



**FINAL REPORT  
with Accompanying Letters of Support for the Project**

**REGIONAL WETLANDS AND WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**Submitted to the State Water  
Resources Control Board  
by Environment Now  
on behalf of the WRP**

**Submittal Date: July 21, 2003  
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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## ***A. Background***

Until recently, the history of wetland and watershed restoration in Coastal Southern California has been piecemeal and disappointing despite the great need and significant values at stake. The region has lost a greater percentage of its wetlands than any other in the country and, in this semi-arid climate rich with biological diversity, the values associated with wetlands are momentous. Recovery and protection of these areas is critical for beaches, sport fisheries, numerous sensitive species, birds of the Pacific Flyway, water quality, water supply, and flood mitigation. Moreover these areas play a critical role for education and recreation in this populous region where wetlands—marshes, rivers, streams—are the most accessible natural areas in an otherwise highly urban environment.

To leverage and target resources more effectively, especially in a region where acquisition and restoration work is extremely costly, planning must identify the most critical wetland resources—not just within watersheds, but across watersheds, within counties, and throughout the region. Defining and promoting a regional perspective within which to place—and inspire commitment to—watershed and project work is central to the mission of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP).

## ***B. Wetlands Recovery Project and Its County Task Forces***

The WRP was formally established in 1998 to coordinate actions among the numerous and disparate parties involved in wetlands work in order to develop a regional wetland recovery and conservation strategy. It's goal is to increase the pace and effectiveness of restoration and wetlands protection work. The WRP has over 20 state and federal agency partners, chaired by the Resources Agency and administered by the State Coastal Conservancy. It also has a distinguished Public Advisory Committee and Science Panel. Most distinctive among such partnerships, however, are the 5 county-level WRP task forces, co-chaired by a county supervisor and leading county-wide environmental organization, which are the vehicle for cross-watershed and cross-county communication. They also provide the means for aggregating and communicating local perspectives to the agencies and the Science Panel. The task forces gather information, participate in consensus-building and decision-making processes, and broaden wetlands constituencies.

### **C. Environment Now**

Environment Now, a nonprofit foundation, chairs the Public Advisory Committee, and employs a full-time person to staff the WRP's outreach efforts. Environment Now also serves as the 501(c)(3) umbrella organization for the 5 county task forces and administers the WRP's small grant program. Environment Now received a Proposition 13 grant of \$607,000 from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on behalf of the WRP to enable the task forces to contribute more systematically to the WRP's objectives.

### **D. This Project**

Although the WRP task forces have existed for several years and have served as a communication hub for each county, their all-volunteer nature made it difficult to follow through with new initiatives given the members' primary responsibilities to the work of their employing organizations. Under the Proposition 13 grant, each county task force hired a full-time watershed coordinator for a 15-month period. These watershed coordinators performed a range of functions: producing the deliverables required under the Proposition 13 grant; furthering the implementation of a wide variety of tasks identified in the WRP's *Regional Strategy*; and expanding communication networks and interest in wetlands issues.

The CalPIRG WaterWatch Program, whose mission is to invest California campuses and communities in stewardship of local waterways, hired staff to oversee efforts on university campuses to recruit student volunteers to assist task force member organizations as on-the-ground troops for restoration and monitoring activities. In addition, WaterWatch volunteers fanned out to elementary schools throughout the region, using Project Wet curricular materials to promote the outreach message: *H2O: Headwaters to Oceans, Water Connects All Life*. Although the WaterWatch Program had already existed on some University of California campuses in Southern California, the grant allowed for expansion to new campuses, especially the California State University system, thus reaching out to a more economically and ethnically diverse student population.

A significant result of all this work is to promote a greater alignment of interests around wetlands throughout the region. As the task forces and WaterWatch Program build momentum, community interests—local government, non-profits, educational institutions, and individuals—increasingly identify ways to incorporate wetlands recovery and protection into their missions, mandates, and day-to-day activities. Aldo Leopold pointed out that modern conservation tends “to relegate to government many functions eventually to large, too complex, or too widely

dispersed to be performed by government.” (SAND COUNTY ALMANAC, *The Land Ethic*). Southern California wetlands have suffered from the proverbial “thousand cuts.” Thus, while the WRP’s state and federal agency partnership is key, it must be used to inspire the energies of others, rippling out to engage an ever-widening set of ideas, talents, and resources around wetlands recovery. This has been the real value of the Proposition 13 grant.

## **1. Purpose**

The Proposition 13 grant helped to realize three different sets of objectives. The first set, related to watershed management planning, specifically addresses requirements set out in the Proposition 13 bond language and the grant agreement. The second set pertains to implementation of the WRP’s *Regional Strategy* which identifies five regional goals and over forty different actions to achieve them. The grant was to enable the county task forces to play a significant role in fulfilling the WRP’s goals. The third set has to do with community-level interests incorporating wetlands recovery into their own programs and activities—broadening the circles of interest. These overlap and complement one another, but represent somewhat different ways of describing the work undertaken.

### a. Proposition 13 Goals in the SWRCB Contract

The contract between Environment Now and the SWRCB describes the overarching grant objective from the perspective of the SWRCB in implementing Proposition 13 requirements as follows:

[T]o coordinate watershed planning on a regional basis by allowing the task forces to contribute local resources to watershed management planning tools under development by the WRP.

The background section of the contract highlighted five deliverables designed to further this objective: (1) a regional watershed planning assessment, (2) an inventory of restoration projects, (3) a Southern California volunteer network, (4) a model watershed ordinance, and (5) a regional wetlands and watershed plan for Southern California. The body of the contract specifies a number of tasks and subtasks designed to fulfill the objective and contribute to development of the five products. These are described in more detail in the section below, Deliverables.

### b. Actions in the WRP’s *Regional Strategy*

The WRP’s *Regional Strategy* identifies six overarching goals:

- (1) Preserve and restore coastal wetland ecosystems;
- (2) Preserve and restore stream corridors and wetland ecosystems in coastal watersheds;

- (3) Recover native species diversity;
- (4) Integrate wetlands recovery with other public objectives;
- (5) Promote education and compatible access related to coastal wetlands and watersheds; and
- (6) Advance the science of wetlands restoration and management in Southern California.

The Five-Year Implementation Plan accompanying the *Regional Strategy* describes actions to help realize each of these six specific goals and, further, describes three related areas of activity that are critical for attaining the six goals:

- Information exchange and dissemination;
- Partner agency involvement;
- Funding.

These goals and the related actions were developed with significant involvement by all parts of the WRP. How the grant enabled the task forces to further actions identified in the WRP *Regional Strategy* is discussed in the section below, Activities.

### c. Broadening the Circles of Interest

While the SCRCB's Proposition 13 grant objectives and the WRP's *Regional Strategy* objectives have structured the work effort under the grant, an underlying purpose was to create centers of activity in the task forces and universities that could encourage local interests to pursue their missions in light of wetlands recovery and protection. This extends the WRP partnership to local government agencies as well as community and educational organizations, each of which has its own particular resources and perspectives to bring to bear. It creates new synergies and greatly enhances the resources directed towards wetlands recovery. As new interests are attracted to work on wetlands recovery issues, they generate new ideas and products that were not listed among the Proposition 13 deliverables or the *Regional Strategy's* actions.

## **2. Scope**

The Wetlands Recovery Project is dedicated to protecting and restoring wetlands (rivers, streams, marshes, ponds) within coastal watersheds encompassed by the geographic area spanning from Point Conception to the border with Mexico. This includes all or part of five counties (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego) whose water bodies drain to the Southern California Bight. The WRP's primary focus has been identifying and carrying out acquisition and restoration projects for coastal wetlands and, more recently, for rivers and streams that drain to the coast. The county task forces have played an increasing role in working with the agencies to develop potential projects and

set regional priorities. The Proposition 13 grant helped support this work, and has also allowed the task forces to participate more fully in the development of wetlands assessment tools spearheaded by the WRP Science Panel and activities sponsored by the Public Advisory Committee focused on educating decision makers and the public about wetlands and the WRP. In addition, the grant has allowed for creation of deliverables that have provided the task forces and the WRP as a whole with a better grasp of who is doing what and where within each county, where the gaps and opportunities are, and how to address them.

While coastal wetlands constitute a finite set of acquisition and restoration possibilities that the WRP is committed to acting upon whenever the opportunity arises, coastal watersheds comprise a vastly larger set of possibilities and raise thorny issues about priorities. When written, the Proposition 13 grant was to help support task force participation in the development of an assessment model by the WRP's Science Panel which could satisfy the requirement in the bond language for a watershed management plan. The task forces contributed to development of the Southern California Riparian Ecological Assessment Model (SCREAM, formerly SWAMP, to characterize and compare biodiversity, biochemistry, and hydrogeomorphology across watersheds); and to the California Rapid Assessment Methodology (CRAM, to evaluate wetlands conditions at a specific site); and to the EcoAtlas (a directory of GIS data and studies). Although the task forces have helped to shape these tools so they reflect local as well as state and federal agency data and needs, the completion dates for these tools was extended beyond the 15-month Proposition 13 grant period. Thus the Pocket Navigator to the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, which describes the many products that have been generated by the WRP partnership within the framework of a watershed management plan, has been substituted for the assessment model initially envisioned. The biodiversity module of SCREAM is now complete, however, and the CRAM is undergoing final field testing and the EcoAtlas is in draft form. The Science Panel and WRP as a whole are now wrestling with questions about how these tools should be managed and made accessible on the internet.

In addition to participating in development of tools by the Science Panel, the Proposition 13 grant enabled the task forces to contribute to the work of the Public Advisory Committee which educates decision makers about wetlands and the WRP and helps to find funds for WRP projects and activities. It also allowed for greater cross-county communication, learning, and activity.

### **3. General Approach**

Watershed coordinators were hired in each county to support the task forces and carry out the work of the grant, especially producing the specific deliverables required under the grant agreement. They engaged in research activities to

- Identify organizations engaged in project and planning work in the watersheds in each county;
- Find existing GIS data bases for the EcoAtlas and the SCREAM and participate in developing and testing CRAM;
- Map areas covered by existing watershed management plans;
- Target priority gaps in watershed planning activities and encourage organizations to begin addressing those gaps;
- Develop county-by-county lists of potential funders of wetlands and watershed management projects;
- Describe and map proposed restoration projects;
- Help secure resources and funding for organizations willing to take on work related to projects and watershed management planning.

While much of the above is directed towards recovery of wetlands, protection of existing wetlands is also key. The project manager worked with a select panel drawn largely from the Public Advisory Committee to review strategies available to local government to protect wetlands and aquatic resources which resulted in a report and a set of findings and recommendations. In addition, the County of Ventura was awarded two grants to explore how such strategies might be adopted there.

The WaterWatch Program hired coordinators at each university, who in turn recruited faculty and student volunteers to help with the elementary school classroom presentations and on-the-ground work (clean-ups, monitoring, and restoration). The WaterWatch coordinators worked closely with the Watershed coordinators to direct volunteers to activities deemed important by the task forces.

Once the 15-month period of employment under the Proposition 13 grant ended, the deliverables were described at task force meetings and the annual WRP Symposium. They were also made available on compact disks and on the web (see [www.lasgrwc.org/WRP](http://www.lasgrwc.org/WRP)). A grant to Environment Now from the State Coastal Conservancy allowed four of six people (three watershed coordinators and the grant administrator) to continue working for the WRP while a fifth has been hired as a watershed coordinator by the County of Orange, so her learning is also being put to ongoing use. The other coordinator continues in position at the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, continuing to build on what was developed during the grant period, and a new person was hired to work with him and others

in San Diego County. The WaterWatch Program received US EPA funding to continue with its work.

#### **4. General Outcome**

The general purposes of the grant—coordinating watershed planning on a regional basis—was accomplished by producing the required deliverables; by enabling the task forces to participate more fully in the WRP partnership, especially the work of the Science Panel; and by allowing the task forces to become more proactive forces in their communities, thereby promoting broader interest in wetlands protection and recovery.

With the grant deliverables and the efforts provided to the Science Panel, the watershed coordinators developed planning resources that they and others will continue to draw upon. They also increased the visibility of wetlands and watershed issues in their counties and highlighted the role of the WRP partnership in facilitating coordinated regional planning and implementation.

The watershed coordinators identified, filled, and inspired others to help fill some key gaps related to watershed issues in each county (educational, institutional, technical assistance, planning, and project development). They identified and helped people write grants totaling over \$8 million of which about \$2.5 million was funded, and most of the rest is still under review (not including WRP funds). They engendered key cross-county work related to Rincon Creek (Santa Barbara/Ventura), the Santa Clara River (Ventura/Los Angeles), and the San Gabriel River (Los Angeles/Orange). They arranged for numerous tours and site visits to pique the interest of decision makers; they organized a number of workshops (e.g., arundo removal, project funding, environmentally sustainable interpretive centers); they became reservoirs of knowledge widely consulted for their expertise and viewed as hubs in a communication network they helped establish.

In addition, WaterWatch volunteers fanned out across the region teaching classes, cleaning up rivers, monitoring water quality and participating in restoration work. This established a network of elementary school teachers, university student organizations, and university faculty that can continue this work. Finally, the grant served to heighten appreciation for the role of local land use decision-making processes as a focus for wetlands and watershed protection and, in particular, helped to facilitate a pilot effort by the Ventura County Planning Department.

## **II. PROJECT PRODUCTS**

The Proposition 13 grant was used to develop deliverables under five major categories. Each is described below in terms of its purpose, products, and

outcomes. In addition, Table 1 below lists the deliverables in terms of task, subtasks, due dates and dates submitted.

## **A. Regional Watershed Planning Assessment (Task 4)**

### **1. Purpose of Task**

- a. To enable the task forces to contribute to the WRP Science Panel's efforts to create tools set out in its regional wetland and watershed assessment framework (see *Pocket Navigator*.) The coordinators identified local data resources and local data needs as well as reviewed and commented on assessment tools under development;
- b. To identify key areas where the watershed coordinators and task forces should focus their efforts during the grant period;
- c. To target who is doing what and where in each county to understand the organizational and human capacities with regard to wetlands recovery projects and watershed planning.

### **2. Task Deliverables**

- a. Questionnaire. Provided systematic means for collecting information on who is doing what and where in the watersheds throughout each county and what representatives of different organizations identified as the key "gaps" related to wetlands recovery.
- b. Gaps Report. Vehicle for reporting on the results of the questionnaire and the watershed coordinator's assessment of gaps within each county.
- c. List of Organizations. Extensive list of organizations, by watershed, in each county, with contact information and organizational descriptions. Helped to orient the watershed coordinators to the institutional environment and provided a list from which to select those interviewed for the questionnaire. Included in the Gaps Report.
- d. Watershed Plan Characterization Report. (1) Initial report described planning efforts by county; (2) a supplemental report summarized key information; and (3) a map with a GIS data base produced with assistance from GreenInfo Network provides a visual picture of the intensity of watershed management planning effort throughout the region by depicting plans that are completed, in progress, or proposed. GreenInfo Network provided maps with identifying features on which the watershed coordinators were able to draw the plan boundaries.

Relatedly, California's Legacy Project has assembled data bases on various kinds of planning efforts, but some are indicated by point, rather than by spatial

boundaries so they are difficult to overlay with the watershed plans in a meaningful visual display. For those interested in integrating different kinds of planning activities (endangered species recovery plans, land-use plans identifying sensitive areas, etc.), it would be possible to combine the data base of watershed plans with the plan data bases of the Legacy Project that have spatial boundaries

### **3. Outcomes**

The watershed coordinators surveyed and collected data resources for the Science Panel's EcoAtlas and its Southern California Riparian Ecological Assessment Model (SCREAM; formerly SWAMP). The EcoAtlas is a collection of GIS data bases relevant to watershed planning that will be made available for the WRP's Information Station. SCREAM is under development and will provide a regional assessment of riparian resources according to habitat, biochemistry, and hydrogeomorphology. Watershed coordinators have helped review and assembled other key parties to review the SCREAM work products to date.

The watershed coordinators contributed to the development and testing of the California Rapid Assessment Method for wetlands being developed by the Science Panel in concert with scientists in the Bay Area and the Central Coast. They provided critical feedback for the application of CRAM in Southern California and for the purposes of local government and community organizations.

The watershed coordinators have focused attention—theirs and others—on key gaps in their counties and achieved some significant results (new collaborative planning efforts, new on-the-ground project and funding proposals, new education and outreach endeavors); with data bases and list serves, they have established networks for communication and shared these with others; and they have targeted where planning activities are intense to where they are nonexistent and identified some model plans others may wish to consult.

### ***B. Inventory of Restoration Projects (Task 5)***

#### **1. Purpose of Task**

- a. To identify candidate wetlands projects for WRP small or large grant funding (e.g., provide habitat benefits or “functional lift” ) and assist project proponents through the application process;
- b. To identify wetlands restoration projects that may not be appropriate for WRP funding, but nonetheless would provide wetland benefits (habitat contiguity, water quality, water supply, education, recreation and assist project proponents in seeking project implementation funds.

c. To provide a listing of prospective projects by watershed, benefits, costs, and possible implementing organization for use by those seeking to mitigate for wetlands damages.

## **2. Task Deliverables**

a. List of Restoration Projects. Data base (Access) of projects that can be searched in terms of watershed, project benefits, or project costs. Available on disk and displayed in a set of region-wide and county-by-county maps. (Generally GIS maps of projects are difficult to develop because people do not know the longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates. GreenInfo Network, however, provided the watershed coordinators with maps containing enough identifying features so that they were able to draw in the projects. This method could easily be adapted to grant application processes so agencies could more readily identify the range of projects being proposed for different watersheds and guard against redundancies and inconsistencies.)

b. List of Funding Sources. (1) Excel file of county-by-county list of potential funders for wetlands and watershed activities; and (2) a table indicating the grants which watershed coordinators and WaterWatch coordinator wrote or assisted others in writing.

## **3. Outcomes**

The watershed coordinators arranged for well-attended funding workshops and offered individualized technical assistance. Not including the WRP grants, the watershed and WaterWatch coordinators have applied for—or assisted others in applying for—grants totaling almost \$8.5 million of which almost \$2.5 million has been funded, \$825,00 has not been funded, and almost \$6 million is still undergoing review.

## ***C. Southern California Volunteer Network (Task 6)***

### **1. Purpose of Task**

To create a Southern California community of interest around wetlands issues and invest people with a sense of watershed stewardship and enable those eager to participate to learn about opportunities in their area.

To marshal troops for wetlands cleanups, restoration and monitoring activities and, through participation, teach about the values and threats to the region's wetlands.

To promote an interest in wetlands among young people—university students making choices about careers and avocations—and to reach out to students, faculty, and administrators at the California State University system, in particular,

which has been underserved by available extra-curricular environmental opportunities and programs..

To develop and promote a theme or “mantra” for regional wetlands education and outreach efforts so that the message gains force through repetition rather than losing force through dissipation.

To teach elementary school children and their teachers about wetlands and show how such teaching can enliven the curriculum.

## **2. Task Deliverables & Outcomes**

a. Web-based Community Calendar at [www.cleanwater.org](http://www.cleanwater.org) on which organizers can post their events and which others can consult. Site is averaging 250 “hits” per month. The WaterWatch Program, which will continue to operate the site, hopes to double this number.

b. Trash Inventories for 8 cleanup events with 200 hours of volunteer labor. WaterWatch actually organized 35 cleanups, with 920 volunteers working over 2000 hours to take over 14,000 pounds of trash from the region’s waterways, inventorying trash from 8 sample events as documented in the 5<sup>th</sup> quarterly report.

c. Volunteer work totaling 200 hours for restoration and monitoring with evaluation reports. WaterWatch actually organized 975 hours of volunteer activity, with sample evaluations for 200 hours as documented in the 5<sup>th</sup> quarterly report.

d. Presentations to 60 elementary school classes with evaluations. WaterWatch actually organized 219 presentations to over 7,000 elementary school children using the theme, *H2O, Headwaters to Oceans: Water Connects All Life* and materials from the Project WET curriculum; have completed evaluations for a sample of 15 presentations, with a score of 4.6 out of 5. Documentation in the 5<sup>th</sup> quarterly report.

e. Media reports. WaterWatch issued press releases in relation to many of its cleanup and volunteer events and organized a press event announcing the expansion of the WaterWatch Program from the University of California to the California State University system. Copies of 8 newsarticles included in the 5<sup>th</sup> quarterly report.

Education and outreach are long-term undertakings, but the Proposition 13 grant allowed for creation of some tools critical to establishing a community of interest (the Community Calendar, the unifying theme or “mantra”, the network of supportive university faculty and administrators, a cadre of more knowledgeable volunteer workers and volunteer teachers as well as elementary school children

and their teachers. In addition, many events were attended by elected officials and reporters and covered in the media reaching out to broader publics. Moreover, the institutional capacity of WaterWatch was refined and expanded and will continue the work using other grants.

## ***D. Model Watershed Ordinance (Task 7)***

### **1. Purpose of Task**

To engage key spokespeople and elected officials in an informed discussion to recommend ways to use local authorities to improve wetlands and watershed protections and to encourage local government to pursue selected strategies. This task is critical because federal authorities are being narrowly interpreted. Moreover, protecting wetlands in the first place will be much more cost effective than trying to restore them later.

### **2. Task Deliverables**

- a. List of Panel Members including Chair. The panel, chaired by long-time Huntington Beach City Council Member and Coastal Commissioner Shirley Dettloff, included a geographically representative group with people from local government, the private sector/regulated community (e.g., the Southern California Building Industry Association, the Irvine Company, SCE), and environmental organizations.
- b. Local Strategies Report. This report by Krista Sloniowski, titled Using Local Ordinances to Protect Water Resources, describes five local land-use planning authorities to show how they can be employed to protect natural wetland, riparian, and coastal resources. The paper highlights successful models and shows that local authorities work best when reinforced through a supportive state or federal regulatory structure. It also argues that until watershed management planning is integrated into existing land-use planning, it is likely to remain marginal to local decision making processes.
- c. Meeting Summary & Findings and Recommendations Report (Draft and Final). Panel members met for six hours to hear presentations about local land use planning authorities and case studies and to discuss their recommendations for WRP follow-up activities. These were captured in a Draft Findings and Recommendation Report that was then circulated for comment and revised. This forms part of the post-Proposition 13 grant work by the WRP outreach director and informs activities of the people hired in the follow-on State Coastal Conservancy grant to Environment Now.
- d. Model Ordinance and Strategy for Encouraging Adoption. The report, Using Local Ordinances to Protect Water Resources and the Findings and Recommendations Report both describe and characterize model ordinances.

The Panel did not endorse a particular ordinance, but instead endorsed developing a compendium of innovations that local government in the region are pursuing and then holding a workshop to showcase the results and offer technical assistance to local governments eager to explore some of the options presented. Assembly Member Fran Pavley offered assistance in promoting such a workshop. In addition, the County of Ventura received two grants to support its work in the WRP: (1) a Coastal Impact Assistance Program grant of \$292,229 to prepare a program proposal for Board of Supervisors' consideration to map significant wetland habitat areas and amend the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to establish a Biological Resource Protection Overlay designation/zone which would require all development in overlay areas to be evaluated for impacts on significant wetland habitat areas; and (2) a USEPA Wetlands Program Development Grant to ensure that impacts to wetlands in unincorporated Ventura County are assessed and mitigated through the land use entitlement process by revising Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, determining potential for off-site compensatory, off-site mitigation, developing list of standard conditions for wetlands impacts, mitigation performance, and violations, among others.

### **3. Outcomes**

This task has heightened appreciation for the role of local government in wetlands protection by WRP partners and others and has set a course for follow-on activity including developing a compendium and other technical assistance resources. In addition, some task forces are exploring how the Nonpoint Source Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program developed in Connecticut might be adapted to a Watershed Education for Municipal Officials (WEMO) program in Southern California. This would be a more consolidated and comprehensive effort building on the experience of East Coast pioneers.

## ***E. Regional Wetlands and Watershed Plan for Southern California (Task 8)***

### **1. Purpose of Task & Task Deliverables**

When the Proposition 13 grant proposal was written, the WRP anticipated that, by the summer of 2003, work on the Southern California Riparian Ecological Assessment Model would be complete for five pilot watersheds (one in each of the 5 WRP counties) and that this would satisfy the grant requirement for a regional wetlands and watershed management plan. Because some critical data had to be developed for SCREAM and because the Science Panel has undertaken to implement a broader assessment framework recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, at this juncture only the habitat module--and not the biochemistry and hydrogeomorphology modules—is complete. An array of assessment tools is under development, however, including a California Rapid Assessment Methodology (CRAM) that is close to being a “working draft.” These assessment tools will allow for regional assessments, for comparisons

across watersheds of different variables related to restoration and preservation values, and for comparisons across wetlands. The Proposition 13 grant allowed for the watershed coordinators to contribute significantly to the creation of these tools.

In order to provide a “deliverable” to satisfy the Proposition 13 requirement and that would be useful for regional watershed planning in Southern California, we have created a *Pocket Navigator for the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project*. In the Spring of 2003, the project director and grant administrator for this Proposition 13 grant attended the two-week CalFed Watershed Partnership Seminar held in Napa. The seminar promoted the idea that watershed plans should be designed to invite citizen participation in planning processes. Because watershed planning documents are often highly technical and intimidating, they aren’t really used. Both in name, design, and substance, they need to be more user-friendly.

The *Pocket Navigator* was created to make more transparent and accessible the many watershed planning products that have been created by the partners of the WRP. The *Pocket Navigator* briefly describes the different products and notes how they can be accessed or obtained. Its structure tracks the required elements for a watershed management plan and enables a user to see the relationship of the different products to each other and to watershed management planning.

## **2. Outcomes**

As the WRP partnership has grown, broadening out to include ever-widening circles of interest, it has become increasingly difficult for one part of the WRP to track what other parts are doing—people on the Managers Group may not know of all the products that the Science Panel has created, or one task force may not know what another has done. Moreover, task force member organizations may benefit greatly from knowing what a member organization in another has done (e.g., the County of Orange may benefit from knowing that the County of Santa Barbara has created a *Creek Care Guide*.) The *Pocket Navigator* also provides a ready means to educate those new to the WRP about the progress that has been made and the materials that are available. It may prove particularly valuable in recruiting new people to the enterprise by showing the tremendous amount of interest that exists as measured by the many products created. Moreover, by compiling the existing products, the *Pocket Navigator* points to possible gaps that need to be filled. While the *Pocket Navigator* has been produced in hard-copy format, it may provide the structure and content for updating the WRP web site.

**Table 1. Proposition 13 Schedule of Deliverables, Showing Subtasks, Due Dates, and Dates Submitted**

Task	Deliverable by Subtask #	Due Date	Date Submitted
1. Project Management			
	1.2 Quarterly Progress Reports	7/10/02 10/10/02 1/10/03 4/22/03 <b>7/10/03</b> <b>10/10/03</b>	7/10/02 10/10/02 1/10/03 4/22/03 <b>7/21/03</b>
	1.5 Contract Summary Form	7/10/02	7/10/02
	1.6 Subcontractor Documentation	7/10/02 10/10/02 1/10/03 4/22/03 <b>7/10/03</b>	7/10/02 10/10/02 1/10/03 4/22/03 <b>7/21/03</b>
	1.7 Expenditure/Invoice Projections	10/10/02 & 4/10/03	10/10/02 4/22/03
	1.8 Project Survey Form	1/10/05	
2 Advance Payment	2.1 Written Justification & Schedule	4/15/02	4/15/02
	2.2 Proof of Separate Bank Account	4/15/02	4/15/02
	2.3 Bank Statements	4.10/03 <b>7/10/03</b>	4/22/03 <b>7/21/03</b>
Landowner Notification			
	3.1 E-Mail & Newsletter Copy	7/10/02	7/10/02
	3.3 Los Angeles Times Copy	7/10/02	7/10/02
4. Watershed Planning Assessment			
	4.1 Questionnaire	5/10/02	5/10/02
	4.4 Gaps Report	7/10/02	7/10/02
	4.5 List of Organizations	7/10/02	7/10/02
	4.7 Watershed Plan Characterization Report	11/10/02 & <b>7/10/03</b>	11/22/02 & <b>7/21/03</b>
5. Comprehensive Project Inventory			

Task	Deliverable by Subtask #	Due Date	Date Submitted
	5.1 List of Restoration Projects	<b>7/10/03</b>	<b>7/21/03</b>
	5.3 List of Funding Sources Contacted	10/10/03	<b>7/21/03</b>
6. Volunteer Network			
	6.3 Trash Inventories (8)	1/10/03 (4) <b>7/10/03 (4)</b>	1/10/03 <b>7/21/03</b>
	6.4, Evaluation Reports, 100 Hours Volunteer Activities	1/10/03 <b>7/10/03</b>	1/10/03 <b>7/21/03</b>
	6.4, Evaluation Reports, 30 Classroom Presentations	1/10/03 <b>7/10/03</b>	1/10/03 <b>7/21/03</b>
	6.6 Media Reports	1/10/03 <b>7/10/03</b>	1/10/03 <b>7/21/03</b>
7. Wetlands and Watersheds Protection Ordinance			
	7.1 List of Panel members	7/10/03	
	7.2 Local Protection Strategies Report	10/10/03	<b>7/21/03</b>
	7.3 Meeting Summary	10/10/03	
	7.4 Model Ordinance	12/10/03 1/10/04	
	7.5, 7.6 Findings and Recommendations	1/10/04	
8. Wetlands and Watershed Management Plan			
	8.1 Draft Plan	<b>7/10/04</b>	<b>7/21/03</b>
	8.3 Final Plan	10/10/04	
9. Draft and Final Report			
	9.1 Draft Report	<b>11/10/04</b>	<b>7/21/03</b>
	9.2 Final Report	1/10/05	

### **III. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN RELATION TO THE WRP'S REGIONAL STRATEGY**

The Proposition 13 grant was, in part, to enable the Task Forces to help implement the actions set out in the WRP *Regional Strategy's Southern Five Year Implementation Plan* (November 2001). The Implementation Plan sets out over 40 actions, with 22 relevant to the work of the watershed and WaterWatch coordinators. They are listed below (with the relevant Regional Strategy Implementation action number in parenthesis) with brief descriptions of the implementation role played by the watershed coordinators, or others as specifically noted..

#### ***A. Develop decision support tool to help assess preservation and restoration potential based on ecological objectives (1.1)***

1. Participated in various meetings of the technical advisory committee, Science Panel, and the WRP Managers Group regarding development of the SCREAM (formerly SWAMP) decision-support tool; reviewed and submitted comments regarding draft parameters for the project; and organized and facilitated county task force meetings to review and discuss the decision support tool and the Science Panel's draft position paper on improving regional planning of ecosystem restoration and management in Southern California.
2. Compiled and submitted an inventory of GIS metadata for use by the Science Panel in its riparian mapping project for the pilot watershed as a component of the SAP's EcoAtlas and SCREAM development program and helped to gather data specifically for the pilot watersheds: Carpinteria Creek, the Ventura River, the San Gabriel River, San Diego Creek, and Escondido Creek.
3. Took part in the Science Panel's workshop in Irvine (February 19-20) to review development of a California Rapid Assessment Model (CRAM) for streams and wetlands.
4. Hosted cross-county meeting on the development of the California Watershed Assessment Manual to discuss how it might relate to the WRP Science Panel's watershed assessment framework.

#### ***B. Continue project selection process for annual Work Plan, small and large grants (1.6)***

1. Conducted site visits to encourage new project ideas and increase the role of cities and other community organizations in wetland project development, and conducted field visits of projects underway for task force members to develop more informed project proposals.

2. Organized and facilitated task force meetings to discuss potential acquisition and restoration projects for the WRP's 2003 Project Work Plan. Sponsored presentations to the Task Force to afford prospective applicants the opportunity for preliminary review and feedback on their conceptual proposals.
3. Met with various prospective applicants to discuss the WRP grant program and worked with applicants for large or small grants to refine project concepts and revise specific proposals before their submission.
4. Worked with the other watershed coordinators to develop a small grant evaluation procedure and grading sheet for use by the county task force members in reviewing and ranking county task force priorities.
5. Participated in the monthly Managers Group meetings in which progress on projects is tracked and criteria for selecting new projects are refined.
6. Facilitated county task force meetings in 2002 and 2003 to rank small and large grant proposals; and then participated in regional meetings of watershed coordinators and WRP staff to evaluate and recommend small, and later, large grant proposals for funding.

***C. Target planning and project development in priority areas such as those specified in the Regional Strategy (Tijuana, San Elijo, Los Cerritos, Ballona, Ormond, & Santa Clara River) (1.7)***

**1. Santa Barbara County Coordinator**

a. *Priority South Coast Creeks.* Worked with biologists from NOAA Fisheries and the DFG, landowners, community-based watershed partnerships and local restoration groups to identify and discuss potential acquisition and restoration projects along the South Coast (including ones on Arroyo Burro and Carpinteria, Mission, Montecito, and San Jose Creeks). Assisted landowners and community groups in developing proposals for WRP and DFG grant programs. Organized creek walks and other site visits of potential restoration areas along other creeks with landowners, agency planners and biologists, and restoration ecologists.

b. *Rincon Creek.* Responding to a priority of both the Ventura and Santa Barbara County task forces, drafted and submitted a joint proposal to the DFG fishery restoration program on behalf of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties for organizational support of a Rincon Creek stakeholders group. Worked with staff of Santa Barbara County's Project Clean Water on a companion proposal to DFG to fund a watershed planning project for Rincon Creek, whose watershed (and jurisdictional responsibility) is divided between the two counties.

## **2. Ventura County Coordinator**

a. *Ormond Beach*. Through the task force, encouraged development of project proposals for the Ormond Beach wetlands to build on community interest and enthusiasm around recent land acquisition. Resulted in small grant award for site clean up and invasive plants removal project. Also participated in planning process among the task force, Ormond Beach Observers, Western Alliance for Nature, Audubon Society and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for snowy plover and least tern educational outreach and protection at Ormond Beach. Outreach program began in May, 2003.

b. *Santa Clara River*. In conjunction with Los Angeles County watershed coordinator, organized four watershed stakeholder tours of the upper and lower watershed (summer 2002, spring 2003) to bring together disparate stakeholders to discuss watershed issues, challenges, planning and projects. Worked through this process to bridge communication gaps between various planning processes and stakeholders. The spring 2003 tour was preceded by a January Santa Clara River task force workshop (Ventura County portion of the watershed focus) with presentations by stakeholders involved in watershed and wetland planning and projects. Presenters included Ventura County Watershed Protection District, the Coastal Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, California State Parks, Friends of the Santa Clara River, City of Ventura, and Ventura County Resource Conservation District. The two day spring tour concluded with a similar workshop for the Los Angeles portion of the watershed.

*Ventura River*. Have begun , with the UC Cooperative Extension Program, to organize a “Watershed U” training for stakeholders on the Ventura River modeled after the successful program conducted for the Arroyo Seco.

## **3. Los Angeles County Coordinator**

a. *Santa Clara Watershed*. Organized a workshop and tour for various interests involved on the Los Angeles County side of the watershed; assisted the City of Santa Clarita and Los Angeles County Watershed Management Division to apply for a grant to monitor water quality in the upper watershed; and helped to facilitate a coordinated approach among agencies with land acquisition responsibilities in the area.

b. *Los Angeles River tributaries of the San Fernando Valley and the front range of the San Gabriel Mountains*. Worked with Assembly Member Carol Liu’s office to establish an Open Space Committee for this area.

- c. *Dominguez Watershed Remnant Wetlands*. Participated and helped to promote watershed planning efforts.
- d. *Ballona Wetlands*. Participated in watershed planning efforts for the Creek and the lagoons, and arranged tours of latter.
- e. *Urban Streams*. Promoted opportunities for partnerships and programs between North East Trees, a primary advocate and technical resource for restoring and daylighting urban streams, and county agencies, political leaders, and other environmental organizations. The WRP will soon explore how to frame an urban streams program using its grant funds.
- f. *Upper Ballona Watershed*. Have developed a tour itinerary and have conducted series of tours for task force members, a consulting team, and the general public.

#### **4. Orange County Coordinator**

*Orange Coast River Park*. Conducted tours, held meetings, and gave presentations to promote the River Park Concep—300 new acres of restored wetlands along with up to 100 acres of associated habitats— and helped to organize a major celebratory event hosted by the newly opened Hyatt Regency Hotel (May 2003).

*Santiago Creek*. Worked with the Greenway Alliance to formalize their stakeholder group which is now working with other agencies to prepare an Open Space Master Plan and was successful in obtaining an Urban Streams grant of \$150,000 to restore stretch of creek.

*Prima Deschecha Sub-Watershed*. Worked with local stakeholders and County to organize a stakeholders group to promote compliance with the Regional Board water quality requirements.

#### **5. San Diego County Coordinator**

a. *San Elijo Lagoon*. Because the Lagoon Conservancy has all necessary studies to carry out the Baseline Biological Report for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Feasibility Study, it was the first non-profit, community-based organization selected by the Corps to conduct such a study which is now underway.

b. *San Dieguito Lagoon*. The restoration project has been stymied due to a lawsuit and worsening conditions required experts to support emergency

openings of the inlet and to participate in a public forum about the value of the project.

c. *Escondido Creek*. Worked with the Escondido Creek Cooperative Agreement group to ensure that the watershed planning effort develops an action plan and have provided advice about how to do this.

d. *Storm Water Regulations*. Have participated in several forums—Project Clean Water and the Encinitas Blue Ribbon Committee—to help shape regulations and assure that they support wetlands recovery.

#### ***D. Build capacity and expertise of local agencies and organizations (1.9)***

a. *Arundo Workshop*. Santa Barbara and Ventura County watershed coordinators organized and conducted a WRP regional workshop in Oxnard regarding techniques to eradicate *Arundo donax* (Aug. 29, 2002).

b. *Symposium 2002*. Ventura County hosted the annual WRP Symposium (Oct. 2002) and the Ventura and Santa Barbara County coordinators organized panel session on community-based restoration projects.

c. *Interpretive Centers*. Los Angeles and Orange County watershed coordinators organized a Sustainable Interpretive Center Workshop at Upper Newport Bay to discuss when it is appropriate to build centers near sensitive habitats, alternative interpretive strategies, and, if centers are desirable, how to build them sustainably (Spring 2003).

d. *Funding Workshops*. Santa Barbara and Ventura County watershed coordinators organized and conducted joint workshop to showcase grant programs that fund restoration projects, with presentations by RWQCBs, CDFG, Coastal Conservancy, State DWR, USFWS, and NRCS; Los Angeles and Orange County watershed coordinators conducted a similar joint workshop with over 150 attendees, and San Diego did the same (Winter 2002).

e. *Group Facilitation*. The watershed coordinators offered various kinds of coordinating and technical assistance to many different community-based organizations and local agencies.

#### ***E. Coordinate with agencies working on related efforts to ensure wetlands objectives are considered (2.1)***

1. *County Watershed Management Functions.* (1) In Santa Barbara County, building upon the analysis prepared for the Gaps Report, met with County staff and members of the county task force to develop a strategy for creating a watershed planning and management function in Santa Barbara County government. Given the budgetary crisis now faced by County government, initial efforts have focused on data collection and developing a regional watershed planning framework for the entire South Coast. Working with staff of Project Clean Water and the County planning department, the coordinator helped put together a grant proposal and subsequent work plan for the first step in that effort, one funded by US EPA. (2) In Orange County, the coordinator worked with Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks and the County of Orange to update the “Green Map” to incorporate a vision of river and wetlands restoration and created a PowerPoint presentation to promote the concept. The task force is encouraging the County to engage in County-wide planning for watershed and wetlands recovery. (3) In San Diego, the coordinator worked with the county to develop watershed management plans and criteria, particularly action plan components, which will help to ensure that the plans result in on-the-ground projects and wetlands improvements.

2. *Task Force Meetings.* In each county, the watershed coordinators developed meeting agendas, organized and ran meetings that showcased wetlands issues, and asked speakers to describe how wetlands issues are addressed through their programs and activities.

### ***F. Conduct Needs Assessment of accessible wetlands areas & interpretive centers (3.2)***

1. Environment Now funded the grant administrator to complete data sheet and take photographs of coastal wetlands throughout the region as the basis for a “virtual tour” that could eventually be carried out by bus.

2. The Orange County coordinator collected information on watershed interpretive centers in the 5 counties, compiling it into a data base that was then depicted on a regional map and used in conjunction with a panel at the 2002 annual WRP symposium.

### ***G. Develop Regional Community Calendar (3.3)***

Developed by CalPIRG’s WaterWatch Program which promoted the Community Calendar with the help of the watershed coordinators. See [www.cleanwater.org](http://www.cleanwater.org).

## **H. Create web-based guide describing wildlife viewing opportunities in wetlands and watersheds in region (3.4)**

The watershed coordinators collaborated with local Audubon chapters to complete an inventory data sheet for sites that would be suitable for a Southern California birding and wildlife corridor. Sites have been identified in all but Los Angeles County and will be reviewed by the State Watchable Wildlife Committee.

## **I. Educate federal, state and local decision makers (3.6)**

1. Annual spring Sacramento event co-sponsored by the WRP Public Advisory Committee and the California Coastal Coalition focused in 2003 on the eco-tourism values of beaches and wetlands. Elected officials spoke and received awards; coordinators organized teams from each county to attend and meet with legislators while in Sacramento.
2. Each task force coordinator orchestrated a presentation before the county board of supervisors to recognize contributions made by the county supervisor serving as the task force co-chair and used the opportunity to showcase what the resources the WRP has directed to each county. This was followed up in several counties by regular briefings of various supervisors on wetlands activities.
3. Staff of elected officials are invited and often participate in task force meetings and informed about watershed and wetlands activities in their districts.
4. Elected officials—such as Congress member Hilda Solis, Assembly Member Marco Firebaugh, or Supervisor Gloria Molina—frequently open WaterWatch cleanup and volunteer events with speeches and encouraging words to the volunteers.

## **J. Identify key educational themes for region's wetlands (3.7)**

1. An ad hoc WRP committee advised the WaterWatch Program on a theme that captures the take-home message that the WRP would like to promote; WaterWatch incorporated this message— *Headwaters to Oceans, Water Connects All Life*— into its educational and volunteer activities and the theme has also been adapted for the 2003 symposium: *H2O, Headwaters to Oceans, Integrating Rivers, Wetlands and Coastlines in an Urban Environment*.
2. The watershed coordinators have been heavily involved in a wide range of education and outreach activities from the *Creek Care Guide* in Santa Barbara County, to the *Environmental Education Needs Assessment* in Ventura County,

to the very active Education Working group of the Los Angeles County Task Force, to the newly formed education group of the Orange County Task Force.

***K. Inventory wetlands and watershed education materials (3.8) & develop web-site for disseminating materials (3.9)***

The WRP Los Angeles County Task Force Education Working Group helped the Los Angeles office of the California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) obtain a grant to identify watershed education materials from throughout the region and upload them onto the CREEC web-site. The site serves as a state-wide portal for environmental education materials. With the help of the watershed coordinators, CREEC has identified over 300 organizations producing educational materials that it had not listed.

***L. Address the needs of the region's ethnically diverse population (3.11)***

1. *Santa Barbara County Coordinator.* (a) Assisted management of the Creek Watchers program in Santa Barbara in implementing its Latino Outreach Project (funded in part by a \$30,000 small grant from the WRP). The project is designed to educate 6th graders in several local schools with high Latino student populations about watershed ecosystems and water quality issues through hands-on activities and field trips. The program allows students to work with watershed maps, take a creek walk, test water quality and work at a creek restoration site; it culminates in a bilingual "Family Night" where students and teachers can share their experiences with the students' parents. The basic goal of the program is to increase the Latino community's awareness of and participation in local watershed issues. (b) Developed a program to prepare and publish Spanish-language materials about Carpinteria Creek for the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition. (c.) Initiated conversations with County staff, the Earth Island Institute, the Institute for Social Justice at the UCSB Graduate School of Education, and local community groups regarding possible creation of a restoration corps and environmental career education program that would target underserved students in Santa Barbara-area schools.

2. *Ventura County Coordinator.* The Ventura County Strategic Plan for Environmental Education (Summer 2003) includes a needs assessment that focuses on the South Oxnard area because the Hispanic majority there represents the future demographics of the County as a whole according to demographic and population trends research.

3. *Los Angeles County.* (a) Developed watershed education partnership with the Mexican American Opportunities Foundation which provides English and citizenship training for new immigrants. The UC Cooperative Extension Program is coordinating task force members to provide field trips, curricula, and hands-on activities to promote English and citizenship studies in a watershed context. (b)

Made concerted effort to reach out to under-represented groups in awarding stipends to travel to Sacramento and in offering technical assistance in developing small grants.

4. *Orange County Coordinator.* (a) The watershed coordinator worked with the Bolsa Chica Land Trust which received a WRP small grant for bussing children from inner city schools to the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. (b) The Coyote Creek project grant has a component for outreach to under-served communities, but the project as a whole has not yet commenced.

5. *San Diego County Coordinator.* Worked with Aquatic Adventures on implementing their “Wetland Avengers” which has received two WRP small grants which target minority groups. Provide educational material development and biological oversight of restoration work.

### ***M. Establish larger private sector in WRP (3.12)***

1. The Santa Barbara County coordinator conducted outreach to individual landowners in the Carpinteria Creek, Arroyo Burro, and Mission Creek watersheds regarding their consent to and involvement in restoration projects on their property (such as removal of invasive species and modification of barriers to fish passage). Those efforts culminated in such things as submittal of grant proposals for restoration, consent by the landowner to Arundo removal by the County Weed Management Area, or the landowner joining a community-based watershed group.

2. The Orange County coordinator secured funds for the celebratory event to showcase progress on the Orange Coast River Park from the Hyatt “Regency Hotel and from EDAW and Taco Bell for the Sustainable Interpretive Center Workshop.

3. The Sacramento event featured an award to Cabrillo Power for its role in helping to eradicate caulerpa.

### ***N. Expand WRP Information Station (5.1)***

Data collected by the watershed coordinators for the EcoAtlas, for the Inventory of Potential Projects, and the Watershed Management Plans can be incorporated into the Information Station.

### ***O. Establish watershed contact network (5.2)***

As part of the Gaps Report, the watershed coordinators developed lists of organizations active in wetlands and watershed issues by county. This list became the mailing list for each county task force and is used to keep people throughout the county apprized of issues related to wetlands. Each coordinator also sent the lists to the California Coastal Coalition which sends out a weekly digital newsletter about legislative issues, conferences, grants, jobs, etc.

***P. Expand WRP web site including sections on education resources, links to related sites, community calendar, data (5.3)***

1. The WRP web site has been linked to the Community Calendar.
2. The Pocket Navigator can serve as a basis for revising and updating the WRP web site.
3. The Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council has a section about its role in the WRP on its web site.
4. The CREEC web site could be linked to the WRP web site given the new watershed education materials that it will be posting.

***Q. Sponsor Symposium (5.4)***

*Symposium 2003.* The San Diego watershed coordinator is working with three other organizations to organize a symposium in which the WRP is sponsor to be held in Long Beach (October 23-24) and titled *H2O, Headwaters to Oceans, Integrating Watershed Work in an Urban Environment*.

***R. Coordinate with related regional and state efforts to share information (5.5)***

1. The Southern California Water Dialog is posting the Inventory of Potential Projects developed by the watershed coordinators to its web site.
2. The watershed coordinators have represented Southern California interests in meetings sponsored by the Legacy Project, NEMO, the Critical Coastal Area Program, and the state-wide watershed planning effort.
3. The watershed coordinators have agreed to participate in Managers Group presentations that are designed as education forums for the state and federal agencies to learn what each other is doing in the different watersheds throughout

the region. To date, only the Santa Barbara County coordinator has made a presentation.

### ***S. Secure project funding from state (7.1)***

As discussed in previous sections, the task forces, led by the coordinators, send delegates to Sacramento to participate in a breakfast program and meet with legislators about progress and funding needs, they provide tours for legislators and staff, and invite them to meetings and provide them with written materials.

### ***T. Increase proportion of federal, local and private funding (7.2)***

1. The watershed coordinators actively pursued grant funding—writing and assisting others write proposals—and sponsoring funding workshops. They prepared a list of prospective funders in each county. They have also tried to match mitigation moneys with projects—although none of these efforts have yet borne fruit.

2. The San Diego County watershed coordinator has been working with the San Diego Foundation to invite representatives of a number of national and state-wide foundations to visit Southern California to discuss wetlands and watershed needs and what would entice the foundations to play a larger role. He has also been exploring whether the San Diego Foundation would help fund expansion of the WRP small grants program in San Deigo which the foundation is considering doing through its Environmental Blasker grant.

### ***U. Pursue long-term funding for the task forces (7.4)***

As a follow-on to the Proposition 13 grant, the State Coastal Conservancy has awarded a Technical Assistance Program grant to Environment Now and has hired the grant administrator and 3 of the 5 watershed coordinators to continue working, but as project coordinators who will devote 30 hours monthly to each of the task forces.

### ***V. Secure funding for the SAP (7.5)***

Watershed coordinators have been eagerly promoting the assessment framework being developed by the WRP Science Panel to the SWRCB and to state legislators because they believe it responds to local needs and interests.

## **IV. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN RELATION TO BROADENING CIRCLES OF INTEREST**

It is difficult to describe the full range of ripple effects that have resulted from work under the Proposition 13 grant. The letters from Task Force co-chairs included as an appendix to this report provide a flavor of what the grant has meant in the different counties. Moreover, the *Pocket Navigator for the Wetlands Recovery Project*, which was created in response to the grant's requirement for a regional wetlands and watershed management plan, describes the many tangible products developed by WRP partners and others since the inception of the WRP. The following discussion highlights some county-by-county examples and examples from the regional WaterWatch Program.

### **A. Santa Barbara County**

The County commissioned the *Santa Barbara County Creek Care Guide* to be distributed to riparian landowners, libraries and schools throughout the County (Fall, 2003) and is exploring, with the task force, a strategy to institutionalize watershed planning in County government. In addition, the watershed coordinator stimulated the organization of community-based stakeholder groups in three watersheds by identifying stakeholders, helping to plan and facilitate meetings, and providing technical support to execute their ideas and projects. One of the watershed stakeholder groups, the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition, has become the model for others in the County and has already attracted \$600,000 for watershed restoration and steelhead recovery. Moreover, when controversial issues arise, such as the erosion of the Goleta Beach Park or the determination of whether the Gaviota Coast should be designated as National Recreation Area, the County and others turn to the WRP task force and watershed coordinator to identify key parties of interest and relevant sources of information, and use them as a sounding board for developing strategies for addressing the issue.

### **B. Ventura County**

The Ventura County watershed coordinator has worked with a team of USC graduate students and their professor—helping them to identify a project and plugging them into the appropriate community networks—to produce the *Ventura County Strategic Plan for Environmental Education* (May 2003), which has been adopted by the task force and is being presented to school districts in the County. The County Planning Department, which earlier received a grant to support the WRP task force and wetlands recovery, has just received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to review County land use planning tools to see how they can be implemented to better protect wetlands.

The watershed coordinator has also helped develop a proposal for a Ventura County Historical Ecology Project, possibly focusing on the Santa Clara River, that would create a model methodology for determining the historic distribution of wetlands in the region.

### ***C. Los Angeles County***

The Los Angeles County watershed coordinator has nurtured the education working group of the task force which has spun off a number of products. With the help of the task force, the Los Angeles California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) organization obtained a grant to identify watershed educational materials to post on its web site, a state-wide portal for K-12 teachers and many others. Watershed coordinators in each of the five counties funneled information to CREEC for this purpose, and CREEC has identified over 300 new producers of education materials that may qualify for posting at their site. An active task force member, the UC Cooperative Extension representative, has created a web-based tool kit for watershed planning and developed a program in cooperation with the Mexican American Opportunities Foundation to use watershed organizations to teach English and citizenship skills to new immigrants. The watershed coordinator has also promoted a stream day-lighting initiative in conjunction with North East Trees and helped to shine the spotlight on the Upper Santa Clara River so that the different funding agencies working there are now developing a coordinated strategy for land acquisition.

### ***D. Orange County***

The Orange County WRP task force and watershed coordinator have revamped the Orange County Green Map to incorporate rivers and wetlands into the county-wide vision for acquisition and protection; they have also developed a PowerPoint for presentations. They have made significant progress in developing and promoting the Orange Coast River Park concept, including a celebration in May, hosted by the new Hyatt Regency Hotel, widely regarded as “the social event of the season.” In addition to mashed potatoes in martini glasses, the event featured a new video about the proposed park. The watershed coordinator also helped the Santiago Creek Greenway Alliance to coalesce. The task force encouraged the Serrano Creek Conservancy to branch out from creek-specific restoration to serve as a technical resource to others hoping to emulate it.

### ***E. San Diego County***

The San Diego County watershed coordinator assembled research and county-specific data to focus regional attention, particularly by the WRP Science Panel,

on the relationship of impermeable surface to water quality and wetland functions. He also played an important role in working between government agencies and community-based organizations to foster better communication and collaboration among the plethora of disconnected planning activities occurring in the county. He has also taken the initiative in bringing together some leading foundations to discuss the needs of non-profits involved in wetlands and watershed work in Southern California and to start discussions on how foundations might collaborate and participate in recovery work.

## **F. WaterWatch Program**

CalPIRG's WaterWatch Program went well beyond the grant requirements in the number of waterway cleanups (8 required, 35 organized), hours volunteered for restoration and monitoring (200 required, 975 performed), and classroom presentations (60 required, 219 made) organized under its auspices. They linked university resources with those of the WRP task forces and they produced a data base of selected faculty in the California State University system with wetlands interests. Most importantly they exposed a wide range of people to a new interest in wetlands, from elementary school children and their teachers, to university students, faculty and administrators. WatchWatch also took every opportunity to promote media coverage and showcase elected officials at their events.

## **V. NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section on next steps and recommendations is designed to address two sets of requirements in the contract between Environment Now and the SWRCB. The contract requires that the final report contain a description of next steps required to meet the purposes of the regional wetlands and watershed management plan. Furthermore, the contract requires that the regional plan itself, in this case the Pocket Navigator, must identify and rank regional goals, propose actions, and determine schedules for action. Therefore, when the regional plan is presented for review and comment, this section will be appended as an accompanying document. Schedules won't be developed until then because a part of the review process will be to enlist support for the proposed actions.

As discussed in the section, Activities, above, the WRP's *Regional Strategy* already sets out six regional goals about which there is broad consensus and identifies over 40 actions, 22 of which have been relevant to the work of the watershed and WaterWatch coordinators under the Proposition 13 grant. The *Regional Strategy* has undergone public review, work has proceeded and will be ongoing in relation to those tasks as resources can be directed to them. Work under the Proposition 13 grant, however, has served to identify eight key issues of regional significance that are particularly within the purview of local interests

as represented by the county task forces and flow from activities carried out under the grant.

### ***A. Obtain Long-Term Funding for County Task Force Coordinators***

In the years prior to the Proposition 13 grant, the co-chairs for the county task forces have incorporated task force functions into their organizations' work. However, this only allowed for a minimum of setting up task force meetings and providing a means for cross-county communication about wetlands and watershed issues. With the Proposition 13 grant, the role of the task forces has greatly expanded, the significance of wetlands and watershed issues has grown, and the ability to identify wetlands needs and means to address them has increased. The watershed coordinators have created a community of interest around wetlands issues in each county, have identified gaps and opportunities without regard to a particular agency mandate, and have marshaled commitment and resources to begin to address these issues. They have created the conditions in which watershed planning and wetlands projects can be developed.

Fortunately, as the Proposition 13 grant winds down, a State Coastal Conservancy local technical assistance grant to Environment Now will provide 30 hours monthly of staff time to the task forces (3 of the 5 watershed coordinators will continue so that the knowledge they have built up will not be lost and the other two watershed coordinators will also continue wetlands work in their counties; moreover, a fourth person may be hired under the Coastal Conservancy grant). This grant, while a stop-gap measure, does not completely address local needs. The staff hired under the grant will serve as project coordinators and their primary responsibility will be to help implement projects on the WRP Project Work Plan. When the WRP first formed, it had funds, but few projects; then it had projects but few funds; now it has both funds and projects, but not enough staff to oversee project implementation. That is the need that the Coastal Conservancy grant is designed to address. Moreover, this grant is not likely to be renewed because Conservancy staff will eventually be hired to do this project oversight work.

The task forces need locally based coordinators that do not work directly for a government agency so that they can identify wetlands and watershed needs without first considering agency mandates, can bring a wide variety of agencies and other interests together, and work with state and local elected officials to secure needed support and funding for wetlands work. The coordinators have, paradoxically, become "neutral wetland advocates". Without a particular agency agenda to fulfill, they have garnered the trust of a variety of interests and have become the hub at the center of wetlands activity in each county. They are the "go-to" people who can make the connections needed to get something done. They can identify and foster the work of others, so that increasingly wetlands and watersheds are incorporated into the day-to-day concerns of a broader range of

organizations. The task force coordinators are the means for addressing the problem identified by Aldo Leopold over five decades ago—that environmental issues are just too complex and dispersed to be addressed by government alone. The coordinators are the ones to spark actions that will ripple out and eventually result in the many, many changes that will be required to protect and recovery the region’s severely damaged wetlands.

Next steps.

- Identify various options for potential long-term funding ranging from local government contributions, a foundation program, to state agency grants.
- Develop a written proposal that describes the function and activities performed by the task force coordinators in a way that addresses interests of potential funders.
- Aggressively promote the task force coordinator concept, which would be an urban analog for a program that DFG already funds in agricultural areas.

## ***B. Pursue Permit Coordination***

Permit coordination constitutes a critical next step for facilitating and encouraging the development and implementation of wetland restoration projects throughout the Wetlands Recovery Project region. The complex and often frustrating maze of local, state and federal permits required for restoration projects presents an almost insurmountable obstacle for many organizations and agencies involved in restoration work. This can be especially true for new or emerging community - based organizations that lack the experience and knowledge needed to navigate the permitting process.

The 2002 Report of the Task Force to the Secretary for Resources, *Removing Barriers to Restoration*, identifies the complex regulatory review and permitting process as one of the four major obstacles to restoration most frequently cited by landowners and the non-governmental organizations and agencies that work with them. Participants in the 2002 Wetlands Recovery Project Symposium echoed this concern in a session on community-based restoration projects as did a special WRP Committee that met to discuss a mid-course WRP “Tune-Up in December 2002. WRP county task forces, along with several regional Resource Conservation Districts, join the list of organizations recognizing the need for streamlining the permitting process.

Next steps.

- Examine programmatic models from other regions of California, Washington and Oregon. This should include the permit coordination

model developed for the Elkhorn Slough region, and the Coastal Conservancy funded Integrated Watershed Restoration Program for Santa Cruz County, which includes permit coordination as one aspect of its plan. The north coast five-county region also is in the first steps of developing a program for permit coordination.

- Prepare a list or menu of best management practices and restoration techniques that have been included in other blanket permits or permit streamlining programs to allow program developers to select those practices most appropriate for their watershed or region.
- Identify agency personnel willing to participate in each county or watershed, and determine the practical geographic scale in which to work.
- Organize one or more regional workshops bringing together federal, state and local agency personnel and organizations involved in restoration work. Identify watershed or county specific challenges and issues and convene working groups needed to proceed in permit coordination plan development.

Further steps are contained in the 10 recommendations laid out in *Removing Barriers to Restoration*. In addition to working at the local level to develop and implement region-specific coordination programs, the WRP should participate in the development of state-wide initiatives including the development of the California Watershed Council.

### ***C. Aid in Developing Local Wetlands Recovery Plans***

Watershed planning must be viewed from three perspectives—the region, the watershed, and the local jurisdiction. Many state agency and environmental representatives have come to appreciate the significance of the watershed perspective and, in Southern California, the WRP has raised the profile of the regional perspective which places watershed planning in the context of shared conditions that can make it more efficient. The local jurisdictional perspective, however, takes regional and watershed goals to cities and counties where they can be implemented most effectively. Local government is ultimately the key to plans, projects, and long-term maintenance and protection. Local government can also leverage resources and authorities to ensure the speediest and longest lasting results. This local jurisdictional role is becoming increasingly clear in the WRP's region as illustrated by the following examples:

- The City of Santa Barbara passed a bed tax to fund creek restoration and has developed a plan to acquire and restore lands around city creeks;

- Santa Barbara County Supervisor Susan Rose conducted a study of restoration and open space opportunities within her district as a model for other supervisors.
- The County of Ventura is pursuing creation of an open space district, which based on a survey of public opinion, will accord high priority to wetlands and watersheds.
- L.A. City Council members with districts along the L.A. River have created a Council Task Force to facilitate the greening of the River, and a Council member whose district does not abut the river is seeking to create a L.A. city-wide task force on wetlands and watersheds and may be persuaded to endorse a plan to "daylighting" streams that have been "buried alive."
- The City of Long Beach developed a vision statement and action plan to restore its wetlands.
- Citizens of the City of Monrovia voted to increase taxes to fund open space acquisitions of which wetlands are to be an important component.
- Orange County has brought together local jurisdictions collectively around watersheds throughout the county as local sponsors for watershed planning by the Army Corps of Engineers and now almost all of its watersheds are the focus of planning efforts and spin-off projects. The County is also entertaining developing a county-wide wetlands recovery strategy.
- Encinitas, Carlsbad, San Diego City and County are actively moving forward with development of cooperative agreements committing them to work together to implement watershed restoration actions.

Despite keen interest, local government faces many challenges: what project opportunities do they have? how can they be packaged? how can the agencies work collaboratively to promote multi-benefit projects? which agencies have authority to manage projects in perpetuity and are they the right agencies to do it? how can they coordinate management across city and county agency jurisdictions (e.g., 3-4 different agencies have responsibilities for managing tide gates to lagoons around Ballona Creek); how can the many different kinds of plans various departments are responsible for developing and implementing be synchronized as they related to wetlands and watershed protection? how can local jurisdictions begin to tackle ordinances that hinder watershed work (e.g., fire and weed ordinances)? can they employ community organizations to do some of the work? what kinds of organizational models and processes have worked elsewhere? Ranking and beginning to answer these questions will be key to

wetlands recovery and helping local jurisdictions do this might ultimately form the core of a work program for task force watershed coordinators. Some initial steps are possible right now through the work program of the WRP outreach director.

Next Steps.

- Identify local jurisdictions that have begun to develop organizational innovations to address wetlands issues;
- Interview several representatives from these jurisdictions to learn how these innovations were adopted, how they are working, and whether they might be improved, expanded, or adapted for use elsewhere;
- Compile these innovations into a report which will be distributed for comment and refined, ultimately to be used as a tool to encourage others to adopt innovations that may be appropriate for wetlands recovery in their jurisdiction.

#### ***D. Promote Wetlands Protection through Local Authorities***

Wetlands protection is fundamentally a land-use issue which, in the American system, is vested primarily with state and local government. Until watershed management planning is inserted into established local land-use decision processes, it will remain on the periphery of local concerns and priorities. There is no single way to integrate the two, watershed planning and land use. However, some initial resources have been developed under Task 7 of the Proposition 13 grant, which have prompted the WRP to begin a discussion of local strategies for protecting wetlands. These discussions point to some follow-on activities.

Next Steps.

- Consult with select local government officials to determine their primary needs in developing wetlands protection strategies.
- Develop a compendium of innovative strategies being implemented within the region.
- Organize a workshop, possibly in conjunction with Assembly Member Pavley's office, to learn about and discuss local strategies being used in the region and elsewhere in the nation to protect wetlands and watersheds.
- Explore whether and how the NEMO (Nonpoint Source Education for Municipal Officials) Program developed in Connecticut and being adopted

in many states throughout the nation could be adapted for use in the region.

### ***E. Begin to Develop Methods in Addition to Bonds to Fund Watershed Work***

Over the past five years, the State of California has passed bonds worth over \$10 billion for parks, water, and natural resource protection. Much of this funding is already spoken for because of the pent up demand for projects that grew during a long dearth of funding. The State's current budget woes make the prospect of resource bonds in the near future highly unlikely. Moreover, bonds may not be the best way to fund many aspects of watershed work because they tend to go in boom and bust cycles, they are limited to capital projects, and they create long-term operation and maintenance responsibilities with no funding stream. The State's requirement for a super-majority to pass new taxes limits options for new revenues. Nonetheless, various approaches are being explored and proposed. It appears that large new housing developments, for instance, may soon have to pay the price to mitigate their impacts to air quality. A state constitutional amendment has been proposed to add stormwater fees to the list of sewer, water, and trash fees that require only a simple majority for passage. A legislative proposal to tax plastic bags to cover the costs of clean-up and environmental damage is being discussed. An exploration of best methods for funding watershed work on a consistent basis must soon be undertaken.

Next Step.

Task a reinvigorated legislative committee of the PAC to develop a set of legislative options that can be vetted with legislators and decision makers in the new administration in Sacramento and take the lead in linking up with other state-side watershed interests to promote action on the initiative.

### ***F. Coordinate with Other Regional Project Planning Efforts***

Several regional water-related efforts are now underway in Southern California that generate project lists, assess priorities, and pursue funding, project execution, and long-term project management. The Clean Beaches Initiative (water quality), The Southern California Water Dialog (water quantity and conservation) and , and the Sediment Management Workgroup (sand) are three notable examples in addition to the WRP Project Work Plan. One day these project purposes will be addressed in more integrated watershed-by-watershed assessments.

The WRP Managers Group has begun to coordinate project review with new Managers Group members representing the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains

Conservancy in those areas and another group is forming to coordinate acquisition strategies along the Santa Clara River. Habitat value and “functional lift” however, are the focus of these projects.

Next Step.

A review of the various project lists is an initial step that could be taken within the region to see that projects are not inconsistent or redundant. The cross-county task force committee could take the initiative in setting up sequential meetings or a collective meeting in which the Managers Group and their analog in the different processes could describe their work programs by county and by watershed.

### ***G. Encourage Cooperation in State Agency Grant Administration***

As the WRP Managers Group engages in the annual review of projects for its Work Plan, it is eager to see that proponents have secured or are attempting to secure matching funds for the project. While this may suggest that the project has multiple benefits or wider endorsement, it creates an administrative burden for agency staff and the project proponents. The grant proposals must be written for and reviewed under different processes, but more significantly, if awarded, each agency must assign staff to administer its grants. Thus two or three different state agencies may assign staff to oversee a portion of funds being used for the same project. This doubles or triples the grant administration burden for state agencies and also creates a burden of multiple reporting requirements for the grant recipient. Reconciling the agency grant procedures is a monumental task that the state has commenced with the consolidated grant program. It may also be possible, however, for the WRP to select a few test projects that are receiving funds from the WRP and another agency, such as the SWRCB, assigning administration of one project to staff in one agency and administration of another project to the other agency. While these test cases are likely to be labor intensive, they offer the possibility of establishing protocols whereby future projects could be assigned to a lead grant administrator who would address the needs of both agencies and greatly reduce the administrative burden to agencies and grant recipients.

Next Steps.

- Seek to identify appropriate Work Plan Projects, staff, and grant recipients willing to experiment with this concept.
- Obtain the necessary approvals to institute the test cases.

## ***H. Secure Support for a Pilot Historical Ecology Project in Coastal Southern California***

Historical ecology employs a range of research strategies to create a picture of the environment that existed prior to the large-scale changes wrought by European settlement. Although no one is suggesting that this environment can be recreated, the WRP Science Panel has a keen interest in better understanding the historic types and distribution of wetlands throughout the region. This understanding could guide the determination of regional restoration goals—i.e., which types of habitat should be restored where and in what proportion. It could also be used as a benchmark for judging the potential for success of particular restoration project—i.e., success may be more likely if what is proposed resembles what existed at the site historically or diverges based on how conditions have changed.

The task forces and local interests have also expressed desire to find out more about historical wetlands conditions. This is not only important scientifically, but also in terms of generating commitment to restoration. When people learn that not so long ago the Ventura River teemed with millions of huge, migrating steelhead or that the Los Angeles River was bordered by a ribbon of willows, sycamores, wild roses, berries, and other lush vegetation, they come to a more compelling sense of their responsibility to help repair the damage. Moreover, based on the historical ecology project executed in the Bay Area, local people rather than trained scientific experts, can play the lead role in discovering, assembling, and interpreting the historic documents.

### **Next Steps.**

The Science Panel has worked with the Ventura watershed coordinator to develop a grant proposal and there is an as yet unspecified commitment of partial funding. An enthusiastic expression of endorsement for the project by the task forces and community members may help to raise the profile of this project within the WRP.

## ***I. Explore whether the WRP has a Regional Role to Play in Promoting Wetlands and Watershed Education***

Education is vital to the prospects of wetlands recovery and protection. Enormous attitudinal changes have occurred since wetlands were regarded as “bogs” of treachery,” and “mires of despair” which only served as refuges for criminals and pests. Today most people have a sense that wetlands provide humans with valuable services, and Southern Californians realize that wetlands in this region have largely disappeared so what remains has significance. The watershed coordinators and task forces, moreover, have spawned wider communication among the various state agencies, local government

departments, and non-profit organizations that produce wetlands and watershed educational materials.

Many of the task forces have education committees that are developing county-wide activities they can pursue. Regionally, all of the task forces have contributed to the collection of wetlands and watershed education materials by CREEC. And the CalPIRG WaterWatch program has created a theme: H2O, Headwaters to Ocean, Water Connects All Life that has been adapted for the upcoming symposium : H2O, Headwaters to Ocean, Integrating Rivers, Wetlands and Coastlines in an Urban Environment. Nonetheless, the WRP and wetlands interests throughout the region lack a concerted communication strategy and the suspicion lingers that even with the plethora of interest and activity, the energy and message are being dissipated. Staying disciplined and “on message” is critical to penetrating the maze of information that people receive. Is it possible to promote a unified and unifying theme that focuses on just a few things that people can do to play their role in wetlands recovery and protection? Do we want to focus and intensify more of the energy surrounding educational activities to have a greater impact?

Next Steps.

- The questions above need to be raised in the context of the ongoing deliberations of the task force education committees. It might be well, too, to explore whether media consulting firms might offer pro bono services to offer professional advise about communication strategies.
- More modestly, once the CREEC materials have been collected and described a next step would be to analyze them to determine what is redundant and what is missing and use this analysis as a means to direct funding and effort towards the creating the important missing pieces.

**APPENDIX: LETTERS OF SUPPORT ON VALUE OF  
GRANT FROM TASK FORCE CO-CHAIRS**