggested using the word “healthy” in place of “resilient.”

Bruce Posthumus said maybe a “healthy watershed overall.”

Phil Pryde agreed that healthy was a good word. He suggested substituting the word “sustainable” in place of “resilient.”

Ted Griswold suggested using “river valley” instead of “landscape” which suggests big green trucks. Bob Collins suggested everyone send in their suggestions to him or Cathy and to also send in suggestions for guiding principles.

E) Project Update/Overview

Melanie Craig said that the Existing Conditions Report is complete, she is now working on compiling comments. By next month they should have all the comments on the Existing Conditions Report. They will have a draft presentation by next month for members to take out to their organizations. There will also be a questionnaire to take with you. Members should be rolling out the presentation by August or September. The presentation will just be graphics and visuals, no sound, so each person

will do their own commentary about it. Presentation will be distributed on CDs and will be a Power Point presentation. If anyone has special computer requirements such as MAC, please let her know.

Mark Whitehead mentioned that the Existing Conditions Report is posted on the web and the pictures are wonderful. Some members have posted suggestions. TAC was involved in reviewing the EXR.

Bob Collins advised that the grant requires that we create a Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). We have done that. The TAC took field trips to the upper and middle watersheds and were provided a self directed tour handout for the lower watershed for members who have the time. The TAC reviewed the Existing Conditions Report and met on June 9th. There was a memo with the TAC's recommendations with the email that was sent out. Melanie, Cathy and Bob met and tried to put a framework around where the comments from TAC came from. The three big issues were (1) land use, (2) water quality, and (3) cultural resources. The TAC had some interesting discussions about what plan really portrays and what is going to happen to the watershed. The TAC suggested revising the land use section of the document.

They also had some discussion about what you actually see out on the ground reflect may not be what is in the plan. There may be some disconnection between the plan and what is actually on the ground. Some questions and observations included what we can reasonably expect in terms of development in the watershed and what impacts that would have on imperviousness, etc. With regard to water quality, the TAC felt it needed information on organics in the water and the effect on the ecosystem and a discussion of nutrients should be included, as well as impaired water bodies.

As to monitoring, there is a lot on the coast but very limited inland. Some of the impaired water bodies were listed because monitoring had occurred there, mainly by the City Water Department. The TAC felt the cultural resources section needed to be more general, some felt it was too specific.

Also included were the notes from the two field trips and TAC was asked to look at those to see if they are accurate.

The TAC was formed to provide technical advice to the policy group in terms of what they saw in the document and in terms of their expertise that the document is as accurate as possible. Bob looked for a chairman, and everyone looked back at him, so he will be the spokesperson for the TAC.

The field trips were very useful. We will probably plan more trips to get a real idea of what is happening out there.

Melanie Craig did an excellent job of capturing the comments.

Bob distributed a suggestion by the TAC that the Existing Conditions Report portray existing and planned land uses, what is on the ground now and what is being planned for each of the jurisdictions in the watershed.

Weston will talk to the County about what is in the SANDAG 2030 document. The majority of the members wanted to get the Existing Conditions behind them and get to the action stuff. Weston will take the comments and put them into a revised document so you can see where the changes were made. The final Existing Conditions Report will be available by early August and Weston hopes to get the group's approval at the August meeting.

Craig Adams requested that the revised Existing Conditions Report be sent out without the strikeout showing changes which make it very confusing to read. Some people stated that they wanted the strikeout version.

Suzanne Michel advised that the Wetlands Recovery Project, the Coastal Commission, and Project Nemo are very interested in doing outreach and education on watersheds in southern California. They would hold a workshop and take the Existing Conditions Report and analyze it, do peer review, and do outreach on it. Suzanne asked if the policy group would like her to submit the San Dieguito River Watershed to the Coastal Commission as a potential project. It was agreed that Suzanne will submit the San Dieguito Watershed for consideration.

Bill Simmons asked what was involved, how much work? The request was to do a workshop within the next six months and then at the Wetlands Recovery Project forum which is about a year from now to discuss what has been learned and how it can be applied to the rest of Southern California.

Bill Simmons asked if comments could be integrated into the report and how much conflict was there among the comments. Melanie Craig said there was not much conflict, a lot of the comments were very similar which would make it easier to integrate.

Mark Whitehead had a question for Bob Collins regarding land use patterns, and showing existing land use patterns. Then there are land use plans for each of the various jurisdictions. Isn't one of our goals to influence land use planning? Where do you see the watershed plan interfacing with land use decisions and current existing and approved land use plans?

Mark Whitehead asked what influence the watershed plan would have on land use plans. Bob Collins explained that we can only make suggestions about impacts of land use planning and ask individual jurisdictions to consider the suggestions in land use decision making.

Ted Griswold mentioned that there was no plan 50 years ago, maybe it was too complicated to plan back then. Now there is a need for sustainable planning in this area. The Existing Conditions Report kind of says that but not exactly. The objective is to offer enlightenment based on a very well researched document.

Bob asked Bruce Posthumus to share his views of the watershed planning process. Bruce expressed that there are two schools of thought on watershed planning:

1. formally approved and adopted watershed plans by Cities/County, and
2. suggestions: an advisory document that contains suggestions. Individual agencies then decide what to do or not to do.

Argument for #1, what good is it if not adopted. However in favor of #2 is that jurisdictions may find something in the alternative plan that is not consistent with their own individual plans. In either case it is essential that watershed planning make a difference. Just to create the watershed plan and have it sit on a shelf would mean we have wasted our time and wasted our money. An analogy to watershed planning would be like this, "a huge ship will hit a bridges abutment if it keeps going the way it has been going, and a tugboat has to come along and nudge the ship onto a safer course." Jurisdictions in the watershed need to understand that doing things the way they have always done may not be in the best interest of the watershed.

Meeting Announcements:

- 1) Next meeting for the TAC will be around January. We will send out an e-mail and hopefully will have a draft watershed plan for the TAC review at that time.
- 2) There will be a phone conference with the executive committee to talk about the Power Point presentation and how that will be rolled out, and the comments we want to get back from that exercise.
- 3) At the July meeting we will review the Power Point presentation, talk further about Issues of Concern matrix, and if timely talk about the framework plan in terms of where we are going.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Next meeting of the policy group will be July 28, 2005, at the Escondido City Hall.