

WATER CONSERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 8, 2010
Time: 10 a.m. – noon
Location: San Diego County Water Authority
Board Room
4677 Overland Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123
Directions: http://www.sdcwa.org/contact/km_directions.phtml
Contact: Kelly Mooney, 858.522.6766, KMooney@sdewa.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ACTIONS

1. Call to Order
 - Glen Schmidt welcomed everyone to the meeting. Luis Generoso was ill and unable to attend the meeting.
2. Welcome and Introductions
 - All attendees introduced themselves.
3. Review Jan. 11, 2010 Meeting Notes and Update on Action Items
 - Members approved meeting notes as written.
 - Glen Schmidt announced that only about 50 members completed the online survey in January. A follow-up survey will be sent out to those who did not respond to verify contact information and interest in remaining on the CAC. Members who do not respond to the follow-up survey will be removed from the roster.
4. Conservation Action Committee/Workgroup Goals and Action Items
 - Glen Schmidt announced that the structure of the Committee and workgroups is under review. He presented the ideas he and Luis discussed, and requested that responses be sent to Luis at lgeneroso@sandiego.gov. Currently the Conservation Action Committee includes three sub-committee work groups:
 - Industry Cluster
 - Ordinance
 - Outreach/Education
 - New committees include:
 - Landscape Industry Work Group
 - Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Work Group
 - Agricultural Work Group and Regulations, Codes and Standards Work Group

Glen explained that the current structure focuses primarily on the landscape industry.

Lawrence O'Leary, from TORO, suggested the use of a metric in the purpose statement. He recommended that the Regulations, Codes and Standards Committee be in contact with the other groups because it is important that everyone is aware of regulations.

Nan Sterman, from Plant Soup, Inc., recommended that residents and individuals be included in the mission statement and membership.

Marty Eberhardt, from the Water Conservation Garden, recommended that the Outreach and Education Work Group be reinstated and continue work. She said that more education is needed for residents and single-family homes.

Linda Flournoy, from Planning and Engineering for Sustainability, mentioned that it would be helpful to include “sustainability” in the mission statement because it is becoming a more meaningful term. She agrees that the Outreach and Education Work Group should begin work again. Glen responded that there had been discussion to expand the scope of the Conservation Action Committee beyond water.

5. Water Supply Update

- Jason Foster, from the San Diego County Water Authority, gave the water supply update. He explained that El Nino is expected to last through spring 2010. Wet weather is expected to continue and snow levels are currently up at 107 percent of the statewide average. The Colorado River is about 10 to 15 percent below average for this time of year. Overall, targeted conservation levels are about 20 to 22 percent below average so far in 2010. The recent wet weather helps but provides no significant changes to the current supply challenges. Statewide project allocations are set at 15 percent but may rise to 35 to 45 percent. However, regulatory restrictions will affect the final 2010 allocations. In April and May 2010, Metropolitan and the San Diego County Water Authority will determine the 2011 allocation levels.

Linda Flournoy asked if there are any attempts to see how much is being lost in runoff. Jason said he would check with the water resources department to find out. Jason explained that the gap in conservation levels is due to the allocations and education in the summer as well as economic conditions.

John Rader asked if it would be possible to segregate water savings by different types like landscape and residents. Jason said he would check with the water resources department to find out.

6. Landscape Irrigation System Evaluation and Management

- David A. Shaw, from the University of California Cooperative Extension, distributed and discussed the publication “Landscape Irrigation System Evaluation and Management”. The document, originally published in 1990, has been updated multiple times as research based information has been developed. The publication has been useful to landscape irrigation managers, growers, and landscape architects. The publication explains the evapotranspiration (ET) methodology used to determine plant water needs and the process of irrigation system evaluation to calculate irrigation runtimes and schedules to meet water needs. Dave explained that the ET model was developed for agriculture where the main objective of irrigation is yield. However, in landscapes, while yield and growth are important, the main objective is aesthetic value. The publication is aimed at providing the landscape manager with the tools to apply the right amount of water to the landscape. It does not focus specifically on “saving water”. This objective is different than “applying the right amount of water”. However, Dave illustrated how water can be saved through system maintenance and uniformity improvements, scheduling improvements, deficit irrigation, and reduction of irrigated area. These are all management issues. He explained that the Cooperative Extension provides research-based information and briefly discussed multiple studies done by the UC Cooperative Extension.
 - A groundcover study was done in Irvine to test four levels of irrigation treatment. The study determined Kc (Plant factor) information for six commonly used groundcovers. Drosanthemum ice plant in the study performed well when irrigated at 0.25 ETo with irrigation frequency of five to six weeks. A follow-up trial on irrigation frequency determined that frequency was not as big an issue as the amount of water applied.
 - A shrub irrigation study was done at the San Diego Botanic Garden to test 30 common and native plant species. Kc information developed for these ornamentals is in the publication. UC Cooperative Extension has also completed trials with six to eight plant types in different areas of the state and the investigators are currently consolidating the data.

- A smart controller study was done in Riverside to test four controllers. Three of the four controllers were capable of adjusting runtimes as ETo changed during the year. However, it was found that precise and location specific precipitation rates and uniformity information needed to be input into the controllers to improve accuracy of the irrigation schedule. The smart controllers use average precipitation rates and efficiency numbers (selected by system type) which do not reflect the amount of variability in landscape irrigation systems.
- A mulch evaporation study showed that some mulch materials (especially fine textured organic mulches) can absorb water and once wet, will evaporate about the same amount of water as cool season grass for the first four to five days after irrigation. Mulch can reduce evaporation from the soil surface if drip irrigation is used under the mulch, or if overhead irrigation is used, by applying more water (to penetrate the mulch and wet the soil) but reducing the frequency of irrigation. In other words, water retained by the mulch can offset savings achieved in reducing evaporation from the soil.

Glen explained that he is interested in more information regarding trees, shrubs and groundcover. With AB 1881, plant groupings would be helpful for residents and landscape industry professionals. Dave responded, indicating that WUCOLS contained that information, but that it is somewhat subjective and anecdotal in nature since it was done “by committee” and no trials were performed. The main objective of WUCOLS was to provide guidance for plant groupings, but it is now taken as absolute data and Kc/plant factor numbers have been linked to the WUCOLS ratings.

Marian Marum, from Marum Partnership Landscape Architecture, said she thought the WOCULS information was out of date and she would like a master list of plants and their water needs for reference. With new regulations, landscapes must meet a certain threshold. She said the only resource available is mandates and LEED calculations from the state.

Dave indicated that he knew the requirements for the design portions of various ordinances. While necessary to pass planning, certification, and permitting procedures the predicted water needs and irrigation schedules based on ETo and WUCOLS are lacking in precision. Another issue with the WUCOLS is “how do we get more plants (as well as new cultivars) on the list?” and “how is WUCOLS information updated?” This needs to be worked out. As far as field trials, there is some limited screening of landscape plants through the Arboretum Allstars program at UC Davis, but testing of every landscape species to determine a rating (or a range) for Kc information takes time and is expensive.

Lawrence O’Leary asked if there is some way to predict the efficiency of an irrigation system and if a cheat sheet was available to help with water budget calculations. Dave indicated that manufacturer’s guidelines can only predict the uniformity and that the installation, maintenance and management of the system are less predictable and affect the efficiency directly. Dave explained that there is not currently a cheat sheet available although the information in the “Landscape Irrigation System Evaluation and Management” publication, various websites, and computer programs are available.

Marty Eberhardt suggested that the CAC work on an expanded plant list.

7. Work Group Reports

- **Model Ordinance** – Glen Schmidt explained that landscape standards are posted to the Ordinance Web page as they become available. Currently, the city of San Diego and about half of the county have completed ordinances.
- **Industry Group** – Brian Maynard, from BRICKMAN, explained that landscape companies need to know how ordinances will affect them when they work in different locations throughout the region. He also reminded the membership to contact him or Rob McGann regarding membership. Contact Glen or Luis if you are interested in chairing one of the new committees.

8. Legislative Update

- Alexi Schnell, from the San Diego County Water Authority, provided a legislative update on the Water Authority's two sponsored bills, the Water Bond that will appear on the Nov. 2, 2010 statewide ballot, and recent positions taken by the board on state legislation and initiatives/ballot measures. Please see the update listed on the CAC Web site for more information.

9. Member Announcements/Other Business

- Rob McGann said CLCA is working to figure out how the ordinances can be addressed.
- Marian Marum reminded people about the sustainable landscape symposium on Thursday, March 11. Also, policy and position papers are available on the ASLA Web site.
- Carlos Michelin announced that AWWA official charity, Friends of Water for People, will be hosting an informal gathering on Thursday, March 25 at the Greek Palace on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. The organization provides potable water to areas of need.
- Scott Robinson announced inspection trips scheduled for May 2 and 3 with Director Jim Barrett and May 21 with Bud Pocklington. Send questions or reservations to srobinson@sdcwa.org.
- Michele Shumate announced the launch of a new landscape Web site to showcase landscapes that demonstrate maintenance and standards. Please send letters of interest to mshumate@sdcwa.org. The Web site will include photos and possibly addresses.
- Cecilia Tipton, from the San Diego County Watershed Protection Program, announced a new Web site, rethinkwateruse.org. They are coming up with new ideas for the program including rain barrel sales and a green gardener certification program. The certification program will include a series of courses in runoff pollution prevention and conservation. They will be hosting an integrated pest management workshop among others. Kiosks with touch screens located around the county will help with community outreach.
- Lawrence O'Leary announced that Earth Day is coming up in April.
- Larry Brietfelder announced Otay Water District's ongoing turf removal program.
- Ted Thurston introduced Henry Castillo, the new Caltrans representative. He said Caltrans maintains close to 400 water meters across 17 agencies in San Diego County.
- Henry Castillo said Caltrans is looking into a 10-inch transmission line for recycled water. He also gave his phone number, (619) 688-3335, to the membership in case they need to contact him.
- Chris Roesink announced the Sports Turf Managers seminar on March 19 from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is open to the public.
- Chuck Bragdon announced that the hotels he works with at Water Saver Solutions recycle up to 80 percent of water.
- Linda Flournoy announced that she has a revised version of her soil presentation. She said she had some concerns about the Model Ordinance and said she would submit them to Glen.
- Nan Sterman announced an Encinitas Garden Tour on April 17, 2010.
- Julian Duval announced many upcoming events at the San Diego Botanic Garden. Find more information at www.sdbgarden.org.
- Marty Eberhardt announced that the Water Conservation Garden will be hosting its spring plant sale on March 20 and its spring garden festival on April 24.
- Hank Ortiz announced that Water Dex will be hosting a workshop later this month at the UC Irvine Extension.
- Vince Lazaneo announced that the Master Gardeners recently completed a table-top display for use at community events. The display was on display in the lobby.

MEETING HANDOUTS

- 2010 Water Supply Outlook
- 2010 Water Bond Summary
- Landscape Irrigation System Evaluation and Management

- Friends of Water for People Invitation
- Encinitas Garden Festival & Tour Invitation
- Water Smart Pipeline Bookmark

NEXT MEETING DATE

May 10, 2010, 10 a.m. – noon; San Diego County Water Authority
4677 Overland Ave., San Diego, CA 92123

ATTENDEES

1. Glen Schmidt (Co-Chair), Schmidt Design Group
2. Peter J. Abernathy, E N V I R O N S
3. Nikki Alexander, League of Women Voters
4. Chuck Bragdon, Water Saver Solutions
5. Teran Breceda, 3rd John, Inc./Breceda Landscape
6. Larry Breitfelder, Otay Water District
7. Henry Castillo, Caltrans
8. Julian Duval, San Diego Botanic Garden
9. Marty Eberhardt, Water Conservation Garden
10. Megan Ely, Rain Bird
11. Damian Esparza, Watersmart Conservation
12. Linda Flournoy, Planning & Engineering for Sustainability
13. Jason Foster, San Diego County Water Authority
14. William Franklin, U.S. Navy
15. Fred Grim, Valley Crest Landscape Maintenance
16. Mike Grisdale, Friends of the Water Conservation Garden
17. Frank Hilliker, San Diego County Water Authority
18. Catherine Hollinger, WaterSmart Consulting
19. John Holt, Recon Native Plants, Inc.
20. Liz Jaeschke, Prescott Company
21. Fran Lambert, Mariposa Landscape & Tree Service, Inc.
22. Vince Lazaneo, University of California Cooperative Extension
23. Sandra Lozano, Sweetwater Authority
24. Marian Marum, Marum Partnership Landscape Architecture
25. Brian Maynard, BRICKMAN; California Landscape Contractors Association
26. Hank McCarrick, SECOSYS
27. Rob McGann, California Landscape Contractors Association
28. Rachele Melious, Mr. G Trees
29. Carlos Michelin, San Diego County Water Authority
30. Kelly Mooney, San Diego County Water Authority
31. Carl Nettleton, Nettleton Strategies
32. Darla O’Leary, Driwater, Inc.
33. Lawrence O’Leary, OGC Resources
34. Hank Ortiz, Water Dex
35. Doug Park, Water Saver Solutions
36. Teresa Penunuri, San Diego County Water Authority
37. John Rader, EuroAmerican Propagators
38. Joseph Randall, Olivenhain Municipal Water District
39. Richard Restuccia, Valley Crest Landscape Maintenance
40. Pat Richter, Tierrasanta HOA Landscape Coalition
41. Philip Robisch, Hunter Industries
42. Troy Roble, Energized Solutions
43. Chris Roesink, Hunter Industries
44. Sarah Rossetto, Katz & Associates

45. Alexi Schnell, San Diego County Water Authority
46. Dave Shaw, University of California Cooperative Extension
47. Michele Shumate, San Diego County Water Authority
48. Rose Smutko, Tierrasanta HOA Landscape Coalition
49. Nan Sterman, Plant Soup, Inc.
50. Ted Thurston, Caltrans
51. Cecilia Tipton, County of San Diego Watershed Protection
52. Torrey Webb, Vallecitos Water District
53. Doug White, Center for Sustainable Energy
54. Carey Worthy, Labahn's Landscaping