

Southern Sierra IRWMP

Planning Meeting

October 7, 2009 1:00 - 4:30 pm

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Nancy Bruce, Circle J – Norris Ranch, Springville Public Utility District (SPUD)
Carole Clum – Tulare Co. Citizens for Responsible Growth
Jeannie Habben – Chowchilla RCD/Fresno Watershed
Carolyn Hunsaker – Forest Service - PSW
James May, Tulare County RMA
Larry Otter, Foothill Water Research
Logan Page – Sierra Foothill Conservancy
John Shelton, Department of Fish and Game
Robyn Smith, Yosemite/Sequoia RC & D
Gary Temple, Sierra and Foothills Citizens Alliance/SRCD
Kerri Vera – Tule River Tribe Environmental Department
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 1:05.

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

○ Review of Minutes/Agenda

Julie asked everyone to look over the meeting notes from the August meeting. She then asked if there were any additions or corrections. There were no comments, so the notes remained as written.

Elissa Brown went over the new format for the Agenda. She said that we are moving from informal meetings to very formal meetings and this new Agenda reflects this change. Our meetings will have to be very efficient and she will be working with us closely to see to that.

Elissa and Julie asked for additions or deletions to the Agenda for this meeting. There were none.

Carole Clum brought up the Tulare Co. Oak Woodlands Management Plan, and Elissa said there was a time for that later in the Agenda.

○ Administrative Report

- Bobby said that Sequoia Riverlands Trust met with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy financial person. We have 50% of our remaining balance remaining - \$16,000 to \$18,000. If Bond sales rise, we will have more money. We do have a budget, most of which will go towards Elissa's position. A funding letter will be sent out soon to Federal and other grant agencies.
- Bobby, as Project Manager, is unfunded at this point. Frances, as administration, and Julie, as meeting facilitator, are on a "match/in kind" basis. Everyone should document all contributions they make. Bobby can send a spreadsheet to show where to do this and the milestones for match documentation. He said that the Values and Visions are big for this region.
- Bobby will be working on the workplan and the budget. There are three fiscal agent applicants (and potentially one more) and the Coordinating Committee will decide. Our RAP application has been completed, as well as all our Milestones. We still need to decide how to resolve the small overlap with Madera. Also, the Kern IRWMP has signed the MOU. Two of three completed items, the MOU with Madera is the only item left.

○ Major Topic(s)

- Elissa asked what is the function of the IRWMP? We can't do water management without looking at everything else too. We went over the "Where Are We and What Are We Doing Next?" handout. Elissa's goal and job is to write a grant to get us the funding from the Department of Water Resources. What are functions of plans? Elissa went over the Plan, the Guidelines and the SSIRWM Plan on the handout.

Madera spent money on studies. The plan itself was not that detailed – need to identify the essential data gaps.

Nancy Bruce mentioned a website, "waterwordsthatwork.com" by Eric Echol.

Elissa continued by saying we need to focus and refine the efforts of stakeholders. What are other good uses of IRWMP funding? Carole Clum said to study to reduce wildfire risk in the foothills. Elissa and Carole said overall watershed protection. John Shelton said to help entities to facilitate ongoing education and stakeholder identification and education. Carolyn

Hunsaker said data collection. John Shelton asked how we find out about NEPA and CEQA documents that are out there?

Our next step is to do a workplan and budget.

At the next Planning Committee meeting, Elissa will ask for commitments from attendees.

Elissa then went around the room to find out what people have as issues and if they might be able to help.

Jeannie Haben – Already working on partnership in Madera.

Carole Clum – She will be able to participate. Water supply and habitat are her key issues.

Nancy Bruce – Between SPUD and Circle J/Norris Ranch, her time availability is limited.

Kerri Vera – She is not sure about the Tribe's participation. Their issues are drinking water, hazardous waste and water quality. Bobby asked that she try to participate in whatever capacity she can. Bobby said that the IRWMP would help the Tribe with their studies.

Carolyn Hunsaker – Yes, she would participate.

Jim Mays – He would not be able to participate any more than what he is doing already. His interest is flood control.

John Shelton – He is definitely interested in doing this. He is also interested in flood control.

Gary Temple – He will share what he is doing in the north county. His interest is the relation between land source and use.

Larry Otter – Yes, he will participate between 10 to 20 hours. His issue is maintaining our ditch system in the foothills, infrastructure, and legal rights.

Julie Allen – Yes, she will participate. Water rights and infrastructure are her interests.

Logan Page – Yes, he will participate between 10-20 hours. Water quality, watershed, fish and wildlife.

Bobby Kamansky – He will fill in wherever needed. His issue is habitat.

Robyn Smith – Yes, she will participate. She's interested in fire hazards and cultural resources, energy and power.

○ Outreach and Communication

- Julie said that the DWR is in favor of JPA. However, they vacillate between priority for funding or not. They meet every other month to nurture relationships. It has been going for a couple of years.
- Bobby said in the adjacent regions, Kern County now has an MOU. We split watershed with them. We will review boundaries.
- Bobby spoke with Springville's PUD's attorney: 1) Zach was concerned if SPUD could fill a role, and 2) _____.
- Tulare County RCD – Bobby made a presentation to their Board. They are worried about infringing on private property rights. Bobby is talking to Board again tomorrow. Tom Daly is the President of the Board and he is on-board with the process. Bobby's talking points: non-regulatory, non-binding and voluntary.
- Tulare County Water Commission, Debbie Vaughn – noted the need to release staff for this process. No money required for participation, the Planning Committee may need to ask stakeholder and members for contributions, but this will not be compulsory.

○ Member and Area Reports

- Jeannie Haben – Madera County, Regional Water Management Group is meeting Monday. The MOU with the partners is on Draft #12. There are eleven groups, including two conservation and four water groups.
- Carole Clum – She has a Gama (?) study, with water studies. She's working on the Oak Woodlands Management Plan and collecting reports from water agencies.
- Nancy Bruce – SPUD to approve MOU next week. There was a fire on the Tule watershed, which burned the flume for the second time.
- Carolyn Hunsaker – There is \$1½ million in Federal money going into watershed research. She's working on matching funds, 1) National Science Foundation money. Sierra National Forest delayed on burning treatments, 2) Moving ahead on new NEPA activities (Sierra Forest Legacy and John Muir Project). Also the Kings River Project.
- Jim Mays – He's working with the Corps of Engineers on White River-Deer Creek flood control issues.
- John Shelton – SS IRWMP did receive the MOU from DFG. Gold dredging permits were being given out, but there were too many lawsuits so they stopped issuing. Fish hatchery planting. Regarding wetlands, State Board called and the policy may be changing regarding the dredging of wetlands.

- Gary Temple – SCD – Capitol Building Grant, conference call with DWR and Gary and Fresno County in E. Fresno Co - \$50,000. SRCD working with county to review the Oak Management Plan to conform with Fresno Co.
- Larry Otter – His website will be up and running in a week or so at foothillwater.com.
- Bobby Kamansky – He received watershed maps from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, one for each watershed in our planning area.
- Robyn Smith – She had nothing specific for this group.

○ Public Comments

Not applicable today.

○ Calendar Update

- The next Planning Committee will be on November 18, 2009 from 12:00 to 3:30 at the Farm Bureau (conflicts with the Farm Bureau conference room schedule, so time needed to be changed.)
- Look for an email with the date and time for the next Coordinating Committee meeting.
- Bobby is giving a tour this Saturday for the California Invasive Plant Council at Kaweah Oaks Preserve. There is a “webposium” with SNC and the Board of Supervisors on October 29 regarding fire issues.
- John Shelton said that there is meeting with the San Joaquin partnership and the Governor’s appointed taskforce on Friday, October 23 at their annual meeting. It’s in Fresno and it’s free. It begins at 9:00 am.
- Bobby is going to the Sierra Nevada Alliance conference in North Lake Tahoe from October 16-18. There is also a Department of the Interiors meeting on the web for two hours with Diane Feinstein on water policy.
- Elissa said we would keep this Agenda format for future meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30.