

Southern Sierra IRWMP

Planning Meeting

November 18, 2009 12:00 - 3:30 pm

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Tom Carter - Springville Public Utility District (SPUD)
Carole Clum – Tulare Co. Citizens for Responsible Growth
Jeannie Habben – Upper San Joaquin Stewardship Council
James May, Tulare County RMA
Larry Otter, Foothill Water Research
Logan Page – Sierra Foothill Conservancy
Debbie Vaughn – Tulare County CAO
Julie Allen – Meeting Facilitator
Elissa Brown – Project Grant Writer
Bobby Kamansky, Project Manager, Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Frances Tweed, Sequoia Riverlands Trust

Meeting Notes by Agenda Item

○ Introductions / Agenda Items

Meeting started at 12:10.

Julie Allen introduced herself and had all attendees do the same.

Bobby said that he had heard from Gary Temple, Steve Haze and John Shelton and they sent their regrets that they could not be at the meeting today.

○ Review of Minutes/Agenda

Bobby asked if there were any additions to this Agenda, and there were none.

Regarding minutes from the last meeting, Bobby said that Frances wanted it noted that he had sent them out in her Draft form. Bobby had not had a chance to review them.

○ Administrative Report

- Bobby spoke with Sequoia Riverlands Trust's Executive Director, Soapy Mulholland, and she said that Elissa's payment will be coming.
- Bobby said that there is enough money to have restarts, even though bond sales were low.

- We are able to do “backfilling” but don’t know when that will be to get rest of 50%.
- There are a couple of proposals for outreach and stakeholder involvement, which we need for finances.
- The staffing right now for the SS IRWMP project is: Bobby, Project Manager; Elissa, Grant Writer; Frances, administration.
- We continue to measure our progress with the Gantt chart and still need to appoint a fiscal agent.

○ Major Topic(s)

a. IRWMP Application

- Elissa said that the IRWMP application is due in March or April and we need to look at the best way to focus our activities. She went over Page 1 in the handout she distributed about our priorities.
- We have to have an IRWMP to apply for the IRWMP Implementation Funds.
- Climate change and disadvantage communities. Bobby said that 95% of our area is disadvantaged and managing water for these communities will be an important part of the IRWMP.
- Elissa said that in order to “rise to the top”, our IRWMP needs to do something more spectacular and more useful to further management in this region.
- Elissa went over Page 2 in her handout, about the three steps. This process needs to be staffed, either by paid or volunteer personnel.

Step 1: Build Effectiveness:

Jim May suggested “filters” to see CEQA/NEPA information.

Elissa suggested adding: climate change; fire resistance and flood resistance; identify best practices, make as a sub: increase water supply.

Julie asked if we can be sure that the State will come through, with the State’s revenue down by 50%? Elissa said to put that aside until guidelines come out – “trust her”.

Step 2: Build Efficiency:

Elissa asked if Tulare County will think that the web portal will be helpful. Jim May said there is already information out there. Debbie Vaughn said that it depends on the department in the County.

Elissa proposes to set aside the web portal until they speak to others who have done it. We need to think about it more. It would help to have key people get input from various entities. Julie was wondering what parts do we supply directly vs. do we supply the hotlinks for agencies to update?

Julie asked - synthesize interagency database – where do we put the data set?

Baseline watershed conditions – there needs to be comprehensive water and natural resource inventories in the watersheds, without compromising private property rights.

Elissa needs a subcommittee.

Step 3: Fill Essential Data Gaps:

Bobby said not to propose any new monitoring gauges. This must be completed in 2 to 3 years.

Would IRWMP help Tulare Co.'s Management Plan? Bobby and Elissa might have to talk to Jim May and Debbie Vaughn about this.

Bobby talked about a rain event and downstream benefits.

c. Projects Discussion:

- Flood control projects.
- Invasive species removal (tamarisk, Arundo, etc.)
- Water retention on grazing land – Residual Dry Matter (RDM)
- Watershed protection through exclusion of development.
- Well monitoring for water quality and quantity.
- Sustainable gardening practices / certified wildlife habitat.
- Use of natives in landscaping – compile preferred list of fire resistant and drought tolerant.
- Establish hydrologic capacity of major watershed's, e.g. Kaweah, Tule, Kern.
- Meadow restoration, e.g. Big Meadows. Develop ranking and protocol.
- Flood corridor protection.
- SPUD needs set of regulations and discharge. Evaporative ponds insufficient.

- Outlaw septic tanks in riparian area.

Bobby wants ranking criteria of projects.

b. Additional Funding/Resources

- Collaboration building grant - \$1,200 travel stipend
- Bobby works for SNC.
- Send letter from Tina Terrell to show support.
- SRT won't be able to ask SCE.
- NFW has money available next summer.

o Outreach and Communication

a. JPA

- Julie talked about the JPA (Joint Powers Agreement). It meets bi-monthly and was formed under Prop 50. It's user oriented. IRWMP is under Prop 84.
- Zack Smith is looking at how to keep JPA alive.
- There is another round of Blueprint grants out there.
- Sarge Green "got his Million Bucks". Integrate two water regions to feed into water plan.
- Two million: 1 million for inventory of disadvantaged communities (DAC), and 1 million for demo project, engineering and CEQA.
- Watershed Coordinators – one per watershed – through administrative grant.

b. Adjacent Regions

- Letter agreement with Kern IRWMP

ACTION ITEM: Letter of Agreement with Madera, which Bobby will sign, unless he hears differently.

c. Outreach and Membership

- RCD, Tulare Co. – Bobby made a presentation to them. Two problems: 1) private property rights, 2) concerns about working with environmental groups. TC RCD signed MOU and is now a member of Planning Committee

- “Collaboration and consensus based” at IRWMP Summit.
- Jim May, Debbie Vaughn and Bobby – to have a conference call with questions about MOU, governance, financial contributions, etc.
- Inquiry from Fresno Co. – can’t leave county.
- Jim May said that the RMA room has a phone available to meet.
- Bobby presented at IRWMP Summit in Tahoe with slides, and his program is online.
- Member and Area Reports
 - Carole Clum – Social norms about natural resource use and conservation
 - Bobby said that on November 7 in Three Rivers, three water districts came together in a Town Hall meeting with Dennis Keller who is with KDWCD.
 - Jeanne Haben said that the upper San Joaquin River watershed assessment is back on. This is to be completed by June, 2010.
- Calendar Update
 - No Planning Committee meeting in December, same as last year. There will be a Coordinating Committee meeting.
 - After discussion, the next Planning Committee meeting will be Wednesday, January 27 in Fresno/Clovis. After that, February 17 in Visalia, then March 17. Late April for the proposal.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20.