



DWR Grant Programs Update

Introduction

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) provides grants to communities across California to support integrated watershed management activities addressing water supply reliability, flood risk and environmental stewardship. DWR began providing grants two decades ago. The last decade saw increased emphasis on funding sustainable groundwater and drought relief projects as the State continues to grapple with more extreme patterns of “weather whiplash” in the face of climate change. DWR’s grant programs evolved to more strategically address the needs of California Tribes and historically underrepresented communities, in particular the Human Right to Water. Until recently, voter-approved bonds funded the majority of DWR’s grant programs, including Propositions 13, 50, 1E, 84, 1 and 68. However, in 2021 and 2022, the California Legislature authorized over \$1 billion in general funds to DWR for drought relief, and another \$340 million for sustainable groundwater management. In response to the large influx of new funding with extremely short lifespans, DWR moved swiftly to develop new streamlined grant solicitations and award the funding. At this juncture, there is an opportunity to highlight the work that has been done and share data to demonstrate return on investment and inform the future.

Background

The programs discussed in this presentation are managed by the DWR Division of Regional Assistance (DRA) through its two branches in Sacramento and four regional offices in Red Bluff, West Sacramento, Fresno, and Glendale; with oversight provided by DWR’s Deputy Director for Sustainable Water Management. DRA supports the stewardship of California’s water resources at the local level through technical and financial assistance, data collection and dissemination, resources evaluation, and coordination.

This presentation aligns with Goal One of the Commission’s Strategic Plan, which states that the Commission “will serve as a primary public forum for the discussion of improving water management policy to assist regions in achieving climate resiliency” and includes an objective to “convene panel discussions or presentations and invite public comment and discussion at Commission meetings.” By bringing a discussion of DWR’s grant programs to a public meeting, the Commission will provide public transparency and accountability for how State funds are being spent.

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Meeting Date: July 17, 2024

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Meeting Overview

DWR's Manager for the Division of Regional Assistance, Art Hinojosa, will provide an overview of the major grant programs and the range of projects funded to foster sustainable water resources management, and will discuss how we can build on these accomplishments and lessons learned to inform future policy, legislation and funding decisions.

This is an informational item.

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