

Stakeholder Engagement Charter

[Reviewed by Planning Group on 8/2/18. Updated 8/7/18]
Developed by the Consensus Building Institute

Purpose

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) is developing the Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP). The purpose of this charter is to outline the intent and operating guidelines for stakeholder engagement for developing the Long-Term Management Plan.

The Agency is convening a collaborative process to engage interested parties, landowners, technical experts, scientists, and the public in developing and shaping the plan. To support this process, the Agency is convening a broad-based planning group, issue-specific working groups, and other conversations as needed. The Agency will work with the planning group to develop and implement a communication and engagement plan to share information and solicit feedback from community members.

The Agency has received grant funding that requires it to develop the plan in 2018.

Roles and Responsibilities

Convener

The Agency is responsible for developing the Long-Term Management Plan, and its Board of Directors will consider approving the plan upon completion. The Agency is convening a planning group and working groups to support plan development. The convener commits to running a clear, transparent process. Staff represent the Agency and weigh in on planning group and working group deliberations. Staff will also develop materials to inform planning and working group discussions.

Planning Group

The planning group is made up of a broad group of individuals and organizational representatives including state and federal regulatory staff, landowners, land managers, agriculture representatives, water resource planners, advocacy staff, biological resource specialists, and other interested parties.

The role of the planning group is to shape the goals, components, and overall Long-Term Management Plan. The planning group problem solves on opportunities, challenges, and implementation. The planning group can recommend when issue-specific experts need to convene as a working group. The planning group shares information and promotes understanding about the plan. A vital outcome of planning group deliberations is to build widespread support and understanding for the Long-Term Management Plan and its implementation. Planning group meetings are open to the public. The membership list is included in the appendix to this charter.

Working Groups

Working groups delve into specific issues or process needs to provide insights and guidance to the Agency, consultants, and planning group. For instance, working groups will partner and problem solve with Agency staff and consultants to provide feedback on technical / scientific information and guide LTMP development from technical, scientific, political, socio-economic, and funding viewpoints. Working group members can help identify management issues and coordinate with landowners on solutions. Working groups meet as needed per the Agency, consultants, or planning group's recommendations. Working groups draw on experts from a range of disciplines that may or may not be active in the planning process.

Technical Consultants

Technical consultants work in close partnership with the Agency to conduct analyses and to develop the plan. The technical consultants will share information and draft materials to inform planning group and working group discussions. During planning group meetings, technical consultants will provide expertise and answer planning group and working group member questions; however, technical consultants do not weigh in on planning group final recommendations.

Facilitator

The facilitator will be Gina Bartlett with Consensus Building Institute. The facilitator will design meetings and guide the process toward achieving mutually agreed-upon purpose and goals. The facilitator will work with all the parties to ensure the process is credible, fair, and effective. The facilitator will facilitate meetings, identify and synthesize points of agreement and disagreement, and assist in building consensus among members. Another key role of the facilitator will be to serve as a confidential communication channel for planning group and working group members, as well as other stakeholders. This allows stakeholders who wish to express views privately if they do not feel comfortable doing so in a larger group or to facilitate problem solving and conflict resolution.

If a planning group or working group member has a concern about neutrality or performance of the facilitator, s/he should raise the concern first with the facilitator and then with Elizabeth Krafft or Shaunna Murray of the Agency.

Decision-Making

The purpose of this stakeholder engagement process is to develop a Long-Term Management Plan with widespread support. As such, the planning group and working groups will strive for consensus in its decisions and recommendations. The Agency will be the ultimate decision maker on plan content given that the plan must be complete in 2018. However, the Agency is committed to working with interested parties and stakeholders through the planning group and working groups to reach agreement (as much as possible) on the plan.

The definition of consensus is that everyone can at least “live with” the decision or recommendation. A member can “stand aside” and let the group reach consensus. This would still constitute a consensus agreement and outcome.

When unable to reach consensus, the group will summarize different perspectives in the meeting summary for the Agency to consider in its final decision-making.

Process Agreements

All Planning Group meetings are open to the public.

Everyone agrees to negotiate in good faith. All participants agree to participate in decision making, to act in good faith in all aspects of this effort, and to communicate their interests during meetings. Good faith also requires that parties not make commitments they do not intend to follow through with, and that parties act consistently in the meetings and in other forums where the issues under discussion in these meetings are also being discussed.

Everyone agrees to address the issues and concerns of all participants and create a problem-solving environment, treating concerns as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won. All the parties agree to consider the issues and concerns of the other parties and strive to reach an agreement that takes all the issues under consideration.

Everyone agrees to inform their leadership and constituents about the outcome of the facilitated discussions.

Agreements stand even if representatives change. If an organization changes its representatives, organizations commit to a thorough debriefing of new representatives with the facilitator. New representatives agree to uphold previous agreements reached.

Working Together

Participants and the facilitator will work together to create a problem-solving environment and follow these agreements to that aim:

- Listen to understand
- Encourage others to contribute
- Focus on the topic
- All ideas and points of view have value
- Be honest, fair, and as candid as possible
- Think innovatively and welcome new ideas, creative thinking, and problem solving
- Invite humor and good will
- Be comfortable

Communication and Media

The facilitator, in cooperation with the planning group and the Agency, will develop a communication plan to organize briefings and information about the plan. The facilitator will provide meeting summaries; each will begin with a concise description of meeting highlights and outcomes, intended for participants to easily share with others.

Participants reserve the freedom to express their own opinions to media representatives, but not opinions of others nor on behalf of the planning group or working groups. Participants can refer media inquiries to other members for individual comments, or to Agency staff for comments on planning group or working group deliberations or outcomes.

If contacted by the press or an external party concerning the discussions, participants are asked to:

- Point out that they are not speaking on behalf of the group;
- Present their views only and conscientiously refrain from expressing, characterizing or judging the views of others; and
- Avoid using the press as a vehicle for negotiation.

The facilitator will avoid speaking with the media.

Planning Group Membership

Regulatory Agencies

California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Annee Ferranti and Sarah Paulson
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Phil Hammer or Mark Cassidy
NOAA Fisheries, Bill Stevens
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jake Martin or Leilani Takano
(Tentative) California Coastal Commission

Resource Issues: Scientists and Interest Groups

Water Quality and Lagoon Management: Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, NOAA, Bridget Hoover, Director
Habitat / Wetlands and Lagoon Management: Central Coast Wetlands Group, Ross Clark, Kevin O'Connor
Fisheries: Trout Unlimited, Tim Frahm
Natural Resource Management (focus on steelhead habitat): Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District, Devin Best
Aquatic, Coastal: The Otter Project and Monterey Coastkeeper, Steve Shimek
Natural Resource Management (focus on vegetation management): Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, Paul Robins
Plants and Watershed Restoration: CSU Monterey Bay School of Natural Resources, Nicole (Nikki) Nedeff
Natural Resource Management: The Nature Conservancy, Abby Hart

(Tentative) *Geomorphology:* CSU Monterey Bay, Fred Watson

Stream Maintenance River Management Unit Association and Agriculture / Landowners

RMU Association Board Member David Costa, Costa Farms (mid-Valley)
RMU Association Member Merrill Farms, Allan Clark with alternate John Bramers (northern)
RMU Association Member Melissa Duflock, Rancho San Bernardo (south)
Water Quality and Operations Committee Chair Dale Huss (lagoon)
Eric Morgan, Braga with alternate Bill Lipe, Rava Farms and (south)
River Management Unit Association, Donna Meyers

Waters Operations and Groundwater Plan Coordination

Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Elizabeth Krafft, and Shaunna Murray
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Gary Peterson, General Manager

Salinas River

Long-Term Management Plan

Greenfield GSA, Curtis Weeks, General Manager
Marina Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Keith Van Der Maaten, General Manager
Monterey County Resource Management Agency, Melanie Beretti

Other

Salinas River Watershed Coordinator, Steph Wald
(Tentative) San Luis Obispo County
State Coastal Conservancy, Tom Gandesbery
Grower-Shipper Association of Monterey County, Abby Taylor Silva