

**Coachella Valley Integrated Regional Water
Management (IRWM) Program
Public Workshop #2**

**Tuesday June 22, 2010
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.**

**Rancho Mirage Public Library
71100 Hwy 111, Rancho Mirage CA**

DRAFT NOTES

Meeting Objectives:

- A. Create a common understanding of the Coachella Valley IRWM program, including schedule, key milestones, and stakeholder involvement.
- B. Obtain feedback on regional water resource issues that can be addressed in the IRWM planning process.
- C. Discuss draft IRWM Plan goals and objectives which respond to the identified issues.
- D. Provide information about project solicitation, including explanation of the purpose/need for a project database.
- E. Share/capture other relevant thoughts and ideas for future discussion.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tom West, RMC Water and Environment, welcomed everyone to the Coachella Valley IRWM public workshop and reviewed the meeting objectives. Introductions were made around the room.

2. What is IRWM Planning?

Tom West provided an overview of IRWM planning, which is a regional approach for addressing water management issues preferred by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources Control Board. IRWM planning is important because it 1) fosters agency collaboration, 2) supports effective water management, 3) enables stakeholder participation, and 4) positions the region for funding.

The Coachella Valley IRWM program is being led by the five water purveyors, collectively known as the Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group (CVRWVG): Coachella Water Authority, Coachella Valley Water District, Desert Water Agency, Indio Water Authority, and Mission Springs Water District. The Planning Partners – who will serve in an advisory role for IRWM Plan development – are currently being identified and may include representatives from the County of Riverside, cities, disadvantaged communities, tribes, and natural resource groups. Work-to-date includes submittal of a Region Acceptance Process application to DWR to qualify as an IRWM

region (April 2009); a public workshop (October 2009); hire of a consultant team to support preparation of the IRWM Plan; and several planning meetings to identify key issues and next steps (May 2010).

The IRWM Plan will 1) Identify water resource needs, issues, and conflicts; 2) Establish regional goals and objectives for water management; 3) Identify water management projects that contribute to Plan goals; and 4) Define how regional coordination is enhanced by Plan implementation. DWR's IRWM Plan requirements were presented and a sample IRWM Plan outline was provided.

The proposed timeline for IRWM Plan development includes identification of needs, issues, and objectives through July; project integration, ranking, and prioritization through August; and preparation of the draft IRWM Plan through October. Following a public review and comment period, the final IRWM Plan will be completed and adopted in December 2010.

The IRWM program provides grant funding opportunities through Propositions 84 and 1E. Proposition 84 will direct \$36 million to the Colorado River Funding Area, where it will be distributed competitively among four IRWM regions (Coachella Valley, Borrego, Imperial, and portions of Mojave). The Proposition 84 funds are anticipated to be released in three rounds over the next few years. Project activities eligible for IRWM funding should reduce water demand, improve operational efficiency and transfers, increase water supply, improve flood management, improve water quality, or practice resource stewardship. Proposition 1E will provide \$300 million Statewide for stormwater and flood management projects, to be distributed on a competitive basis.

Additional IRWM activities in Coachella Valley include a Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Outreach Demonstration Program and a Planning Grant application for support of additional IRWM planning activities. Stakeholders can stay informed about the IRWM program through public workshops at key milestones, the www.cvrwmq.org website, newsletters and press releases, online project database, and stakeholder email list.

3. Water Resource Issues

Tom West asked the workshop participants to break up into Issue Groups to brainstorm the various water resource issues in Coachella Valley. The Issue Groups included: Water Supply/Conservation, Groundwater, Wastewater/Recycled Water, Stormwater/Flood Control, and Natural Resources.

Questions asked of each Issue Group included the following:

- What are the key water management issues facing the Valley? Why are these issues important to you or to the region?
- Where are the water management conflicts that need to be resolved?
- Are some issues more important than others? Please place a star next to your top 3 priority issues.

Appendix A contains the recorded notes from each Issue Group.

4. IRWM Plan Goals and Objectives

Tom West facilitated a group discussion about what goals and objectives should be established for the IRWM program. The suggested goals included: 1) Optimize water supply reliability; 2) Protect water quality; 3) Provide stewardship of our water-related natural resources; 4) Coordinate and integrate water resource management; and 5) Ensure cultural and social sustainability of water in the Valley.

Discussion and suggestions included:

- Primary purpose of the IRWM Plan should be to establish an ongoing process to manage water in the Coachella Valley. Suggestion to add a new Objective #5 related to an ongoing water management process.
 - Note that CVRWGMG will be developing a Mission Statement to explain the overall purpose of the IRWM program.
- Suggestion to add a new Goal #6 addressing the water and sanitation needs of disadvantaged communities.
 - Need to make water and sanitation more sustainable in disadvantaged communities through package plants, conservation, and training/education.

5. Project Solicitation

Tom West explained that project solicitation is the process of compiling a comprehensive list of implementation projects in the region. Compiling this list allows the CVRWGMG and stakeholder to prioritize projects for grant funding and inclusion within the IRWM Plan. IRWM projects are defined by the concept of integration, where multiple water management strategies are integrated together to achieve IRWM Plan goals and objectives.

Projects submitted by Friday July 30, 2010 may be included in the IRWM Plan. Projects may be submitted after the deadline for consideration in future rounds. As each new grant cycle arises, announcements will go out to update or submit projects for consideration.

Local project sponsors can submit their projects through the online project database, which is accessed through the www.cvrwmg.org website. Once project sponsors create a user account, they can add, edit, and submit projects to the database. The submittal forms request information about project description, budget, and project feasibility. Project sponsors can also view all other submitted projects and identify potential project partners. Finally, to facilitate partnerships, the database allows for the sharing of projects by multiple users.

6. Next Steps

Tom West reviewed the next steps involved in the Coachella Valley IRWM program and thanked all participants for attending:

- Call for Projects is open through July 30, 2010
- Planning Partners will draft goals/objectives, prioritization criteria, and regional priorities
- Public Workshop #3 will be held in October to review drafts
- Draft IRWM Plan released for public review in November

Appendix A: Issue Groups

***All bullet points are listed in order of importance/priority, with the number of stars applied by workshop participants listed.*

Water Supply / Conservation Issue Group

- Bay Delta Fix *****
- East Valley Water System (pipelines) Cost-Benefit ****
- Reliability ****
- Land Use ***
- Overdraft **
- Groundwater Protection
- Cost
- Outreach to Landscapers
- Recycled water
- Desalination
- Privatization

Groundwater Issue Group

- Unincorporated areas, health issues *****
 - Thermal Oasis, Mecca
 - Cost of water supply and quality/treatment (arsenic)
- Groundwater overdraft ****
- Quality of recharge supply (Colorado River) ****
 - High quality water is being recharged with inferior water
 - Shallow wells/water table
- Partnerships for water quality treatment ***
- Salton Sea *
- Overlaps with all of the other issues!
- Infrastructure and communication among agencies
- Central water system
- Shared management
- Water testing based on demand and purpose

Wastewater /Recycled Water Issue Group

- Need for septic to sewer conversions *****
- Agency agreements for geographic efficiency – Opportunities for collaboration/regionalism of wastewater / recycled water systems. *****
 - Strategic location based on supply.
 - Conflict – Recycled water availability is not where demand is.

- Recycling of agricultural return flows *
 - Not eligible by RWQCB (food crops)
 - Focus on golf course irrigation and ground water recharge
- Remote farm worker communities – Inefficient to extend municipal water and sewer systems. *
 - Solution = Decentralized systems
- Cooperation between purveyors for water management. *
- Regulatory setting – NPDES and Salt/Nutrient management
- East Valley – Septic contamination of aquifer and agriculture irrigation
 - Poor percolation due to clay later
 - Solution = Recycling! Would also reduce pumping.
- Incentives/subsidies or regulations for using recycled water
- Reluctance to aid DACs from water agencies
- Standards and regulations

Stormwater / Flood Management Issue Group

- Water Quality ****
 - Beneficial Uses
 - TMDLs (CVSC) *
- Stormwater Capture ***
- Flood Protection Plan **
- Alluvial /flood mapping *
- Address lack of resources
- Flood mitigation and MHPs in rural East Valley

Natural Resources Issue Group

- Perched groundwater ****
- Public access to trails and flood control ***
- Nuisance water in the east Valley ***
- Combining recharge with recreation *
- Potable water for recreation *
- Potable water for development past Mecca *
- Sewer for development past Mecca (currently hauling) *
- Thousand Palms flood control
- Overlap of regulatory needs (mapping)
- Flood control past Avenue 66
- Regulatory issues regarding drainage
- M.S.H.C.P.
- Cultural resources in Coral Mountain Area