

Summary of NBWA JTC Meeting
May 22, 2019

Chris Choo, Marin County
Judy Schriebman, LGVSD
Matt Sagues, MMWD
Judy Kelly, NBWA
Mike Prinz, LGVSD
Matt Richmond, WRA
Kelly White, GHD
Sandy Guldman, Friends of Corte Madera Creek
Greg Andrew, MMWD
Isaiah Thalmayer, Point Blue
Kate Powers, MCL
Lucas Patzek, Napa RCD
Will Stockard, MCSTOPP
Jack Gibson, MMWD
Susan Stompe, MCL

Chris began the meeting with introductions and talked about the new focus for the NBWA on developing the concept of One Water -- better integration of all water resources, across the region.

Lucas shared the experience in Napa County of working on developing a more integrated approach to water. He remarked that the Rutherford reach work in Napa is an example of how this might work. That effort started with a legal challenge- in the 80's there was a massive hillside failure and woke people up to new way of regulating agriculture. Clashes between environmental interests and agricultural became common. A Watershed Taskforce was formed, including agriculture and many environmental organizations, which worked toward a two-phased approach. They formed the Watershed Information and Integration Council (WICC) now in operation. Even before state groundwater legislation, Napa was thinking about more integrated surface/groundwater planning The WICC Board is made up of cities, towns, RCDs, flood control, agriculture and environmental interests. Community leaders have also been active and WICC just held its biennial symposium.

Looking back, IRWMP got the County started thinking about new funding opportunities and Napa created a County-only plan. The Napa agencies formed the WICC to set priorities for projects, and while IRWMP was the driver, funding sources are now more diverse. One reason the WICC been successful it that there has been staff who stepped up to lead. Lucas mentioned that Napa is now making the WICC a bit more formal. There is a long line of successful projects the group has pulled together. Lucas notes that unlike Marin and Sonoma, Napa does not have one or two big water agencies that help unify efforts, but Napa Flood Control does often act in that role. Napa's water comes mainly from local

reservoirs; each city has its own. Groundwater is big too because of how much agriculture depends on it. The County joined in with the Bay Area IRWMP, but also did an IRWMP equivalent plan for the County which was “functionally equivalent” to the IRWMP. Eventually the two plans merged but Napa County did get the first IRWMP funding directly from DWR. Lucas reminded the group that the County is in two SWRCB regions and so is also in two IRWMP areas. For the current DAC (Disadvantaged Community) IRWMP funding round, they began by looking at who has not received money as of yet, and identified Calistoga as a place with project needs.

The County is now working to set priorities for projects. About every 5 years they send a spreadsheet around to identify project ideas, possible funding sources, possible partners, etc. They are also now trying to develop a county-wide “Roles and Responsibilities” document. The WICC and the biennial Symposiums have been helpful to vet political issues before they flare up. It’s a way to focus on shared values and talk about how the community wants to plan for the watersheds.

Importantly, WICC gets County money to support its work and is frequently used as a source of information in County deliberations. The WICC Board meets every month and provides a place to hear new information about the resources, helping members to make more informed decisions. An RCD Board member serves on WICC Board. Lucas reminded the group that the county is small at 140,000 people, and that personal relationships are deep and easy to make and maintain. The County also has fewer sanitation districts.

Questions and discussion among the group included:

1) Do the other counties have anything similar to this type of coordination? Chris mentioned that One Tam is similar in intent if smaller in scope and that many of the large watersheds in the region have a focused “Friends Of...” group. One issue for Marin is that many of the creeks drain into non-bay water sources so are arguably out of the focus area for NBWA. Another good example of sub-regional resource cooperation is the Lagunitas Technical Advisory Committee, which grew out of litigation, but has expanded its role and now advises all stakeholders in the watershed while largely focused on fisheries. Sonoma Water also seems to be a strong sub-regional coordinator. Isaiah mentioned that the Marin Carbon Project has a similar type group at work on water resources.

2) What would it take to start this Napa style conversation elsewhere, and what are the new projects that should be the focus of NBWA’s support? Lucas mentioned that the Regional Board has a WDR for sediment in the Napa system and that addressing that issue will come back to agriculture on hillsides. While the regulations underpin this issue, currently they are trying to address it on a voluntary basis. Major main stem Napa River work is also the focus of County

work while the RCD has been doing work on some of the tributaries with the private landowners.

How should transportation and green infrastructure be worked into the conversation? County did do an integrated master plan that tries to integrate water, transportation etc. Caltrans is also a potential source of mitigation funding.

Sandy mentioned that while stormwater could be a major resource and involves every agency, it is not a meaningful water supply element in the North Bay so not sure how a focus on that would help to pull communities and agencies together. Kate suggested that NBWA consider assisting with the mapping of possible sites for high priority green infrastructure projects which could assist the towns and cities and might yield good multi-benefit projects.

The concept was raised about possible stormwater and water quality trading, an idea that is getting some traction nationally. Matt Richmond explained that the concept is based on the carbon-trading model. Mike explained that there was a Santa Rosa project that tried to use stormwater credits. The city of Santa Rosa has a stringent discharge requirement of zero phosphorus in some areas of the system. So when they do discharge, they sometimes will use the credits as mitigation. The organization Freshwater Trust was involved in this work, but the City has found that the utility of this approach is severely limited by having a shelf life on the credits; they expire and then City money is left on the table. Mike thinks that ongoing projects like sediment harvesting might be considered for future stormwater credit investigation. In one example, Santa Rosa was able to use credits from a one-time clean-up a dairy manure lagoon as a source of credits. Perhaps someday we could consider using credits across watershed boundaries but that would not be currently allowed under Phase I RB Permit.

Judy S. asked if there was a way to prepare projects so that when the funds become available we are ready. Chris noted that Marin has worked with STRAW on developing a “ready to go” projects and has been part of several efforts to list “shovel ready” projects. However, these lists usually become out of date quickly. Chris suggested that we should work to find cross-county projects and look to bigger dollars and help highlight and increase the visibility of the North Bay in the funding processes.

Matt urged the group to start this project need/identification effort by polling the NBWA agencies on their needs and issues. He pointed out that his agency is having to raise rates to fix infrastructure and suggested that NBWA keep the focus on what the member agencies need and helping NBWA agencies prioritize those needs and find the funding.

Chris mentioned that past efforts by NBWA to obtain and manage large grants were problematic as the financial oversight work was burdensome to NBWA’s fiscal sponsor MMWD, but thought the NBWA might be able to assist with project

identification and development and have one of our larger members administer a grant. Lucas concurred and noted that lots of the smaller regional entities with defined needs don't have the capacity to really developing unique funding strategies.

For the next meeting, Chris asked if this group is willing to talk about what each agency and organization is focused on, what the identified issues are, and how the organization sees future needs. Pulling this information together at the regional level will help start to stitch together how we approach the One Water.

Next Steps:

✓Chris will start a list of questions and send out the last set of regionally identified IRWMP projects.

✓The group agreed to use the next few meetings to discuss each agencies needs, vulnerabilities and project ideas – to the extent that the JTC representatives are able to discuss such issues.

✓JTC meetings are scheduled out for all of 2019 and will all be held at the MCSTOPP offices. We will meet again on:

July 24

September 25

November 27