



**Stakeholder Advisory Committee  
Meeting Notes**

**Workshop # 2**

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Banning City Hall  
99 E. Ramsey Street  
Banning CA, 92220

**Attendance**

**Stakeholder Advisory Committee**

- John Covington, Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- Peter Pitassi, Diversified Pacific
- Chris Willis, Pardee Development
- Larry Ellis, Banning Heights MWC/Banning Bench Community of Interest Association
- Stan Houghton, High Valleys Water District
- Jason Uhley, Riverside County FC&WCD
- Luis Cardenas, City of Banning
- Elizabeth Lemus, Cabazon Water District

**Additional Stakeholders and Public**

- Perry Gerdes, City of Banning
- Maxine Israel, Cabazon Water District
- Ben White, Wild California
- Greg Hohman, Pardee Development/Hohman Development Services
- David Dazlich, Building Industry Association

**Woodard & Curran Consulting Team**

- Persephene St. Charles
- Warren Greco

**Meeting Notes**

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

- Persephene St. Charles of Woodard and Curran welcomed everyone to the second Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) workshop. Ms. St. Charles facilitated the meeting.

**2) San Gorgonio IRWM Program Update**

**a. Membership and Outreach**

- Ms. St. Charles lead a discussion of methods to increase membership and participation at the SAC Workshops, and described that the SGIRWM website has been created and can be accessed at [www.sgirwm.org](http://www.sgirwm.org). The website currently contains the upcoming schedule for SAC Workshops, and will be updated to include announcements, meeting materials, plan related documents, resources for information on the region, and a sign-up form to join the mailing list.

#### **b. IRWM Region Boundary**

- Ms. St. Charles explained that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), as part of the conditional acceptance of the San Gorgonio IRWM Region, has requested that the proposed boundary be extended further into the Whitewater River Watershed. Subsequent conversations have resulted in DWR indicating that it is still an open issue. The RWMG met last week and has again determined that the original boundary submitted to DWR as part of the Regional Acceptance process is the best boundary for the Region. The RWMG would, however like get input from the SAC and the public on what the Region's boundary should be.
- The SAC and members of the public discussed the issue and provide the following insights:
  - The Morongo Valley communities in San Bernardino County do not have a strong connection to water resource planning or management in the San Gorgonio Pass and would be better served by the Coachella Valley or Mohave IRWM Regions. So the SG IRWM Region should not include these communities within the Mohave subwatershed.
  - The proposed boundary from the RAP application includes all the watersheds that provide water to the region, and that expanding the region could complicate the region's implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.
  - The remaining areas to the east of Whitewater watershed drain into Coachella Valley and therefore do not have any relationship to the SG IRWM region and its stakeholders.
  - The group agreed that the current RAP application boundary is the most appropriate for their SG IRWM Region.

### **3) Follow Up on Local and Regional Planning Coordination**

- Ms. St. Charles listed the sources of information, including plans, reports, or data that have been collected to date for use in developing the IRWM Plan, and asked for any other documents that would help to understand and describe the region.
- The Sand to Snow National Monument is early in their planning process, and most likely do not have anything published at this point.
- The Butterfield Specific Plan has been documented in the City of Banning's Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) and all documents are on the City's website.

### **4) IRWM Workshop Topic: Objectives and Priorities**

#### **c. Development of Goals and Objectives**

- Ms. St. Charles provided an overview of the process for developing the Goals and Objectives for the IRWM Plan. The process begins with identifying the region's issues, needs, and challenges. The next SAC Workshop will focus on defining goals, measurable objectives, and performance measures.

#### **d. Defining Needs, Issues, and Challenges**

- Ms. St. Charles introduced the discussion of the needs, issues, and challenges for the San Gorgonio IRWM region. The topic areas included Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Management, Habitat Conservation, and Recreation. No additional topic areas were identified.

## **Water Supply**

- It was discussed that the Region would not be where it is today without imported water and storage of State Water Project (SWP) supplies in the Beaumont Basin. Heading into the future, the reliability of this supply is of great concern given that this area is literally at the end of the SWP pipe and so the likelihood of impacts up-pipe are greatest for this Region. The potential for emergency interruptions from seismic events as well as reductions due to Bay Delta or climate change issues is concerning.
- There was also discussion about the need to move imported water into areas such as Cabazon and High Valleys without building duplicative infrastructure.
- The City of Banning and the Morongo Tribe have been using retention basins to capture local surface/ stormwater runoff and recharge their groundwater basins. There are other tributaries with potential to do similar work, and there are currently projects to capture Smith Creek and Pershing Creek for flood control and recharge benefits.
- The IRWMP will need to have a strong link to the Groundwater Sustainability Plans that will be completed for the region under SGMA. They should compliment and not conflict with each other as they are being developed in parallel.
- Identifying funding will be an important part of developing regional solutions if the region is going to take on long term challenges, and work together.
- The whole regional water supply system reliant on the groundwater basins and how the basins function with each other and surface operations. Better understanding as to how these basins function is critical – the Groundwater Modeling Task being conducted within the IRWM planning process will help contribute to that understanding.

## **Water Quality**

- California revised the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of for hexavalent chromium (Chromium 6) in 2014. The City of Banning has detected concentrations exceeding the new MCL in some of its wells. The City has received a variance until the year 2020, and will look at treatment options, with some uncertainty and risk from the litigation over the revised standards.
- Nitrates are an issue with septic systems located in the headwater of the groundwater supply for Banning Bench, Cabazon, and Morongo.
- Environmental water quality is generally good in the region due to a lack of development in sensitive areas. There are no real receiving bodies either as streams are ephemeral.

## **Flood Management**

- There is interest in pursuing infrastructure projects in the region with benefits for flood control and recharge.
- The National Weather Service has revised the rainfall estimates for the region, that would result in resulting in greater flood risk. The San Geronio Pass Region naturally has much higher rainfall than the surrounding lower desert areas like Coachella and Mohave - so routing storm flows is critical.
- Much of the County's system flood control system is developed for 100 year events but there are pinch points within the SG IRWM Region along the interstate where some of the Caltrans culverts are designed for only 50-year flood events. As a result some flooding issues have occurred further up the system as flows begin to back up at these pinch points.

## **Habitat Conservation**

- The Region has a conducted extensive habitat planning work through the Western Riverside County and Coachella Valley MSHCPs, which together cover the parts of the SG IRWM Region that lie within Riverside County. One example of an important species with protected habitat along the region's streams is the Burrowing Owl.

- There is not a strong conflict between environmental and municipal water supply and demands within the region, because the habitat is reflective of a region with ephemeral streams and so is less dependent on a reliable water supply source.

#### **Recreation and Open Space**

- Given the nature of the SGIRWM Region, open space is not an issue. There is no water recreation within the area due to ephemeral water bodies but there is plenty of forest service lands and habitat areas that are used by local communities for recreational activities.

#### **5) Summary and Next Steps**

The next Stakeholder Advisory Committee Workshop will be on August 9, 2017 from 2:00 to 3:00 PM. All workshops will be hosted by the City of Banning. The main topics of the meeting will be a workshop on developing Goals and Objectives for the region.