

Coachella Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Program

Planning Partners

Wednesday September 28, 2010
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Coachella Valley Association of Governments
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Room 115
Palm Desert, CA 92260

NOTES

Attendees:

Planning Group

Anna Vargas, Poder Popular
Barbara Hall, Sky Valley Chamber
Bill Bayne, City of Cathedral City
Cindy Nance, Desert Edge Community Council
Dave Barakian, City of Palm Springs
David Saldivar, Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians
Debi Livesay, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
Jennifer Wong, Department of Water Resources
Jose Cortez, Colorado River RWQCB
Margaret Park, Agua-Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
Megan Beaman Carlson, California Rural Legal Assistance
Foundation (via phone)
Mike Gialdini, Riverside County
Miriam Torres, Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
Sergio Carranza, Pueblo Unido CDC
Yvonne Parks, City of Desert Hot Springs

CVRWMG

Anders Wistrom, IWA
Marilyn McKay, MSWD
Mark Krause, DWA
Katie Ruark, DWA
David Tate, DWA
Dan Parks, CVWD
Patti Reyes, CVWD
Tom West, RMC
Daniel Cozad, IPM

Meeting Objectives:

- A. Keep participants up-to-date on the Coachella Valley IRWM program.
- B. Review numerical ranking of submitted project list and brainstorm implementation priorities for Prop 84-Round 1 cycle.
- C. Discuss long-term organizational structure for Coachella Valley IRWM program.
- D. Identify future agenda items for Planning Partners meetings.

Meeting Notes:

Welcome and Introductions

Tom West, RMC Water and Environment, welcomed the Planning Partners, who did self introductions. The group reviewed the agenda.

Cindy Nance, Desert Edge Community Council, asked why the project list was different from last week's. RMC has incorporated some of the clarifications since last week and pulled out projects that support new development.

Update on IRWM and Planning Schedule

Tom West provided an overview of the IRWM program schedule, including: IRWM Plan development, the Planning Grant proposal, and the Implementation Grant proposal.

Planning Partners questioned the schedule and what adoption of the IRWM Plan means to them and their boards. CVRWGMG explained that the Planning Partners do not have to adopt the Plan by December; however, the group is looking for letters of support.

[Correction: Any agencies/organizations whose projects are included in the Implementation Grant Proposal must also adopt the IRWM Plan by the end of December 2010.]

There was some concern about the quick turnaround on the Screen Check Draft IRWM Plan. CVRWGMG explained that comments will also be accepted during the public comment period, but that they wanted to give the Planning Partners an early review opportunity. The Screen Check Draft IRWM Plan will be distributed electronically.

Planning Partners asked if their comments were incorporated into the Planning Grant Proposal. CVRWGMG said that while all comments did not all make it into the proposal, they can be worked into the proposed Work Plan before a contract is signed with DWR.

[Correction: Comments received by Friday September 24th were incorporated into the Planning Grant Proposal. RMC responded to all commenters with status.]

The Final IRWM Plan will be released November 30, 2010. The CVRWGMG boards will then adopt the Plan in December 2010.

There will be more funding available in Prop 84-Round 2 which will likely be mid-2011. Prop 1E funding will also be available in the spring of 2011.

Review and Discuss Ranked Project List

Tom West explained that the submitted project list was updated and re-exported. The scores should not be considered best to worst, as they are simply used to put projects into tiers. We may remove the scores within the IRWM Plan document.

- The projects are color coded for integration purposes. Several themes emerged from the project list – arsenic treatment, septic-to-sewer conversion, water conservation, and stormwater management.
- The short-term arsenic treatment project has been added.

Priorities for Implementation

Planning Partners asked if there is still an opportunity to add to the project list. There is always an opportunity to add, the database is always open, but for this round we are moving forward with what we have now. For additional projects, Planning Partners should be thinking about Round 2 and Prop 1E funding. There will be more time in the future to fund additional projects.

Planning Partners said that they are looking at the total grant funds requested. CVRWGMG will be discussing that issue, as well as funding match availability; those factors will be taken into account when choosing projects. CVRWGMG is working on putting together a package of projects based on the total amount of money available, the readiness to proceed, and the connection with DWR's priorities.

Part of the rush is because no one else in the Colorado River Funding Area will have completed an IRWM Plan in time to receive Round 1 funding, meaning that CVRWWMG will not be competing against anyone else in the Funding Area.

The CVRWWMG screened out projects that supported new development, because:

- Cities and agencies have similar policies in that developers pay fees to meet their needs, i.e. new development has a set funding source.
- Partners said it is logical to meet the needs of existing communities first.

The Desert Edge Community is dependent on new development. There was some discussion of being willing to consider new projects if they are able to pick up DACs along the way, but timing of that could be challenging. Suggestion to look at SCAG region priorities, which are clustered, and perhaps encourage the direction of growth in line with those priorities.

While the region won't get funding to meet the needs of all these projects, having projects in the IRWM Plan may lead them to be able to get funding elsewhere.

Opportunities for Project Integration

Combining projects into programs may also help with additional funding. For Round 1, CVRWWMG is looking at a package that includes water conservation, arsenic treatment, and septic-to-sewer programs. Putting together sub-committees or groups to unite on these needs might be a good idea.

CVRWWMG will spend the next three weeks looking at sets of projects and will bring back a package to the Planning Partners at the next meeting. Planning Partners will see the projects a week before. The group can then give the CVRWWMG feedback – the challenge of the Planning Partners is balancing the needs of the agency they represent with the needs of the region.

Planning Partners said some of the flood control projects were not color coded blue. They will send Rosalyn Stewart of RMC Water and Environment feedback on that. There was a request that this could be printed in black and white, maybe with a column indicating what category it is.

There was a question about how water conservation helps everyone as DACs rarely benefit from conservation programs that agencies offer. CVRWWMG hopes that the DAC Demonstration Program outreach will help address the best ways to reach DACs for conservation purposes.

Discuss Long-Term Organizational Structure

Daniel Cozad provided a brief overview of the proposed organizational structure for the IRWM Plan. At this time, the region is developing many pieces of the IRWM program all at once, but in the future it will be done at a slower pace.

There is no voting in the Coachella Valley IRWM organizational structure. All decisions are made by agreement and consensus. If anyone has concerns about the organizational structure, they should send them to Daniel Cozad of Integrated Planning and Management.

Suggestion that the CVRWWMG create a seat for DACs, tribes, etc. in the Planning Partners – there already are DACs and tribes at the table. Also, there are a lot of meetings planned and groups need funding to be able to attend them all. Group should consider these factors in the meeting schedule.

Next Steps

Tom West summarized next steps in the planning process. Responses to the project list must be sent in within a week; the group will re-examine flood projects. The next Planning Partners meeting is on Tuesday October 26th and will address the Screen Check Draft IRWM Plan.