

ATTENDING AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

1. City of San Diego
2. Atkins
3. City of Santee
4. Rick Engineering Company
5. HDR
6. CH2M Hill
7. Navahoe Planning Group
8. DWR
9. USACE
10. NOAA /National Weather Service
11. Imperial County Department of Public Works
12. Scripps Institution of Oceanography
13. San Diego County Department of Public Works, Flood Control
14. Citizens for Responsible Water Management

SUMMARY

DWR’s Terri Wegener and USACE’s Kim Gavigan lead the approximately 60-minute San Diego presentation. A deeper discussion of each *California’s Flood Future* recommendation followed.

Key meeting questions/suggestions Included:

- Legal challenges make IWM difficult to implement/ CEQA makes IWM difficult to maintain
- Cities are using flood management funding to address water quality issues
- Due to turnover, policymakers need better information and education should be done regionally
- Education should be done at the public and private level (and include real estate agents and lenders); flood management personnel information should be more accessible; information needs to be regionally appropriate
- Small, temporary fixes are sometimes easier and necessary. Focus on what can be done now while working on long-term fixes to issues.
- Permitting processes should be streamlined; agencies have to complete costly studies to perform O&M in areas where the agency previously was permitted to do same work. Also, regulations are different in different RWQCB regions
- Trust between environmental community and flood community needs to be improved
- Prop 218 is a hurdle and should be changed
- Private investors and land developers are another source to fund projects

RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION

(Italics indicate ideas or phrases from meeting presenters)

Recommendation 1

Conduct regional flood risk assessments to better understand statewide flood risk.

- The regional approach is something we’re getting used to, but it’s usually driven by regulatory requirements or funding because those things encourage agencies to work together. How do we motivate people to get on board without this incentive?

- I don't have money to go out to look at my own problems, how am I going to look at things from a regional perspective?
- From a regional perspective, there is requirement for water quality improvement plans. We look at things from a "triple bottom line" – economy, environment and impact to neighborhoods (social) –perspective.
- We're forced into this for regulatory purposes: trying to integrate with water quality improvement with water supply. If you can get the nexus you're more likely to get more people on board.
- Everything is always trumped by a lawsuit. Enough is enough. Legal challenges make IWM difficult.
- There are flood control facilities that we can't maintain – there is a liability element and permitting issues.
- CEQA is broken. CEQA is a 40-year-old law. It is the trump card. This is great (the Highlights) but put this on your list: CEQA makes it tough to maintain.
- Numerous comments/examples shared related to the challenge of permitting, of maintaining and operation.

Recommendation 2

Increase public and policymaker awareness about flood risks to facilitate informed decisions.

- This is the most crucial recommendation because policy makers are determining my funding. Every two years it starts again with the legislative turnover. People don't care about these things until something goes bad. Every time something goes bad we get funding but then that funding goes bad and falls off. There has to be a way to do this regionally (water quality is an example of where this is being done successfully in one community).
- There is disproportional spending on this water quality as opposed to flood control.
- We need a more effective way to educate elected officials to ensure stable funding can be established.
- Public perception acts the same way – we have very short term memories (Hurricanes Sandy, Katrina). Time passes and people forget.
- Public outreach should be consistent, not just after an event – at the citizen level, not just legislative level.
- Flood classes for insurance agents could be beneficial – people don't want to get insurance to begin with.

- Training should be regionalized – Sandy and Katrina are not good examples because they are the East. Need regional examples (this is the desert), there should be examples here too.
 - *Regionally appropriate information will be a valuable tool.*
- Insurance agents are an important group.
- San Diego Regional manages floodplains differently from other regions and counties – incorporated areas are covered and each city has their own flood control district. What we've seen is that water quality money is gobbled up due to regulatory pressure. In 1985 the cities broke off. Now we're thinking regionally and we all have limited money but there is opportunity to get more money if we work across boundaries.
- Real estate associations should have a similar training program. Realtors and lenders too.
- Great to have a regional example but if people are hearing FEMA say something differently on the TV they will be confused. We need to use the appropriate and consistent language. (100-year-flood, for example)
 - *There is need for consistent messaging that can be used across boundaries.*
- In some communities you cannot find who the floodplain manager is. For the FEMA program (for example), it is very difficult and lists are not frequently updated. It would be nice to know who we should be able to go to to figure out what is going on.
 - *There is a need for easier access to flood management personnel information.*

Recommendation 3

Increase support for flood emergency preparedness, response, and recovery programs to reduce flood impacts.

- San Diego hosts a day-long exercise/simulation called Raging Waters where we explore how all of the various agencies would work together and coordinate during a flood disaster. Normally private companies and businesses would not participate in this type of simulation but this past year they did because there are a lot of businesses who are at risk
- In San Diego, we have a lot of experience with fire response that would probably be helpful here.

Recommendation 4

Encourage land use planning practices that reduce the consequences of flooding.

- Property rights are a local responsibility.
- The state does have some things in place from a general plan perspective, but we need to consider things from a flood risk perspective.

- Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 are very good in that we have thought about infrastructure improvements in the past but these are soft solutions that can be done more inexpensively than building a flood control center. Increasing this awareness first will be more beneficial and less expensive. And can be done before we move to recommendations 5, etc.
- Non-structural improvement will help us gain more political support and help us get the funding.
- This is putting a band aid on the problem – not a permanent solution – but it is easier to begin with small fixes. It allows us to do take steps while we work on gigantic ones.

Recommendation 5 & 6

Implement flood management from regional, systemwide, and statewide perspectives to provide multiple benefits/Increase collaboration among public agencies to improve flood management planning, policies and investments.

- So much focus from the environmental community is on habitat but these groups don't recognize the impact of flooding. Focus is on such little pieces that when floods appear there will be such a catastrophic impact. A lot of times this focus ends up stalling projects... This ties back into who are you educating and communicating with.
- Everyone is pushing the pendulum but we need to find a way to get back to the middle. This goes along with regional working groups. If everyone is reasonable we should be able to build trust and relationships. Trust is an issue.
 - *Too many are protecting their issues.*
- In San Diego we look at what other municipalities do – solutions are across the board. We need to streamline regulatory process and CEQA – this would be extremely helpful.
 - *There is tremendous variation in requirements statewide.*

Recommendation 7

Establish sufficient and stable funding mechanisms to reduce flood risk.

- Get Sierra club educated. Get our students involved in academia. Maybe they can help solve the problem.
 - *Instead of conceptual learning, learning could be more rooted on the ground and in real life applications.*
- There is so much money to fix our problems: private money. Give me a permit and I will fix your problem. There are numerous funding sources. I will pay for my own flood control. I'll pay for the permit.
 - *We need to explore private investors.*
- Prop 218 is the biggest problem/hurdle we face. Because a 2/3 vote is needed it's very unlikely to get something through. This needs to be changed.
- What are the next steps?

- FMA has local lunches in this room every few months, if anyone is interested in attending.

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