

Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program Administrative Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 6, 2011
3:00-5:00pm
Conference Call

Call-in option:
1-866-862-2138
passcode: 1678718

Call-in Locations:

1. California Trout Office
3399 Main Street (Suite W5)
Mammoth Lakes, CA
2. Bishop Paiute Tribe
Environmental Management Office
(EMO-B)
50-B Tu Su Ln
Bishop, CA
3. Mammoth Community Water District
1315 Meridian Blvd.
Mammoth Lakes, CA
4. Inyo County Water Department
135 S. Jackson St.
Independence, CA
5. Leroy Corlett's home
1217 N. Inyo St.
Ridgecrest, CA
6. Big Pine Paiute Tribe
820 Watson Street
Big Pine, CA

Notes

BryAnna Vaughan called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Bruce Woodworth, Central Sierra RC&D, Mono Co RCD
- Bob Harrington, Inyo County Water Department
- Morgan Lindsay, Mono Lake Committee
- Irene Yamashita, Mammoth Community Water District
- Sally Manning, Big Pine Paiute Tribe
- BryAnna Vaughan, Bishop Paiute Tribe
- Dustin Hardwick, California Rural Water Association
- Darla Heil, Owens Valley Indian Water Commission
- Leroy Corlett, Indian Wells Valley Water Commission
- Mark Drew, California Trout
- Holly Alpert, IRWMP Staff
- Janet Hatfield, IRWMP Staff
- Justin Nalder, Bridgeport Indian Colony
- Keith Pearce, Inyo County Dept. of Public Works

2. Public comment period

- No comments

3. Appointment of new chair and vice-chair for July 1 - December 31, 2011

- BryAnna Vaughan briefly describes her responsibilities of Chair; she didn't feel it was more of a burden than just being on the Admin Committee.
- Holly Alpert reminds group the terms of Chair and Vice-Chair are six months long. The terms of existing Admin. Committee members are as follows.

One-year terms:

Mammoth Community Water
District
Inyo County Water Department
Mono Lake Committee

Two-year terms:

Bishop Paiute Tribe
Central Sierra RC&D
Mono County

- Mark Drew asks the committee for volunteers to serve as Chair or Vice Chair
- Irene Yamashita volunteers to be Chair, as does Bruce Woodworth.
- Mark reminds Bruce there may be a conflict of interest for the fiscal agent to serve as Chair. Bruce agrees.
- **Bruce motions to appoint Irene as Admin Committee Chair and BryAnna as Vice Chair. Bob Harrington seconds the motion. All Admin. Committee members participating approved.**

4. Criteria for CRWA needs assessments

- Mark reminds group there are 20 needs assessments budgeted in the Planning Grant. The grant agreement is very close to being completed as a result of the State Budget passing. The hope of today's meeting is to come up with criteria for selecting entities to receive the 20 needs assessments.
- Mark asks Dustin if CRWA has experience working with Native American Tribes (NATs).
- Dustin replies, yes, they have experience working with NATs.
- Bruce asks for a dollar amount of the needs assessments.
- Needs assessments are \$500 each, workshops are \$2500 each (total of 3). CRWA is covering two of the workshops; the other is covered by the Planning Grant.
- Bruce asks if we can only do needs assessments for water companies or if other types of assessments can be made available.
- Dustin Hardwick replies that CRWA specializes in needs assessments specifically for water districts.
- There is discussion about whether the \$10,000 allocated for needs assessments under the Planning Grant has any flexibility to fund other types of needs assessments. It is agreed that at this point it would be difficult to reallocate funds given the status of the Planning Grant. The Planning Grant currently specifies the CRWA needs assessments are for disadvantaged communities and Tribes.
- In the future we can incorporate thinking about other types of assessments and allocate funding accordingly.
- **Bruce would like the Program Office to get the language specific to the needs assessments from the Planning Grant that specifies needs assessments are only for small water companies as defined by CRWA. (Holly reads the specific language from the Planning Grant later in the meeting, p. 3 of these notes, see bold italicized type).**
- Mark asks for more specifics regarding which types of needs assessments Bruce would like to see. Bruce responds that environmental health, fisheries and agriculture are a few and by scaling down to specific interests that these other types of needs assessments may become economically feasible.
- Irene thinks this has already been discussed and that we can focus on other types of assessments in the next phase of the Plan.

- **Eligibility Requirements:** Mutual Water Companies, CSD, PUDs or Tribes are covered by CRWA. Small Community Water System, as defined by the State of California, serves less than 3,300 people, but has more than 15 connections at a minimum. Systems smaller than 15 connections fall under a different designation by the state (Small State Water System).
- Dustin thinks focus needs to follow the State's standard Technical, Managerial, and Financial (TMF) approach. This approach includes fundamentals that ensure successful assistance to rural water districts. CRWA has found this format to work well and provides key elements for good foundational practices. Further, many funding sources require water districts to meet TMF guidelines to be eligible for other funding opportunities.
- **Technical** aspects include: system operations, including evaluations of staff certification levels, system operating plans, daily operational practices, emergency response plans, repair and replacement plans. Templates and guidelines will be provided by CRWA to these entities where appropriate.
- **Managerial** aspects include: board member training (Brown Act, AB 54), chain of command, flow charts, policy development, and enforcement.
- **Financial** aspects cover: budget projection, reserve policy, analysis of current rate structure, capital improvement planning, risk management and insurance, accounting and auditing. Spreadsheets can be provided by CRWA where needed.
- Training is on site on a case by case basis with each individual entity. Upon completion a Significant Contact Report (SCR) will be provided to each entity by CRWA. Needs assessments can be customized to meet each entity's needs. CRWA staff members are trained specifically in the area of needs assessments. If there are not 20 entities interested, not all 20 assessments need be performed; however, the funds have been allocated specifically for this purpose and Mark feels that they will benefit the region as a whole.
- There is an extensive discussion about the issue of \$500 for each needs assessments as a set price. Concern is expressed by Bruce that more complex assessments may become more expensive. It is suggested to wait to see if this is an issue, and if an issue arises bring it to the Group to decide. Holly reiterates that needs assessments are \$500 no matter the complexity of the assessment. Dustin assures the Admin. Committee that he feels comfortable performing the needs assessments for \$500 each.
- Mark suggests we think of these as "initial" needs assessments and if systems need further support they work with CRWA to seek out additional funding or technical support. Dustin agrees that in the past this is how CRWA has dealt with more complex situations.
- Mark asks Dustin how many of needs assessments are typically conducted each year.
- Dustin notes CRWA performs hundreds of these needs assessments annually, and rarely do such complexities arise.
- BryAnna agrees that because we have money for 20 needs assessments let's have 20 done, and if only 15 entities request the assessment then let's look at reallocating funds for those groups that may need additional assistance.
- Sally Manning asks for a reminder regarding the Group's goal with these needs assessments? Holly reads from p. 54 of the Planning Grant application: ***"To help elicit well-conceived project proposals, the I-M Planning Committee will work with a number of partner organizations, including the California Rural Water Association (CRWA), environmental regulatory specialists and a grant writer to provide both technical expertise, CEQA training, and project application development assistance to disadvantaged communities, community service districts, and Native American tribes that are in need of targeted assistance in identifying potential projects, completing the proposal application form and supporting economic analyses, and providing necessary regulatory review documentation. CRWA will help by providing technical assistance and support to organizations in need throughout the I-M region to assist in identifying the most pressing water-***

related projects in their areas for submission to the I-M IRWMP for consideration.”

- Sally asked how this information will be used by the group. Can the assessment results be confidential so that participating entities didn't feel so exposed? It is brought up that this may lead to reluctance to participate in the needs assessment process.
- Mark doesn't think the Group needs to see the reports issued by CRWA. The Group will need a list of who had assessments done, and entities can provide confirmation that the assessment was done for tracking grant deliverables.
- Irene thinks a summary report may be useful for the Group to see in order to help the Group identify common issues among small water systems in the region.
- Bob brings to light that the Group needs enough information to assist in identifying regional issues and using the information to prioritize system needs.
- Dustin explains the CRWA reporting requirements become sensitive with specific locations. The entity receiving a Needs Assessment will be asked to review the Significant Contact Reports which are sent to CRWA funding agencies as a requirement of accountability.
- Holly asks if there are cases where discussions may take place with the entity without including discussion issues into the report.
- Dustin replies that yes, the SCRs are reviewed by the entity before submitting it as required.
- BryAnna asks if this information is public anyway because it receives federal funding (i.e. subject to FOIA?)
- Sally wants to know how much information the Group is going to want from the SCRs.
- BryAnna thinks that only a blanket report to the group is necessary.
- Bob reminds group that the RWMG will need baseline data to appropriately prioritize future implementation projects.
- Mark clarifies that SCRs can remain confidential and that summary information will be provided to the Group in order for the Group to aptly prioritize future projects.
- **Bruce would like clarification by CRWA what the legal disclosure requirements are.**
- Dustin explains that the information shared with the funding agency will be cleared in advance with the entity prior to disclosing information to the funding agency. If an entity chooses to not proceed, they can choose to do so and keep information from the SCR confidential.* **Note** this may limit opportunities to attract funding through CRWA.
- **The program office will come up with some information “buckets” that will constitute the needs assessment summary for the Group, as well as some types of information that may remain confidential and not be disclosed to the Group. This will be approved by the Group prior to beginning the needs assessments.**
- Dustin emphasizes that of all the assessment work the CRWA performs that this issue of confidentiality is rare. These water entities need help and in order to help them some information needs to be passed on the funding agent.
- BryAnna suggests bringing up this information to the Group to see if they have ideas.
- Bruce would rather the Admin Committee make a proactive recommendation to the Group.
- Darla Heil agrees that the Group is going to have some opinion on this subject.
- Mark suggests we focus on decision criteria currently, and the Program Office can come up with the needs assessments information buckets to be included in the needs assessment summary to the Group.
- Bob suggests making it an action item at the next meeting so that Group Members come back in August ready to approve the information “buckets” document.
- Mark summarizes...following this meeting recommended criteria will be sent to the Group to approve at the July 27th meeting.
- **Program Office will come up with initial thoughts on information to be summarized and disclosed (and not disclosed) as a “Recommendation for Needs Assessment Information to be Shared” document before the needs assessments are completed.**

- Irene requests that on the form, we remind entities that this assistance is publicly funded and therefore subject to public review.
- **Bob moves that the Admin. Committee recommends to the RWMG that it consider the information “buckets” to be included in the “Recommendation for Needs Assessment Information to be Shared” document as developed by the Program Office and furthermore, the Group considers the tiered criteria for soliciting needs assessments developed by the Admin. Committee. Members will be asked to discuss the former issue at the July 27 meeting and to decide on the latter. It will be recommended that the CDSIA document be decided upon at the August 31 meeting. BryAnna seconds. All approved.**
- **CRITERIA:** Mark opens the discussion and suggests using DACs and Tribes as a first tier.
- BryAnna suggests one criterion could be an entity who has not had a needs assessment done in the recent past
- Dustin talks briefly about the questionnaire that will be circulated to the different entities to help determine what groups should receive the needs assessments and what their various needs are.
- Several questions were brought up by the Admin. Committee to be used in the questionnaire. They are as follows:
 1. Are you a member of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP?
 2. Are you a Tribe or DAC?
 3. Have you previously completed a TMF needs assessment? When?
 4. Does your water system serve less than 3,300 persons but have at least 15 connections, thereby meeting the State definition of a Small Water System?
 5. Do you agree to the confidentiality and IRWMP summary information agreement?
 6. Are you currently out of compliance?
 7. Is your water system financially sustainable?
 8. Have you applied for additional state or federal funding? When?
 9. Do you agree to the Program Office recommendations for Needs Assessments summary Information to be shared?
- Mark asks how the group feels about giving priorities to Members. BryAnna cautions soliciting non-Member DACs and encouraging them to become Members because of quorum concerns.
- Bob reminds everyone that the Inyo-Mono IRWM process is supposed to be as open and inclusive of all stakeholders.
- Irene thinks members should be given some priority.
Dustin mentions he could pull from his CRWA priority list to see where the greatest needs lie.
It was suggested that, for the first 15 assessments, priority will be given Members. The remaining 5 will default to Dustin’s priority list based on his assessment of the greatest need. There was discussion whether the assessments (LPA-<200 connections) (DPHS-department of public health services >200 connections) are distributed spatially or just picked off the State Needs List. Can we leave up selections of those remaining 5-6 to CRWA, with the caveat being that at least 1 occurring at minimum in Mono County?
- Bryanna suggested that 1 needs assessment for each County in the region seemed fair.
- **Note: Preliminary eligibility requires applicants to meet the standard definition of a small water system as provided by the State of California. (Serving fewer than 3,300 persons and having a minimum of 15 connections)**
- **Tier 1 Filter: First 15 assessments go to Members, as selected by the Group. The remaining 5 assessments go to non-members (at least 1 being in each of the represented counties within the I-M IRWMP region) as chosen by CRWA. After selections are made, needs assessments shall commence contingent upon the**

signing of Confidentiality Disclosure and Summary Information Agreement (CDSIA).

- **Tier 2 Filter:** Among the 15 Members, priority will be given to entities who are both a Tribe and DAC (highest priority); Tribe or DAC, (second priority); or simply a Member, (third priority). Within each category, each entity receives a higher priority ranking if public health/drinking water standards are out of compliance.
- **Bruce moves to recommend the tiered eligibility requirements to the Group on July 27 for approval. Irene seconds the motion. All approved.**
- Bob moves we table remaining agenda items (5-8) for a later date, in the interest of time. Several people second. All approved.
- Bruce requests a sample needs assessments, BryAnna recommends talking direct with the Program Office about this request as many Admin. Committee members need to end the call.

BryAnna adjourns the meeting 5:00pm

Agenda items not addressed at the July 7 meeting but need to be addressed at the next Admin. Committee meeting are as follows:

5. Briefing by Program Office on budget
6. Content and format of fiscal sponsor reports to Admin. Comm. (monthly) and RWMG(Annually)
7. Implementation Grant- Preliminary discussions of Round 1 Implementation proposal and potential strategies for Round 2
8. Review of action items from the meeting