

## Santa Margarita Stakeholder's Strategy Workshop Summary

Tuesday, October 11, 2011, 10:00am to 2:00pm

### Location:

San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility  
3950 N. River Road  
Oceanside, CA

### Introduction

#### **Meeting Goals:**

- 1) Develop a mission statement for the Santa Margarita (SMR) Watershed Nutrient Water Quality Objective (WQO) Assessment Project (Project);
- 2) Identify key issues and interests of individual discharger agency stakeholders;
- 3) Establish current context: basic facts/drivers/constraints;
- 4) Identify guiding principles/elements of an implementation strategy for the Project; and
- 5) Identify action items/next steps.

#### **Attendee List:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Brandon Swope	SPAWAR/Navy	brandon.swope@navy.mil
Jeff Marchand	Fallbrook PUD	jeff@FPUD.com
Michael Welch	Consultant w/ San Diego County	mwelch1@san.rr.com
Rich Williamson	Rancho California Water District	williamsonr@ranchowater.com
Jeremy Jungreis	Camp Pendleton	jeremy.jungreis@usmc.mil
Denise Landstedt	Rancho California Water District	landstedtd@ranchowater.com
Martha Sutula	SCCWRP	marthas@sccwrp.org
Jason Uhley	RCFC	juhley@rcflood.org
Jo Ann Weber	County of San Diego	joann.weber@sdcounty.ca.gov
Jayne Joy	EMWD	joyj@emwd.org
Mark Bonsavage	Camp Pendleton	mark.bonsavage.usmc.mil
Greg Krzys	Federal Bureau of Reclamation	
Ken Johansen (via telephone)	Caltrans	
Rachel Davenport	AMEC E&I, Inc.	rachel.davenport@amec.com
Armand Ruby	Armand Ruby Consulting, Inc.	armand@armandrubyconsulting.com

#### **Meeting Materials Distributed In Advance of the Meeting:**

- Project grant proposal; prior meeting summaries, Project Timing and Phasing summary; list of Prioritized/Revised Management and Monitoring Questions

***Project Overview and Timeline:***

Jo Ann Weber, County of San Diego, presented an overview and timeline of the Santa Margarita (SMR) Watershed Nutrient Water Quality Objective (WQO) Assessment Project (Project). The Project is a collaboration among the County of San Diego, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Rancho California Water District, the County Water Authority, and the State of California Department of Water Resources. The Department of Water Resources is providing 75% of the funding, under a Proposition 84 grant, for the reevaluation of nutrient WQOs in the SMR Watershed. The project is divided into two phases and is currently in the first phase.

During the summer of 2010, the executive management team of the SMR stakeholders created a subgroup to develop a grant proposal for Proposition 84 funding for the Project. The proposal was developed during the fall of 2010 and submitted in January 2011. In July, 2010, the stakeholders met with the Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego (Regional Board) to promote a collaborative effort with the Regional Board. During the following six months this group, led by Martha Sutula, SCCWRP, developed the Project's PAEP, QAPP, and work plan.

Phase I funding was awarded on August 16, 2011 to both the upper and lower SMR watersheds. The Stakeholder subgroup has also met with the overlay committee, in charge of coordinating the grant project, to ensure funding is allocated and spent in the most effective manner possible.

***Project Scope:***

The regional stakeholder advisory committee ("Overlay Committee") requested that the discharger stakeholders meet as a subgroup to determine the best use of the grant funding, ensure the Project methodology remains within the scope of the grant, and, should the scope of the grant need to be further tailored or amended, to ensure benefits of any alterations meet or exceed anticipated benefits under the initial proposed scope. Changes are due within sixty (60) days from the time of the grant commitment letter, or November 15, 2011. However, the County Water Authority would like any changes to be submitted by October, 31, 2011.

The current scope for Phase I of the Project is to form and facilitate a stakeholder advisory group, conduct field and special studies, and to develop recommended nutrient WQOs for the SMR estuary. Phase II will focus on the upper and lower SMR River, upstream of the estuary. The upper and lower Proposition 84 grant scopes are essentially identical.

**Development of Strategic Approach**

The discussion was facilitated by Armand Ruby, Armand Ruby Consulting. Development of the strategic approach began with discussion among the stakeholders to identify big picture issues and Project expectations, to form a basis for a joint strategy. The stakeholders defined the project area as: the lagoon, estuary, rivers, and tributaries within the SMR watershed. In addition, the stakeholders concluded that local conditions such as temperature, canopy cover, and biostimulatory substances should be considered as part of the WQOs. Local conditions vary among the different water bodies within the SMR watershed. Whether WQOs will be narrative or have numerical endpoints will be an important consideration further into the Project. Results of the Project may lead to new TMDL targets, may be incorporated as revised WQOs within the Basin Plan, and/or may result in the creation of site-specific Basin Plan objectives.

Collaboration with the Regional Board, NGOs, and agricultural groups is necessary to ensure that all interests and groups are accounted for and considered as part of the Project.

The overall consensus was that the group wants to develop a collaborative, scientifically-defensible, technically-sound approach that appropriately complements and contributes to respective regulatory requirements and goals

***Development of the Project Mission Statement:***

Upon consensus of the Project dischargers stakeholder subgroup, the following mission statement was adopted for the Project:

**Develop appropriate WQOs for nutrients / biostimulatory substances that are protective of beneficial uses throughout the range of conditions in the SMR Watershed.\***

\*as consistent with the Clean Water Act

***Agency-Specific Key Issues/Interests:***

Each agency provided a brief overview of what they viewed as their key issues and interests for successful implementation of Phase I:

- [Agriculture (in absentia): want to continue to discharge
    - Concern re: impact of TMDL on BMP requirements
  - County of San Diego: existing TMDL – Rainbow Cr. (targets: P 0.1, N 1 mg/L)
    - Find viable alternatives to treatment of wet weather discharges
    - Develop scientific-based approach, solve real problems, efficient use of funds
  - EMWD: SMR is an example site for NNE
    - Concerned about statewide application (e.g. re: discharge in Santa Ana)
    - Meeting 0.1, 1.0 in discharge very difficult
  - FPUD: interest in developing SMR as a drinking water source
    - Meeting 0.1, 1.0 in discharge very difficult (even w/ tertiary treatment)
  - RCWD: leverage benefits with other efforts
    - Coordinate monitoring projects?
    - Concentrated discharge flows to generate hydro. power
    - Don't want to have treat Metropolitan water before discharge
  - Water agencies: want regulatory certainty
  - Camp Pendleton: Science-based protection of beneficial uses
    - Use recycled (tertiary treated) water – dry weather
    - Discharge during wet season to SMR
    - Possible indirect potable recharge (to GW)
    - Alleviate reclamation permit standards, esp. re: irrigation
    - Eliminate inappropriate impairments (de-listing)
    - Develop WQOs that support appropriate TMDL targets
    - Meet environmental stewardship goals (esp. re: endangered species)
  - Bureau of Rec.: conjunctive use project w/Camp Pendleton, FPUD
    - SMR as drinking water source
  - Riverside Co. MS4s: appropriate allocation of resources
    - Find viable alternatives to treatment of wet weather discharges
    - Highest and best beneficial use of water
- } How will WQOs affect salinity management plans?

**Current Context:**

The group identified the following drivers and constraints influencing stakeholder actions and limitations:

- Impairment → 303(d) listings (→ TMDL(s))
- Nutrient status/algae

	Wet	vs.	Dry
SW Discharge:	P, N > WQOs		P, N > WQOs
River:	P, N > WQOs		P, N > WQOs
Lagoon:	-----		Algae

- Proposition 84 grant to develop WQOs
  - Natural/ambient background (various sources)
- Reference conditions - TBD
- Current Basin Plan WQOs (P: 0.1; N:1 mg/L)
- Camp Pendleton effluent & other discharges (incl. agriculture) discontinued
- Beneficial use designations
- GW inputs to SMR(?) & Lagoon
- Other Regulations: e.g.: state nutrient policy (NNE), ag. Waiver, etc.

**Principles/Elements of a Strategy:**

The group identified the following principles and elements to form the basis of a nutrient strategy:

- Develop technically-sound, scientifically-defensible WQOs for consideration by RWQCB
- Effective engagement with the RWQCB at high level to ensure consistent approach and agreement on process/approach
- Adhere to federal/state regulatory axioms
- Provide improved process for making regulatory decisions and basis for TMDL targets
- Work with RWQCB to adopt mutually-agreed-upon WQOs as a BPA

**Reconciliation of Stakeholder Interests and Limitations:**

Input from the Regional Board is crucial to determine the approach moving forward. Possible outcomes include:

- a watershed-based approach involving updating WQO standards in the SMR watershed to accurately reflect naturally-occurring nutrient concentrations,
- application of the proposed nutrient numeric endpoint (NNE) approach, as supported by EPA Region 9, or
- development of narrative basin plan objectives as the basis for determination of nutrient impairment.

Clarification from the Regional Board is necessary for effective implementation of the Project and to ensure a consistent regional approach moving forward, perhaps through a MOU or MOA.

The process needs to engage regulators early and at a management level to ensure a consistent decision-making approach and process.

The stakeholder strategy moving forward includes:

- Agreement between the Regional Board and stakeholders as to the approach for WQO assessment; focusing the Project on the approach and process instead of the potential outcome and results.
- Ensure that the process and approach developed is cooperative and that nutrient WQOs are representative of local water bodies within the SMR watershed.
- Provide the Regional Board with Project results for their consideration and achieve consensus on TMDL objective recommendations within the Santa Margarita Lagoon to provide to the Regional Board, as specified in the grant.

***Issues Set Aside for Future Stakeholder Discussions (“Parking Lot”):***

- Antidegradation laws
- NGO involvement – Trout unlimited?
  - Fish flows
- Potential update of the N WQO in the Basin Plan
  - As narrative, not set as the 10:1 ratio
- WQOs for Nutrients (N & P) or dissolved oxygen and algal biomass
- Timeline
- Legal / regulatory process requirements
- Coordination

**Next Steps:**

- Review axioms from federal and state law used by the Stormwater Quality Standards Task Force in the Santa Ana Region (to be provided by Jason)
- Identify more specific goals/objectives of the Project to better define strategy and approaches both for lagoon and river, in context of Principles/Elements (as per above)
- Revisit the grant management questions, monitoring questions, and work plan based on the results of strategy development and avoid potential conflicts
- Provide a list of all nutrient management studies and special studies that may impact the Project and WQOs, such as the reference condition study
- Develop a timeline with inclusion of concurrent studies that may tie into the process
- After the next meeting, expand the decision-making process to include other groups such as the Farm Bureau, Irrigated Lands Group, Trout Unlimited, other NGOs, and potentially the Regional Board.

**Next Meeting:**

City of Oceanside  
Community Rooms (located next to Library)  
300 North Coast Highway  
Oceanside, CA 92054  
Wed 10/19/11, 10am to 1:30pm