

Coachella Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Program

Coachella Valley Tribes

Thursday May 20, 2010
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Coachella Valley Water District
85-995 Avenue 52
Coachella, CA 92236

DRAFT NOTES

Attendees:

Tribe Workgroup

Belinda Ray, BIA
Cynthis Morales, BIA
Douglas Garcia, BIA
Christina Mokhtarzadeh, BIA
Margaret Park, Agua Caliente
Debi Livesay, Torres-Martinez
Lonnie Rodriguez, ??
Anthony Madrigal, Jr., 29 Palms
Michael Jackson, Cabazon
Les Ramirez, Augustine
Anna Aljabiry, DWR

CVRWVG

Arden Wallum, MSWD
Marilyn McKay, MSWD
Mark Krause, DWA
David Tate, DWA
Katie Ruark, DWA
Dan Parks, CVWD
Patti Reyes, CVWD
Paul Giera, IWA
Andrea Riesgo, IWA
Paul Toor, CWA
Tom West, RMC
Roselyn Stewart, RMC
Daniel Cozad, IPM

Meeting Objectives:

- A. Create a common understanding/expectations of the Coachella Valley IRWM program, including schedule, key milestones, and stakeholder involvement.
- B. Obtain feedback on regional water resource issues to make sure issues are covered and articulated appropriately.
- C. Confirm involvement in and commitment to future meetings and to providing input to IRWM Plan development. Confirm key points of contact. Identify other potentially important participants.
- D. Share/capture other relevant thoughts and ideas for future discussion.

Meeting Notes:

Patti Reyes, Coachella Valley Water District, welcomed the group and thanked them for attending. Daniel Cozad, Integrated Planning and Management, introduced the meeting agenda and facilitated the discussion.

Introduction to IRWM Program

Tom West, RMC Water and Environment, provided an overview of the State's IRWM program and its goals/objectives, upcoming Prop 84 funding opportunities, and the activities considered relevant to IRWM planning. He provided an overview of the CVRWMG and the Coachella Valley IRWM region. Finally, he reviewed the proposed work plan and schedule for development of the Coachella Valley IRWM Plan.

- How does the CVRWMG perceive the tribes?
 - Sovereign nations, so separate recognition and meetings are necessary to understand water resource needs/perspectives.
 - Heard your comments at the October 2009 Public Workshop. We want to involve tribes in water management in the Valley.
- Seeking frank communication and collaboration between the CVRWMG and tribes.
- How can tribes be a partner in CVRWMG? Don't want to be second class decision-makers in IRWM effort.
 - CVRWMG still working to define governance, needs to be included in Plan. What does partnership look like?
 - Recognize the need for direct Board/Chair coordination on key milestones – planning separate policy workshop to allow for such coordination.
- Need to coordinate long-term planning activities and funding opportunities.
- Focus on resource sustainability (not 'what's in it for me' attitude).

Issues Identification

Daniel Cozad provided an overview of the water-related issues identified to date through a review of local water management plans and studies. He invited additional feedback and clarification on the issues important to the tribes.

CVRWMG has compiled information from local water management plans and State Water Plan 2009–Regional Report into the issues list. Do tribes have water management plans or other documents we can use?

Demand Projections

- Agencies need to recognize land use authority and population/employment projections on tribal lands.
 - Needed in order to manage regional groundwater supply.

Habitat Protection/Restoration

- Resource management for sustainability is important to tribes.
- Salton Sea ecosystem restoration is a key issue for Torres-Martinez tribe.
 - Concern about both volume and quality of water flowing to the Salton Sea.
 - Need to coordinate timing/volume of flows to wetlands – ag return flows, canal water, recycled water, etc.
 - State promised to develop a data management system, but to date has not done so.
- Native plants preservation – In Whitewater River channel at 29 Palms reservation, floodplain clearing (levee mgmt) by CVWD could endanger plant species.

- Need greater communication for any clearing occurring on reservations.
- Tribes were not a part of MSHCP process. CVWD has easements on tribal lands, so their activities are regulated by the MSHCP.
 - Need MOU w/tribal property owners for annual O&M activities.
 - Partnership between CVRWGMG and tribes to transcend artificial boundaries.
 - Aqua Caliente have developed a habitat species plan. Other special areas on tribal lands have been mapped elsewhere. A special discussion with tribes on this issue would be helpful.
- Need to incorporate tribal open space designated on reservation lands into regional open space network.
- Culturally-significant waters on tribal lands – not mapped, but want to recognize generally in IRWM Plan.
 - Reluctance to disclose resources because they may be defaced. Need to understand resources not specific sites.
 - Culturally sensitive lands off tribal reservations in jeopardy – how to protect?

Water Quality

- Water quality is important – sustainability requires balancing the need for increased recharge volume of imported water with the water quality impacts of TDS and other contaminants
 - This balance should be struck with an eye toward the Valley-wide best interest
- Question whether Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is monitored for water quality?
 - Yes, through the region's NPDES MS4 permit. WWTPs also monitor their discharges to the channel.
 - Tribal water quality data is available through the State.
- High TDS levels in recycled water – concern about recharge into deep aquifer.
 - Suggest advanced treatment before recharge occurs. Suggest considering Federal solutions/assistance to mitigate issues associated with Colorado River.
- Concern about septic leaching issues.
 - Lack of basic water/wastewater infrastructure on tribal lands (similar to DACs).
 - Inadequate or undersized facilities or systems in low percolation areas.
 - Septic in areas that may contaminate high quality groundwaters.
 - Septic to sewer conversion and costs/difficulty are increased across jurisdiction lines.
- Mobile home parks on tribal lands also facing arsenic (60-70 PPM) problems. Could potentially share solutions w/DACs.
 - Allotted lands are individually owned (not tribal) so enforcement capabilities by EHS are limited. Difficult to regulate water/ww systems.

Water Supply

- Affordability of water and wastewater rates are significant for some tribes. Issue of jurisdiction can be complex on tribal lands.

Region Boundaries

- RAP Map 6 – Boundaries of reservations are incorrect. Margaret to send update.
- Torres-Martinez tribal lands extend south at the Salton Sea. Request to expand RAP to include all tribal lands.

Project Development

- Tribes can provide feedback on IRWM projects – impacts and benefits to tribal resources.
- Suggestion to distribute Implementation Grant PSP criteria to tribes so they understand how their projects would be in competition w/agencies.

Stakeholder Outreach

Tom West provided a summary of the proposed stakeholder and public outreach strategy, including several more meetings of this Planning Group to guide development of the IRWM Plan. He also described the Disadvantaged Communities Outreach Demonstration Project proposal that the CVRWGMG has submitted to DWR for additional funding.

Daniel Cozad returned to question raised at the beginning – “What does partnership look like?”

- Partnership – must develop and document what partnership means:
 - I. Communication and consultation opportunities
 - II. Mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of information and understanding of the limits of the exchange capability of all parties due to legal or cultural issues
 - Water supply and quality monitoring data
 - Development plans for the future related to water
 - Habitat and cultural land understandings
 - Tribal boundaries, jurisdictions and interests
 - III. Mechanisms to facilitate cooperative feedback on draft efforts of the CVRWGMG and IRWM plan document
 - IV. Opportunities for project proposal, review and coordination, funding and impacts assessment
- Suggestion to explore what a written agreement between the tribes and CVRWGMG to outline partnership might look like
 - Are there legal prohibitions for such an agreement? May need State Assembly approval for exceptions to enter into tribal agreements.
 - Les to research what type of agreement may be most appropriate.
 - Daniel to check into other IRWM regions re: tribal agreements + DWR Tribal Summit
- Partnership should be initiated with the IRWM timeline in mind, but without overlooking opportunity for broader cooperation of the group
- Suggestion to send CVRWGMG letter to tribal chairs about their participation.
- Request to receive meeting materials in advance of future meetings.
- Request copy of contact list of CVRWGMG and consultants.