SAN DIEGO RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN WORKSHOP SUMMARY

LAKESIDE COMMUNITY CENTER
FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 2002

Dianne Jacob, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and thanking them for their involvement in this project.

Lewis Michaelson, the workshop facilitator, then provided a brief overview of the purpose of the workshop. Participants were thanked for their attendance and informed that this was the second in a series of three workshops aimed at soliciting the public's input and ideas on the development of a watershed management plan (WMP) for the San Diego River Watershed.

Teresa Brownyard, County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health (DEH), provided an overview of the project. After describing the scope of the project, Ms. Brownyard provided an overview of the many important environmental resources in the watershed. She emphasized the importance of public participation in ensuring that the WMP reflects the public interest. Participants were then provided with an overview of the project schedule. It was noted that prior to completion of the WMP in February 2005, there would be two more rounds of public workshops in mid-2004 and early 2005. In addition to the workshops, Ms. Brownyard encouraged interested members of the public to participate on the San Diego River Watershed Workgroup, which meets on the second Friday of even months from 1-3 p.m. at the City of Santee, 10601 Magnolia Avenue, Building 8. She informed everyone of the project website (www.projectcleanwater.org) and emphasized that it should be used as an informational resource as well as an avenue for providing input.

Ivan Holler then spoke on behalf of the County of San Diego's Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU). Mr. Holler informed attendees that project management duties for WMP development would soon be transferring from DEH to the DPLU.

After the presentations, participants were asked if they required any clarification on the information presented. Following this, they were encouraged to provide input on two aspects of the development of Plan:

- What should the goals and objectives of the Watershed Management Plan be?
- What methods should be employed to accomplish these goals?

Participants were informed that they would first address these issues in a facilitated discussion, following which they would be asked to write their suggestions and concerns down on index cards for consideration in the development of the WMP.

During the open discussion, participants were free to raise issues and make comments on any topic they chose. To facilitate the reader's understanding, however, comments have been grouped into categories by topic. The categories are listed in the order of the number of comments received, starting with topics receiving the most frequent comments.

DISCUSSION

1. **Water Quality** (7)
    a. Groundwater quality is an important issue. This area has eight or nine groundwater wells that serve up to 50,000 people. The Management Plan must address the protection and monitoring of groundwater quality.
    b. Is the County only concerned with what's at the far end or all along the watershed?
    c. There needs to be regular monitoring of the watershed and the data should be made available to the public.
    d. Different communities that exist along the San Diego River Watershed need to be educated on the consequences of disposing manure into the river and offered other alternatives for disposal.
    e. Improve water quality by creating extensive wetland areas that allow the water to sink into the ground.
    f. People need to be educated about water quality issues.
    g. Heavy river users need to be engaged in the process to protect water quality.

2. **Wildlife Habitat/Wetlands** (5)
    a. There needs to be a coordinated and consistent effort toward the removal of exotics and invasives. Tamarisk and Pampas grass are particularly of concern upstream. Studies have shown that the removal of tamarisk results in a prompt increase in the quality and quantity of water. However, removal needs to be undertaken repeatedly until the invasive has been completely eliminated from the site.
    b. Land that already has a viable habitat needs to be acquired so that we protect what is already there.

c. There is a new piece of equipment that has been very effective in the removal of invasives. The San Diego County Department of Public Works should be able to provide more information on this equipment.

d. Create extensive areas of wetlands to allow water to seep in the ground and filter out contaminants.

e. Explore opportunities to construct wetlands.

3. **Public Education and Partnerships (6)**

a. The local school system is an untapped resource. The Plan should include an outreach program that engages schools, and gives students hands-on experience and teaches them to be caretakers of the earth.

b. The Plan must definitely have an education component.

c. Use the Web site as a communication tool and create a community bulletin for the exchange of ideas and information.

d. Forge partnerships with groups and people already engaged in such activities and give them ownership. The San Diego Native Plants Society and the Cuyamaca Community College are two such groups.

e. Show people how they can help and provide them with the assets.

f. People need to be educated about the concerns of sand mining.

4. **Water Quantity and Reliability** (5)

a. The issue of recharging groundwater wells also needs to be considered.

b. San Diego County needs additional water storage capacity and in light of this, another dam should be built further up the watershed.

c. Given how crucial water is, as little as possible should be allowed to reach the ocean. Cofferdams should be built all along the watershed to capture water before it reaches the ocean.

d. People need to be educated about appropriate landscaping for this region. They strip out native plants and plant exotic high-water using species. There needs to be more awareness about Xeriscape and drought-tolerant plants.

e. Encourage water conservation to increase water availability.

5. **Land Use** (4)

a. Limit growth in order to protect water and habitat quality.

b. Will this process or its work product have any authority to influence growth in the region?

c. Property values must also be kept in mind and the Management Plan should also work to the benefit of the property owners.

d. Easements are an effective way to deal with the concerns of property owners. Programs in Colorado have been successful in making property owners give up rights to develop certain portions of their property in exchange for tax benefits.

6. **Other** (3)

   a. The San Diego Watershed crosses several jurisdictions and there needs to be efficient coordination between agencies for the Watershed Management Plan to be effective.

   b. Have regular meetings to discuss issues pertaining to watershed management.

   c. The upper reaches of the watershed are already designated as wild and scenic area – do not waste a lot of resources studying upstream.

After the open discussion concluded, each participant was given index cards to document his or her suggestions and to offer any new ideas not brought up during the discussion. Participants were asked to list the most important issues and objectives that the WMP should address and/or the methods to accomplish them. If they chose, they could number their suggestions to indicate highest to lowest priority. Each set of comments below reflects the comments made by a single individual.

INDEX CARDS

Set 1: *(No particular priority order)*

- Water supply/reliability (surface and ground).
- Engaging industry to participate in the watershed effort:
  a. Indian nation
  b. Industry which is located/relies on the San Diego River
  c. Agricultural community
- Water resource protection through land use regulation.

Set 2: *(No particular priority order)*

- Storage.

- Recharge of groundwater.
- Quality of water.
- Conservation.
- Run-off.

Set 3: *(No particular priority order)*

- Education measures focusing on the youth.
    a. Create expert groups along the watershed for:
        i. Data collection
        ii. Work force
        iii. Outreach programs
        iv. Youth prevention program
- Partnerships
    b. Communication between groups

Set 4:

1. Water quality is most important – no industrial uses near a river, stream, pond or lake.

Set 5:

1. Water reuse!!! Either for recycled water (irrigation) or especially for drinking water using water hyacinths, reverse osmosis, etc.
2. Use of wetlands for groundwater recharge and surface water cleansing.

Set 6:

1. Acquisition of land – This is the surest way to preserve and protect.
2. Creation of wetlands.
3. Outreach programs to educate and involve primary users of the San Diego River.
4. Addition of an education element to the management plan.

Set 7: *(No particular priority order)*

- Please do not ignore the impact of non-point source pollution (i.e., individual residential contribution). IT ALL ADDS UP!

- The most effective method we found in the Tahoe region for dealing with stormwater run-off was natural vegetation areas (vegetated swales, berms, etc.).
- Structural BMPs tend to be high maintenance and more costly.
- Finally, go native with the vegetation.

Set 8:

Education – Public information and training on specific topics like:

1. Manure management.
2. Septic/leach field impacts.
3. Run-off versus drainage.
4. Groundwater monitoring.
5. Aquifer monitoring/rate of loss.

Money *(No particular priority order)*

- Is this all worthwhile? What are the benefits?
- Where is the money going?
- Who controls the money?

Politics *(No particular priority order)*

- How is this related to state and federal laws?
- How is the County affected by City concerns and vice versa? For example, San Vicente water pumped out for use in Barona.

Set 9:

1. Land acquisition or conservation easements to create buffers in riparian areas – especially around agriculture.
2. Creation of extensive wetlands.
3. Data sharing among several agencies – County, City, Water Districts, etc.
4. Public education and outreach – Evening meetings to inform adults and use school to involve kids (design curriculum, etc.).
5. New growth should use swales, wetlands and other means to avoid storm drains and increase groundwater infiltration.

Set 10:

1. Acquisition of land.
2. Create wetlands.

3. Add an education component to the plan. Part of that being a proactive approach to informing the public (i.e., make our city understand why this needs to happen before the plan is even in place).

   Engage other citizen groups, environmental organizations, etc. Organic farmers have a wealth of information.

Set 11:

1. Develop a plan that enables results to be measured.
2. Enforcement of present codes would/could produce immediate results.
3. Ways to improve water quality and quantity.
4. Education, conservation, youth.