

**Santa Margarita Watershed Nutrient Initiative Meeting
Thursday, September 13, 2012**

Location:

Rancho California Water District
2nd Floor Conference Room
42135 Winchester Road
Temecula, CA 92589-9017

Introduction:

Attendee List:

Name	Organization	E-mail
Dave Ceppos	Center for Collaborative Policy, California State University Sacramento	dceppos@ccp.csus.edu
Pam Nelson	Sierra Club / EMARCD	pamelaosn@yahoo.com
Jo Ann Weber	County of San Diego	Joann.weber@sdcounty.ca.gov
Sheri McPherson	County of San Diego	sheri.mcpherson@sdcounty.ca.gov
Rich Williamson	Rancho California Water District	williamsonr@ranchowater.com
Chuck Katz	U.S. Navy (SPAWAR)	chuck.katz@navy.mil
Martha Sutula	SCCWRP	marthas@sccwrp.org
Ashmita Sengupta	SCCWRP	ashmitas@sccwrp.org
Rachel Davenport	AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.	rachel.davenport@amec.com
Cynthia Gorham	Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego	cgorham@waterboards.ca.gov
Ashli Desai	Larry Walker & Associates	ashlid@LWA.com
Via Telephone:		
Brittany Struck	National Marine Fisheries Service	Not provided
Jason Uhley	Riverside County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	juhley@rcflood.org
Roya Yazdanifard	Caltrans	Not provided
Jayne Joy	Eastern Municipal Water District	Not provided
Scott Thomas	Stetson Engineering	ScottT@StetsonEngineers.com

Meeting Materials:

- Agenda (*Note: the following two items were added to the agenda after the Technical Advisory Committee meeting: data management, sharing, and access; and the proposed level of effort for tributaries of the Santa Margarita River [SMR]*)
- Action Items from last meeting
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Feedback from Brittany Struck regarding proposed priority of Special Studies
- SMR Nutrient Initiative Proposal to Develop Linked In-stream-Groundwater Models (Scott Thomas – Stetson Engineers)

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- Special Study: What is the assimilative capacity of the SMR for Nutrients?
- Monitoring Work Plan to Support the Development of Nutrient Water Quality Objectives in the Santa Margarita River
- Monitoring Work Plan to Support the Development of Nutrient Water Quality Objectives in the Santa Margarita River Special Study: Studies to Improve Precision and Accuracy of Sampled Modeled Stream Benthic Algal Biomass
- PowerPoint handouts:
 - Estuary Algal Biomass Monitoring
 - Studies to Improve Precision and Accuracy of Sampled and Modeled Benthic Stream Algal Biomass
 - Determination of the Assimilative Capacity of the SMR for Nutrients
 - Developing linked In-stream-groundwater models
 - Technical Work elements to Develop Nutrient Site-Specific Objectives

Meeting Goals:

- Continue Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Discussion about sampling plans and river segmentation
- Achieve preliminary stakeholder direction on priority special studies
- Receive informational updates
- Track status of action items

Action Items:

1. Jason Uhley will send out the letter to the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Executive Officer (EO) on Monday (9/17/12) and will send a pdf copy to Dave Ceppos and Sheri McPherson.
2. Jason and Sheri will talk on 9/14/12 to transfer contact information for potential SMR Group participants and Sheri will provide Jason the contact list. Jason will send the draft Participants invitation letter to Mark Bonsavage on 9/13/12 and Jason will send out the final letter on 9/17/12. Jason will send a pdf copy of the letter to Dave and Sheri
3. The RWQCB EO presentation will be on October 5 at approximately 12:00 pm
4. By 9/21/12 Dave will solicit and identify 2-3 Steering Committee (dischargers) participants and 1-2 non-discharger Participants available to attend the EO Briefing.
5. Jo Ann Weber and Jason will talk offline by the end of next week (9/21/12) to discuss the San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWM) and respective desired / intentions of San Diego and Riverside Counties to contribute to and lead the next Prop 84 proposals
6. By 9/21/12, Martha Sutula will coordinate a webinar of the TAC and interested Group Participants (particularly Steering Committee members) regarding further discussion about Nutrient Numeric Endpoint (NNE) objectives and associated sampling targets. Martha will send the NNE Webinar information to Dave for Group distribution
7. By 9/21/12, Rich Williamson of Rancho California Water District (RCWD) will coordinate with Denise Landstedt about when and how public outreach / participation will be conducted for the RCWD IRWM and Salt Nutrient Management Plan (SNMP) and will provide an update to Dave for communication to the full Group.
8. By October 19 (target date for San Diego County organizations to submit preliminary proposals for Prop 84 consideration) the Steering Committee needs to do the following through a webinar / conference call:

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- a. Discuss and confirm that the SMR Group wants to proceed with a Prop 84 Phase II proposal and who will be the lead organizations (as also addressed in Action Item 5 above)
 - b. Discuss and decide special study priorities (as informed by the straw poll outcomes from the 9/13/12 meeting).
 - c. Discuss and advise how to proceed with remaining Phase I funding so that the Phase II funding needs are accurately determined. *Note: These decisions are internally important for the SMR effort however the specific outcomes may not be included in the SMR Prop 84 proposal so as to allow future flexibility should project conditions change.*
9. Dave and Martha will schedule the Steering Committee Webinar and conference call by 9/17/12.
 10. Martha will schedule discussions with the respective dischargers for each tributary. The schedule for the conversations will be provided by 9/27/12. Stakeholders should consider for the conversation:
 - a. What is the length of tributary / reach the model should cover;
 - b. Where sampling sites should be placed;
 - c. Where to put the sampling effort (i.e. compliance points); and
 - d. Any leveraging that stakeholders can provide for that efforts (e.g. existing sampling efforts and/or sampling wells that could be used to augment proposed new sampling plans).
 11. By 9/17/12 Martha will send to Con Kontaxis the tributary spreadsheet next week for Caltrans to fill out which tributaries they have a stake in. Martha will also provide the special study priorities spreadsheet so Caltrans can provide their input.
 12. The TAC will provide a recommendation to the steering committee for the \$270,000 remaining in Phase I prior to October 19.
 13. Martha and Rich will discuss coordination of the IRWM and SNMP and Martha will provide an update during the October 24 meeting.
 14. Martha will contact Rich Ottolini (RCWD) to discuss flow changes with him re: the Cooperative Water Resource Management Agreement (CWRMA).

Review of August 30, 2012 Action Items:

Due to the number of items and the limited amount of time between meetings, not all action items have been addressed. In the interest of time, only key action items were reviewed:

1. Letter to the RWQCB is complete and will launch on Monday, August 17.
2. The final Stakeholder Invitation letter is complete and will launch on Monday, August 17.
3. The presentation to the EO, Dave Gibson, will occur on October 5, 2012. Members to attend have not yet been decided upon. Dave will coordinate with people who were not in attendance during the September 13 meeting.
4. Barry Pulver (RWQCB) has provided Martha rationale/criteria for compliance points (action item #6 on handout)
5. The RWQCB has been contacted regarding the definition of management areas. The RWQCB indicated there is flexibility to how management areas are defined in a Basin Plan, but they are subject to Board approval and contingent upon receipt of data.
6. The San Diego IRWM is in the process of soliciting projects to enter scopes and proposals at www.sdiwrmp.org through October 17, 2012. SCCWRP will be submitting with a current quote of \$1.67 million, not including costs for running the project, and they will follow up with the steering committee to see if they are within the appropriate range.

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General Updates:

RCWD has approved the contract for the IRWM update. SNMP kickoff meeting will take place on October 3rd with the consultant and some major stakeholders. Both are under contract and ready to go. Phase II level funding is expected to amount to \$1.6 million. RCWD is willing to help and put up other projects they may have towards the match, because 10:1 ratio for costs/funding between the RCWD and the San Diego work expected. Rich will follow up with Denise by the end of next week (tentative target) to determine if there will be a stakeholder meeting and to discuss the public outreach/participation component of RCWD's IRWM.

The San Diego County Water Authority has finalized a contract with DWR this week, but the County of San Diego still needs a contract with Water Authority

All other updates were provided under the review of the August 30 action items.

COORDINATION DECISION: Dave posed the question to the group as to whether anyone was opposed to the new agenda structure, with the TAC meeting in the morning and the larger workgroup meeting in the afternoon through the end of the calendar year. No objections were voiced, therefore, the rest of the 2012 SMR Group meetings will include a TAC meeting beforehand.

Discussion and Draft Prioritization of Proposed Special Studies:

Dave outlined the process for conversation(s) moving forward regarding draft prioritization of proposed special studies. Per the SMR Group Charter, the larger Group has the opportunity to voice opinions and concerns prior to any Resource Decisions being made by the Steering Committee. Presentations from the last meeting were provided in handout form. Between September 13th and 19th, the SMR Group Steering Committee must make a formal decision as to how the next Proposition 84 grant will proceed. The process will consist of a two step process:

Step 1: Which studies are a high, medium, and/or low priority; and

Step 2: Of those priorities, which studies are a priority within those tiers.

USMC Camp Pendleton has decided to fund (with 99% certainty) the following two projects independently from the stakeholder process:

1. Estuary Bathymetry (estimated at \$109k)
2. Estuary groundwater monitoring (estimated at \$231k)

USMC Camp Pendleton has added and separately funded an additional study not part of the Santa Margarita Nutrient Initiative process: Software to assist visualization of modeling results for \$121k.

Several studies remain for the stakeholder prioritization process:

1. Estuary algal biomass monitoring (split into two studies)
 - a. Long Term Monitoring
 - b. Intertidal and Subtidal Monitoring
2. Improve precision/accuracy of sampled and modeled benthic stream algal biomass

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3. Assimilative capacity of SMR for Nutrients
4. Linked Instream and Groundwater Models

Martha provided a summary of the studies, divided between the river and the estuary.

Studies for the SMR River

All river projects tie into modeling; dealing with model uncertainty and margin of safety (i.e. no local data and studies are currently available). Current groundwater studies also need more data. SCCWRP would like the groundwater studied in Murrieta and Temecula Creeks; however, not all stakeholders felt this was necessary or the best use of Proposition 84 funds. The groundwater model focuses on dry weather and will link the upper and lower watershed. Geosciences has a model for upper watershed and Stetson has one for the lower watershed.

Nitrogen assimilative capacity (de-nitrification) is how nitrogen is assimilated into the waters of the SMR. The project will study how the SMR substrate controls the amount of biomass growth. Currently that cannot be taken into account because large amounts are needed for analysis to reduce uncertainty and the current SWAMP protocol is not designed for site specific assessment and is really for regional monitoring.

Martha proposed that Estuary Algal Biomass Long Term Monitoring, Estuary Algal Biomass Invertidal and Subtidal Monitoring, and Estuary groundwater monitoring are connected. While they can be done separately, there may be interdependent parts; Estuary Algal Biomass Invertidal and Subtidal Monitoring would have to be done with Estuary Algal Biomass Long Term Monitoring. They can be done separately, but should be done together and should not be staged.

Studies for the SMR Estuary

Estuary distribution of algal biomass needs additional information and is not very well understood.

Study Prioritization

Dave suggested three basic frames to think about during the Participants' prioritization discussion of the studies:

1. Which is most important for overall health and benefit to the river/estuary?
2. What is in your organization's specific interest?
3. Whether some prioritization may impose a negative impact on another stakeholder?

The following table presents the prioritization of participating stakeholders, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest priority:

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Study #	Study Description	Budget	RCFC & WCD	Sierra Club	Camp Pendleton	County of San Diego	Rancho California Water District	Fallbrook Public Utility District	RWQCB	National Marine Fisheries Service
1a	Estuary algal biomass monitoring (long term)	\$126k	2	3	1	2	3	1	1	3
1b	Estuary Algal Biomass Intertidal - Subtidal	\$126k	3	2	2	4	4	2	2	2
2	Improve precision/accuracy of sampled and modeled benthic stream algal biomass	\$185k	4	1	5	1	5	5	5	4
3	Assimilative capacity of SMR for Nutrients	\$137k	1	4	4	3	1	3	4	1
4	Linked Instream and Groundwater Models	\$350k	5	5	3	5	2	4	3	5

Martha provided the scoring for the prioritization of studies, with the following order:

1. Estuary Algal Biomass Long Term Monitoring
2. Estuary Algal Biomass Invertidal and Subtidal Monitoring (could be done under phase 1)
3. Linked Instream and Groundwater Models
4. Improve precision/accuracy of sampled and modeled benthic stream algal biomass (could be done under phase 1)
5. Assimilative capacity of SMR for Nutrients

Some of the studies may be incorporated under the Phase I grant. The stakeholders have \$270,000 left because USMC Camp Pendleton paid for estuary modeling. Martha indicated that Estuary Algal Biomass Invertidal and Subtidal Monitoring should be funded before Estuary Algal Biomass Long Term Monitoring and suggested that it be included under Phase I along with the Stream Algal Biomass Study. Collection of data now will better inform the future studies under Phase II. There may also be a Phase III in about 2 years with roughly \$54 million available in funding for the San Diego Region. SCCWRP believes the project will cost roughly \$1.67 million, once the \$270,000 is accounted for, but the ultimate decision is up to the Steering Committee. If conducted through the Proposition 84 process, it will need to go out to bid. USMC Camp Pendleton has some interest in taking (at least some of) the studies on, but is open to others doing it as well.

Estuary modeling is designed to develop a load response curve. Estuary modeling was discussed by the Group as possibly being part of Phase I, instead of river monitoring that was initially included. The concept proposal out now has the river as Phase II. USMC Camp Pendleton expressed concern as to whether there is enough data for the estuary modeling. The County of San Diego also expressed concern that they may be expending resources on estuary modeling in anticipation of a TMDL and the result may be delisting the estuary.

The key decision for the Steering Committee to make is how to proceed with Phase I so that the Phase II proposal can be formulated (the Phase II proposal will be broad to allow for some flexibility in activities in future years.).

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Data Management, Sharing, and Access

Currently, stakeholders have two places to upload data: the Project Clean Water website (www.projectcleanwater.org), a password secure site where all final documents and data are posted, and the "Cloud" (via SCCWRP) where all technical data is provided and the SMR Group has free access. As the process evolves, there may be a quality assurance issue storing all data on the Cloud. Stakeholders should have access to the data but it needs to be protected so it doesn't get changed or deleted. The website is a good place to direct participants. Stakeholders and the technical team need a private access side of the website, which they have on the Project Clean Water website. The stakeholders discussed what should be available on the Project Clean Water website and what should be available on the Cloud. Ashmita (SCCWRP) preferred the Cloud because the interface is clean and user friendly. No Participants indicated a preference.

The Participants agreed that the Project Clean Water website should be used for final work products and those items vetted through the SMR Group process. Everything on the Project Clean Water website has to go through Sheri McPherson, who may have to make executive decisions and come back to the Group after posting or not posting certain materials. The Cloud will be available to the TAC.

Proposed Level of Effort for Tributaries

Sites will be monitored on a segment basis, which provides more certainty. However, they will be predicted at the tributary level, which provides less certainty. The Group needs to decide how to set up the model and what sites to monitor. Sites for the purpose of the discussion are those that have been listed and, in particular, whether they have been listed for wet or dry weather data. If seasonal objectives are sought for the sites, then more monitoring data are needed for modeling.

For example, Murrieta Creek has two tributaries that are ephemeral streams listed for wet weather: Santa Gertrudis Channel and Warm Springs Channel (both of which typically do not flow during dry weather). The EPA, State Water Board and the RWQCB need to be involved with this decision. Riverside Flood Control & Water Conservation District is beginning their new program and may be able to use some of the data for this project, but a cost/benefit analysis will need to be conducted.

Overall, this will be a tributary by tributary discussion. Martha will contact those stakeholders who need to talk over each tributary and will schedule discussions with the groups for each tributary. Martha will schedule the conference calls by September 27, 2012. A copy of the matrix of stakeholders for each tributary is provided below.

Reach	SD County	RCFC	FPUD	RB	Camp Pendleton	RCWD	Caltrans (will get back to us) ¹
Upper SMR	X	X		X	X	X	
Lower SMR	X			X	X		
Murrieta Creek		X		X		X	
De Luz Creek	X		X	X	X		
Redhawk Channel		X		X			

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Temecula Creek		X		X		X	
Rainbow Creek	X		X	X			
Stone Creek	X	X	X	X			
Sandia Creek	X	X	X	X			
Devils Creek	X		X	X			
Fallbrook Creek	X		X	X	X		
Santa Gertrudis Creek		X		X			
Warm Springs Creek		X		X			

Martha will provide the spreadsheet to Con to fill out on behalf of Caltrans.

Martha suggested items each stakeholder should consider prior to the tributary conversation:

- What is the length the model should cover?
- Where would you like your sites placed?
- Are the sites suggested sufficient?
- Will a sampling effort be linked to compliance monitoring?
- Are there existing sample sites by you or others that can be leveraged as part of a future new sampling effort

Next Steps:

The technical team will provide a recommendation to the steering committee on how the remaining \$270,000 should be allocated. The Steering Committee needs to determine and discuss the following:

- Distribution of remaining Phase I funds;
- Priority of Phase II special studies;
- How much specificity will go into the proposal versus being flexible and broad;
- Whether they want to move forward with Phase II;
- Whether anything is earmarked for Phase II;
- What type of RWQCB staff commitments should be planned for and whether additional funds should be provided for load estimation;
- How long the County needs to get appropriate internal approvals; and
- The budget.

Rich Williamson would like to discuss how this project plays into current water rights agreements. Martha will discuss RCWD flows (entered into the model as a point source) with Rich Ottolini from RCWD. Other signatories should be available as well.

Rich Williamson would also like to coordinate the IRWM and SNMP work, which he will discuss with Martha (i.e. what data needs to be collected for the model). Martha will provide an update at the October 24, 2012 meeting.

Next Meeting:

October 24, 2012
San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility
3950 North River Road
Oceanside, CA 92589