

# MEETING SUMMARY | LOCAL GROUNDWATER ASSISTANCE GRANT OPPORTUNITY SOUTHERN SIERRA IRWMP REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING

June 14, 2012

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## 1. Action Items

1. **DORIAN** to suggest Bob Puls contact Steve Haze to learn about Sierra RCD’s experience with groundwater information over the past decade.
2. **BOBBY** to continue outreach to potentially interested LGA grant applicants.

## 2. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Bobby Kamansky, Southern Sierra Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan (SSIRWMP) Project Manager, welcomed and introduced participants to the meeting. He noted that this meeting was focused exclusively on preparing a DWR Local Groundwater Assistance (LGA) grant application. Mr. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) Facilitator, reviewed the agenda and the ground rules.

## 3. LGA Grant Context and Link to IRWM

Mr. Kamansky noted that the 2010 IRWM planning grant application proposed including a full groundwater management plan (GMP). This was removed from the 2012 application because the geographic scope of work involved, the complexity of fractured bedrock, and the large number of individual well-users; nonetheless the topic remains important and the 2012 application did mention the need to find funding to develop associated information, apply this to planning, and make recommendations for land use decision-making. The LGA grant is an opportunity to do this.

## 4. Review of Historical and Current Information

The original scope of work proposed by Ken Schmidt in 2010 included 8 tasks, which Mr. Kamansky reviewed (see the original scope of work, distributed to the group). Comments followed.

- Integration of data from partner agencies like the Forest Service (USFS) should occur early in the process.
- An analysis of existing data and data gaps, including USGS geologic data, should be included as proposed.
- There are at least 7 applicants in the region. Therefore the application language must track closely with the Proposal Solicitation Package (see page 6) to ensure that it scores as highly as possible. This includes working with DWR where possible, and identifying data gaps relevant to the California Water Plan.
  - Regarding GMPs, points can be earned for applicants implementing a plan, 3 for those planning to develop one, and 0 for those not planning to do so. There is no penalty for not doing so, but neither are points awarded.
  - It could be clarified that GMPs are partly irrelevant given that the IRWM does not include the entire Isabella GW Basin, as well as the fractured rock geology.
  - The group could still gain points from the geographical balance section, which are discretionary points awarded by management.
- One RWMG member has concern about the potential for state government to use the data gathered for regulatory purposes, for which the data was not intended.
  - **ACTION ITEM: DORIAN** to suggest Bob Puls contact Steve Haze to learn about Sierra RCD's experience with groundwater information over the past decade.

**Regarding previously suggested focus areas**, Mr. Kamansky noted that in the original IRWM application these were identified through the Planning Committee, and focused on areas of little data or areas of conflict. Of the original list, those in Kern County were now outside the IRWM boundary. Sierra Resource Conservation District (SRCD) has been working in the Auberry area (#3). #1 and #2 (Dunlap-Miramonte and Squaw Valley) have had wells condemned for low yield by Fresno County, and there is conflict. Areas #4 and #5, Springville and Three Rivers, also have concerns, while less is known about areas #6 and #7, although Camp Nelson has recently talked about putting in a water system.

**Regarding new information and modifying the scope of work for 2012**, Mr. Kamansky reviewed the written information. He reiterated that a GMP may be inappropriate given the partial coverage of the Isabella Basin, and also that multiple independent users may or may not be interacting through fractured bedrock. Therefore the model of a public trust resource connected through one basin may be inappropriate, so a different model is needed that perhaps is linked to land use designations or zoning and thus ties GW management to land use. The LGA study could inform the IRWMP in this regard.

It was asked how this work would fit with existing information and advocacy around wells drying up in the Springville area, as related to newly permitted subdivisions.

- It was noted that in other areas this type of information was provided to decision-makers (the Board of Supervisors) who could then choose what to do in terms of policy, such as work on land use designations, conduct planning and management, or recommend best practices. The IRWM itself, however, was non-regulatory and non-binding. At most it would verify the accuracy and up-to-date nature of information and

produce recommendations. The relationship between water management and land use was one of the values that the group had identified and emphasized in previous years.

- It was emphasized that this work should not duplicate existing studies. There are other Sierra land use and water planning forums already operating, involving medical, air quality, and transportation stakeholders.

**Regarding county support of the application**, it was noted that letters of support are not part of the application and do not add value. Nonetheless for the purpose of communication and understanding regional goals and concerns, Steve Haze and Bobby Kamansky noted that they would brief (or had briefed and would brief again) the Fresno County Water Advisory Committee and Tulare County Water Commission, respectively. Then in the text of the application the level of comfort of the counties could be noted.

## 5. Comparison of Historical and Current Scope of Work

Mr. Kamansky walked the group through a table comparing the historical and current scope of work. Discussion followed.

- The revised scope and budget should be shared for review with Ken Schmidt, both to ensure that the funding is adequate and that data will meet the standards required by Mr. Schmidt.
- The grant provides an opportunity for Mr. Schmidt, DWR, and SSIRWMP members to work together and build the capacity and competency of the SSIRWMP group in this area. It is likely that this is the first step in a range of groundwater-related issues and work.
- Task #1 should note that DWR will support part of this work.
- Task #4 is an opportunity for advancing consistency between the Forest service and the California Water Plan's Detailed Area Units and Planning Units. Macrolevel analyses can be verified by subwatershed investigations, improving the conclusions of both levels of analysis.
  - DWR has water budget information, but limited data on foothill wells.
- Task #5 parallels and should be articulated with stream analyses being conducted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).
- Task #6 can also benefit from RWQCB work and databases like Geotracker, California Integrated Water Quality System, and Leaking Underground Storage Tanks. Water budgets should not include contaminated water that is not available for supply purposes.
  - The health departments in each county also have some information available, depending on the water supply system size. A nitrate and impairment study is ongoing.
  - The USGS also has a range of water quality information, links for the Sierra Nevada Hydrologic Province include:
    - [http://ca.water.usgs.gov/gama/includes/GAMA\\_pubs\\_print.html](http://ca.water.usgs.gov/gama/includes/GAMA_pubs_print.html)
    -

- [http://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/gama/SU/sierra\\_reg.htm](http://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/gama/SU/sierra_reg.htm)
  - [http://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/gama/SU/cen\\_sierra.htm](http://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/gama/SU/cen_sierra.htm)
  - [http://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/gama/SU/s\\_sierra.htm](http://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/gama/SU/s_sierra.htm)
- The application should call out the need for and plan for collaboration among responsible agencies.
- Task #10 is reduced because there will be no GW management plan.
- Task #11 was combined with Task #1, given the watershed analysis programs of the forests.
  - This should be called out in the proposal so it's clear what the assumptions regarding agency contributions.
  - It is likely that the funds for this task should be increased, given the role of DWR and USFS and the time it takes to coordinate data.
- Overall, the administrative cost is around 3%.
  - It was recommended to increase this to the %5-%9 range, based on the preference of the grant administrator.
  - There are few subcontractors, so the cost does not seem like it would need to be very high.
  - The grant application should specify who will do what, how many hours this will take, and the associated cost.

## 6. Immediate Next Steps, including Applicants and Focus Areas

The group agreed to the timeline proposed by Mr. Kamansky. They added that all SSIRWM members would be invited to provide comments by close of business on Monday, July 9, to allow enough time for packaging and submission. A call will be held on Thursday, July 12, to provide final feedback.

Regarding applicants, Mr. Kamansky will continue outreach to Tulare County RCD, Springville Public Utilities District, Three Rivers CSD, and Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District. Sierra RCD offered to serve as the grantee if no other organization is interested.

- **ACTION ITEM:** BOBBY to continue outreach to potentially interested LGA grant applicants.

Mr. Dane Mathis, DWR, clarified that each applicant can submit more than one application, but the total award for multiple projects proposed by a single applicant cannot exceed \$250,000. Mr. Haze clarified that Sierra RCD will also be submitting a request for additional work to advance their existing LGA work effort, and that he would ensure that the associated budget would complement rather than detract from the proposed SSIRWM budget.

Regarding focus areas, it was suggested that one could come from each county, and that Three Rivers and Springville had groundwater issues directly connected to land use. Auberry is being covered by Sierra RCD in Fresno County, so Three Rivers and Springville would also help to cover the other geographic areas of the region.

## **7. Attendees**

1. Pam Buford
2. Michelle Dooley, DWR
3. Dorian Fougères, CCP
4. Jeannie Habben
5. Steve Haze
6. Bobby Kamansky
7. Dane Mathis, DWR
8. Chris Moi
9. Dick Moss
10. Soapy Mulholland