



project clean water

Science and Technology TAC Basin Planning Issues Technical Workgroup

Meeting Summary
September 18, 2002

The Basin Planning Issues Technical Workgroup met on September 18, 2002 to discuss a regional strategy for providing stakeholder input and support to the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board for the upcoming triennial review of its Basin Plan. The Workgroup discussed four areas where efforts should be directed. These are listed below.

Sheri McPherson, County of San Diego, began the discussion by providing a brief history of the Basin Plan and triennial review process. In short, the Basin Plan has evolved through a series of amendments over the last 30 years, but remains largely based upon the original document as it was adopted in 1971. Among other things, the Basin Plan defines water quality objectives and beneficial uses for the surface and ground waters throughout the region. The Plan is intended to be a dynamic document, amenable to change as new data or information becomes available. During the triennial review process, the Regional Board evaluates all available information to identify and prioritize “projects” – which Regional Board staff defined as issues that may require a Basin Plan amendment.

Regional Board Comments

In response to several requests for clarification regarding the triennial review process, Regional Board staff members Art Coe and Christina Arias provided the following information:

- There is currently no timeline for commencement of the triennial review; however, Executive Officer Robertus has indicated that, despite resource constraints, he is committed to conducting the review in the near future.
- The triennial review consists of the identification and prioritization of “projects” as defined above. These projects originate from two sources: 1) a formal solicitation of public ideas for projects, and 2) Regional Board staff suggestions.
- The triennial review is the opportunity for the Regional Board to assess whether current water quality objectives and beneficial uses are valid.
- Events have superseded the project priority list developed during the previous triennial review (1998). For example, several of the top priority projects remain on hold, while others lower on the list are nearing completion. This illustrates the need for a new triennial review.
- Art Coe suggested that a possible purpose for this technical workgroup would be to identify 2 or 3 top regional priority projects to which stakeholders would be willing to devote resources.

- Christina Arias indicated that she is provisionally envisioning the development of a new priority project list from scratch; that is, the top priority projects on hold from the last triennial review need not be the top priority projects resulting from the upcoming process.
- Art suggested that one output of this technical workgroup might be a suggestion about when the triennial review should commence.

Stakeholder Concerns

The following questions and comments were voiced by interested parties at the meeting:

- This Workgroup should work in a cooperative and pro-active way to influence the triennial review process rather than reactively responding to Board work products as was done during the 303(d) process.
- The triennial review process should address whether water quality objectives and beneficial uses currently in the Basin Plan are valid since money is currently being spent in response to meeting these targets.
- The public and agency staff need to be better informed about the triennial review process. A water quality standards course, workshops, and website links to other regional processes were suggested as potential educational opportunities.
- How much will limited resources constrain Board efforts to implement priority projects? Will there be Board staff dedicated to this project?
- Regional research entities (universities) need to be better harnessed as they are an important source of funding and are willing to direct their research efforts toward areas of stakeholder priority. In this way research can better inform policy and management decisions. Identification of a water-related project for the Regional Workbench Consortium conference in May 2003 was suggested as a potential action item for this Workgroup.
- Clarification is needed as to how the Regional Board prioritizes its project list and how these projects, in turn, lead to Basin Plan amendments.
- What is involved in conducting a “use attainability analysis”? (UAA is a procedure undertaken to relax/strengthen a standard or add/eliminate a beneficial use.)
- The impacts on groundwater resources of importing high-TDS water should be explored.
- Can some priority projects from the 1998 list be removed?
- Does the Regional Board set its priorities by waterbody?

Workgroup’s Purpose

General consensus was reached that the workgroup’s focus should be on the following four items:

- Provide pro-active input during the triennial review process
- Facilitate the education of the public/staff regarding the Basin Plan amendment process
- Prioritize a few Basin Plan projects to which stakeholders would be willing to devote resources
- Identify and begin compiling useful scientific data for submittal to the Regional Board

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Basin Plan Technical Workgroup is scheduled for Wednesday, November 6 (1:00-3:00 pm) at the Metro Biosolids facility. A draft agenda can be found Project Clean Water website at <http://www.projectcleanwater.org/>.

**Basin Planning Issues Workgroup
September 18, 2002
Attendees List**

Christina Arias –San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Dick Bobertz – San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority
Deanna Boshears – San Diego Landfill Systems
John Brandt – Law Crandall
Seekey Cacciatore – City of Chula Vista
Mike Cairns – PBS&J
Rob Chichester – U.S. Navy, Southwest Environmental Code
Art Coe - San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Arlene Dea Deeley – City of San Diego, Water Department
Steve Dow – Berryman & Henigar
Bruce Furbush – NRG Energy, Inc.
Paul Gebert – San Diego County Water Authority
Steve Geyer – Tetra Tech
Karen Helyer – Port of San Diego
Rob Hutsel – San Diego River Park Foundation
Chuck Katz – SPAWARSYSCEN, Marine Environmental Division
Kit Kesinger – Ramona Water District and Iron Mountain Conservancy
Eric Klein – County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health
Ruth Kolb - City of San Diego, Stormwater Program
Rosanna Lacarra – MEC Analytical
Cynthia Mallett – Mission Resource Conservation District
Sheri McPherson - County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health
Jeff Murphy - County of San Diego, Department of Planning and Land Use
Jeffery Pasek – City of San Diego, Water Department
Mary Anne Pentis – Vernal Pool Society
Al Pentis – Vernal Pool Society
Keith Pezzoli – UCSD, Urban Studies and Planning Program
Chris Stransky – AMEC Earth and Environmental
Todd Snyder - County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health
Cid Tesero - County of San Diego, Department of Public Works
Alan Thum – San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy
Jon Van Rhyn - County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health
Kathy Weldon – City of Encinitas
George Wilkins – Pacific REMS
Edward Wimmer – City of Lemon Grove
Nancy Winiarz – Port of San Diego