



Monterey County Water Resources Agency

FY 2020-25 Final Strategic Plan Update
Workshop Report

March 2025

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Workshop Overview

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) held a Board of Directors workshop on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm in the Cayenne Room at Schilling Place offices. The workshop provided an opportunity for the Board to hear a final update from staff on the 2020-2025 strategic plan, review elements of good governance, preview the next strategic planning process, and strengthen teamwork. This report contains a summary of the results of the workshop.

Al Zelinka and Mary Locey with Baker Tilly facilitated the workshop.

Objectives

- Review and discuss governance roles, best practices and strengthen teamwork.
- Review the successes of the final year of the MCWRA five-year strategic plan.
- Review and discuss the upcoming strategic planning process and key milestones.

Agenda

- Welcome and call to order
- Board icebreaker exercise
- Review Board interview themes
- Discuss characteristics of effective governing bodies
- Staff presentations
 - Overview and implementation status update from the Deputy General Manager
 - Presentations from Finance, Operations and Maintenance, Hydrology and Environmental Resources, Engineering and Dam Safety, and Administration
- General Manager's vision for the next several years
- Small table discussions: Challenges and priorities
- Upcoming strategic planning process and milestones
- Wrap up and next steps

Participants

The workshop was attended by Board members, Agency staff, and members of the public. The Board of Directors and staff presenters are listed below.

Board of Directors

- Mike LeBarre, Chair, appointed by City Selection Committee
- Matthew Simis, Vice Chair, appointed by Grower-Shipper Association
- John Baillie, appointed by Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Jason Smith, appointed by Monterey County Farm Bureau
- Mark Gonzalez, District 1, appointed by Supervisor Luis Alejo
- Mike Scattini, District 2, appointed by Supervisor Glenn Church
- John Canatser, District 3, appointed by Supervisor Chris Lopez
- Deidre Sullivan, District 4, appointed by Supervisor Wendy Root-Askew

- Ken Ekelund, District 5, appointed by Supervisor Kate Daniels

Staff Presenters

- Ara Azhderian, General Manager
- Shaunna Murray, Deputy General Manager
- Kelly Donlon, Chief Assistant County Counsel
- Eva Gonzales, Board of Directors Clerk
- Nan Kim, Finance Manager
- Tanya Lewis, Accountant
- Jason Demers, Senior Water Resources Engineer
- Charles Lingenfelter, Water Maintenance Superintendent
- Peter Kwiek, Associate Water Resources Hydrologist
- Mallory Roberts, Water Resources Hydrologist
- Peter Vannerus, Associate Water Resources Engineer
- Ricardo Carmona, Water Resources Hydrologist
- Marinn Browne, Water Resources Biologist
- Amy Woodrow, Senior Water Resources Hydrologist
- Guillermo Diaz Moreno, Water Resources Hydrologist
- Elise Harden, Senior Water Resources Engineer
- Mark Foxworthy, Senior Water Resources Engineer
- Jessell Fenley, Administrative Services Assistant

Ground Rules

Al suggested some ground rules for the workshop, to help keep the group engaged and on-track. The ground rules are listed below.

- Listen to each other's point of view
- Seek consensus
- Assume good intent
- Speak up if we need a course correction
- Stay focused

Workshop Preparation

In preparation for the workshop, Al Zelinka and Mary Locey met with the Deputy General Manager to discuss the objectives and agenda for the workshop. Agency staff prepared their final update to the Board on the goals and strategies outlined in the 2020--2025 strategic plan. Baker Tilly prepared an agenda, PowerPoint presentation, handouts, and other materials.

Opening Comments

The workshop began with a welcome and call to order by Board Chair Mike LeBarre. The Board Chair turned the session over to Al and Mary, who reviewed the workshop agenda, objectives, and ground rules for a successful session.

Bike Rack

Al explained that items that were brought up but would not be discussed today would be added to a bike rack, for future attention. No items were added to the bike rack.

Icebreaker

Al led the Board of Directors in an icebreaker exercise. The purpose of this activity was to kick off the workshop informally and to learn more about each other. Each Board member shared a brief story about the first time that they realized water is an important resource.

Board Interview Themes

To set the stage for the day's discussions, the workshop kicked off with a review of the themes from the Board interviews that were conducted last fall. The interview questions sought Board members' perspectives on the Agency's recent successes, upcoming challenges, and opportunities. The themes that were shared are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Board Interview Themes

Successes	Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress on the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) initiatives, habitat conservation plan, and strategic plan goals• Improved communication and public engagement in planning• Grant funding successes and strategic financial planning• Leadership's ability to focus on vision and mission• Staff's progress in recruitment, retention, and promoting within• Staff morale has improved• Enhanced relationships with other agencies and leveraging partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial constraints and the need for sustainable funding• Overcoming regulatory challenges• Staffing challenges related to wage rates and recruitment• Addressing infrastructure disrepair and environmental issues• Navigating a complex governance structure and relationships with other water agencies• Addressing flooding issues and seawater intrusion• Ongoing litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore new revenue streams• Improve governance practices• Enhance Board member onboarding• Address financial challenges and seek funding for sustainability• Enhance transparency and collaboration with stakeholders

Characteristics of Effective Governing Bodies

Overview of MCWRA's Governance Structure

AI presented an organization chart of the County of Monterey and a high-level overview of the governance structure of MCWRA. This included how Board members are appointed and a review of the Agency's various committees.

AI explained that the Agency has a complex and sophisticated governance structure. It was discovered that these various governance layers are not cohesively defined. Staff is reviewing the delineation of the various roles and responsibilities of the Agency Board of Supervisors, the MCWRA Board of Directors, and the MCWRA General Manager that are specified in various sources of authority. Staff will organize and present the various governing roles and responsibilities to the Planning Committee. Eventually, staff will bring this research to the Board to engage in a meaningful conversation that will clarify who does what, and for what purpose.

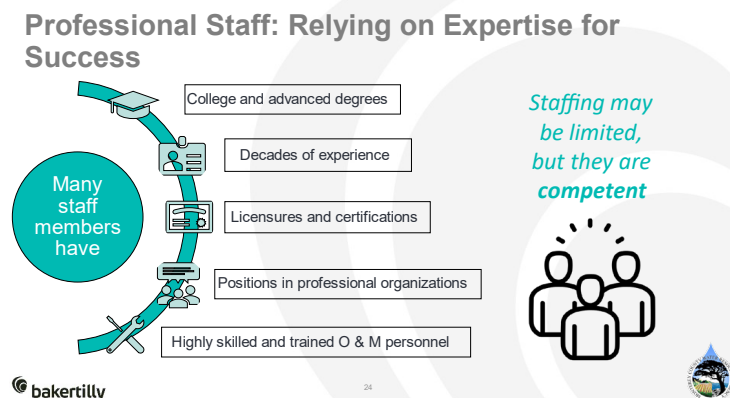
Effective Governance

AI explained that good governance is the act of intentionally creating effective conditions for making decisions. He emphasized the importance of building relationships, good communication, understanding expectations, and fostering mutual respect. Further, he shared that effective boards share a unity of purpose; have clear roles and responsibilities; foster a positive governance culture; and have norms, protocols, and policies.

In advance of the workshop, Board members received an article on high performance governance from the *Institute for Local Government* (ILG). The facilitators referred to the article, and highlighted the six attributes of exceptional governing bodies, which were identified in the article are listed below.

1. Have a **sense of team**; a partnership with the general manager to govern and manage the Agency
2. Have **clear roles** and responsibilities that are understood and adhered
3. **Honor the relationship with staff and each other**
4. Routinely conduct **effective meetings**
5. Hold themselves and the Agency **accountable**
6. Have members who practice **continuous improvement**

AI highlighted the importance of relying on the expertise of the Agency's professional staff. MCWRA's team is a group of gifted individuals who care deeply about the Agency's mission and advancing its purpose. The slide that was presented is shown below.



The Board engaged in a discussion about what they thought was going well, in terms of governing best practices. The points that were made are summarized below.

- The Agency is heading in the right direction.
- We need to recruit and hire additional staff.
- We are continuing to hire staff. We just opened and filled a position that was missing for decades (biologist).
- Agency management is working with the County on improving hiring practices and clarifying classifications that need to be different from the County.
- Our leadership is strong, and transparency efforts have improved. Hiring quality people go together with funding. Knowing how to address this is tough. Kicking the can is not a solution, because it comes back to rate payers.
- Transparency has improved and we have been building trust. Having an adopted strategic plan and holding workshops help put the Agency on a good path to enhancing transparency and keeping the public informed.
- The Chair agreed with all points that were made. When he first joined the Board, he saw unhappy staff who did not feel appreciated. The current Board of Directors has shown appreciation toward staff, understands that it takes a cohesive team to accomplish goals, and see measurable results. The Board is invested in continuous improvement, appreciates staff, and needs to hear feedback through Ara. If something is not working, the Board wants to hear from staff.

Effective Board Meetings

AI reviewed some key characteristics of effective Board meetings. A summary of the discussion that followed is presented below.

- We need to update our bylaws.
- Agency staff want to make a difference and help as much as possible; they are an important resource that help enable Directors to make the right decisions.
- This can be enhanced by the Board reviewing staff reports and raising questions to Ara or Shaunna in advance of the Board and committee meetings. That way, staff will be better prepared to answer questions and there will be no surprised.
- Workshops are a place to be respectful. Sometimes during meetings, anxiety can rise and questions or responses can be misinterpreted.
- Board meetings are the business of the organization. We need to be clear and succinct when answering questions.
- An agenda sets forth a topic. We may have different views and opinions, but as a governing body, we need to listen to each other and come together to make a decision.
- Civility is important as we work together to do important work. Our Board allows everyone to speak.
- There is generally a high amount of conflict around water. The Agency is dealing with many regulations and many different needs.

The group then reviewed and discussed contents from another article from ILG, which focused on trips for promoting civility in public meetings. The facilitators then reviewed with the Board additional tips for dealing with conflict.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are agreed-upon standards of behavior and practices that form the basis of rules of order, conduct, and procedure. Al presented ten suggested guiding principles and noted that this was a starting point to begin thinking about updating the Agency's Bylaws. Al explained that the principles represent a system of operating, and if they are not working, the Board should feel empowered to change them. Workshop participants discussed that when the Board members and staff have all bought into the Agency's mission as a guide for their work, government works well and with purpose.

Comments were made about how the General Manager should be thought of as a conduit and a resource for information and for asking questions of staff. When the Board asks questions of staff, staff provide science-based facts, data, and other information and then the Board acts politically. These two elements may not always be in sync, because sometimes the Board pushes back due to lack of funding or other resources; therefore, the need to reconcile staff recommendations and policy decisions can be messy.

The ten potential guiding principles that were presented for consideration by the Board of Directors are listed below.

1. **Follow the Rules:** Respect and comply with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Act, applicable laws (e.g., Political Reform Act, Brown Act), ordinances, resolutions, and bylaws adopted by the Agency's governing bodies.
2. **Lead with Purpose:** Govern professionally by fostering collaboration, promoting the Agency's mission, staying committed to learning, and engaging stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for our community.
3. **Respect Leadership:** Support the presiding officer's role in maintaining order, guiding meetings with fairness, and setting a positive tone through knowledge of parliamentary procedure.
4. **Practice Civility:** Treat everyone with respect, act with honesty and integrity, and engage in disagreements professionally and constructively.
5. **Be Prepared:** Review meeting materials in advance and familiarize yourself with agenda topics to participate effectively.
6. **Communicate Proactively:** Discuss questions or concerns about agenda items with the General Manager before meetings to ensure productive discussions and prevent surprises.
7. **Listen and Learn:** Pay attention to staff and consultant presentations, ask thoughtful questions, and seek to understand their recommendations.
8. **Engage Thoughtfully:** Contribute to discussions by sharing your perspective clearly, avoiding repetition, and focusing on building consensus or mutual understanding.
9. **Work as a Team:** Model teamwork, maintain civility during debates, and express dissent respectfully to uphold decorum and constructive dialogue.
10. **Respect Decisions:** Once a vote is taken, support the majority's decision while honoring and respecting differing opinions.

The Board reflected on the ten sample guiding principles. One Board member pointed out that most of the staff in the room joined MCWRA within the last five years. As such, the staff is pliable to change, and it was suggested that change management be added into the guiding principles. Additional comments suggested that regulations are always evolving, changes can happen quickly, and sometimes it is difficult to adjust. Al suggested that newer staff bring experience from their former agencies, which can be used as an advantage to helping MCWRA make some changes.

Staff Presentations

Following a brief stretch break, the group reconvened to hear the strategic plan updates from staff. This segment of the workshop kicked off with some comments from the Deputy General Manager. Shaunna reminded the Board and staff that the 2020-2025 strategic plan was the Agency's first strategic plan, and that staff has readily made progress on the goals and strategies. She set the stage by reviewing the Agency's adopted vision statement, mission statement, and five overarching goals.

Vision Statement – *Be recognized throughout the region as a leader in water resource management through demonstrated knowledge, integrity and the quality of our actions.*

Mission Statement – *Manage water resources sustainably while minimizing impacts from flooding for present and future generations.*

Strategic Plan Goals:

- A. *Infrastructure Maintenance*
- B. *Planning and New Projects*
- C. *Financial Sustainability*
- D. *Effective Core Services and Organizational Improvement*
- E. *Community Relations*

Shaunna highlighted some key accomplishments pertaining to staffing. She shared that the Agency's internship program resulted in two new full-time employees. Shaunna discussed the challenge of having 17 current vacancies, some of which are specialized and technical positions that are difficult to fill.

Staff from each of the Agency's five sections presented on the strategic plan goals that applied to their respective section, recent accomplishments, and upcoming priorities. The goals that each section provided updates on are listed below.

Finance Section

- Effective management of Agency's financial transactions.
- Timely facilitations of budget development, adoption and implementation.
- Successful implementation of adopted budgets.
- Maximization of revenue opportunities.
- Improvement of team competency.

Operations and Maintenance

- Operate all Agency facilities for optimal water resource management.
- Maintain Agency facilities, equipment, and real property to ensure safe and reliable function for the present and future.
- Ensure ongoing capability of effective emergency response to critical situations related to water resource management.
- Plan for long-term efficacy and resiliency of Agency facilities, lands, and operations.
- Achieve and maintain optimal staffing levels and performance.
- Monitor and conform to regulatory requirements for facility operations and maintenance.

Hydrology and Environmental Resources

- Effective data collection and reporting to support water resources management and environmental compliance.
- Provide subject matter expertise on regional and project-specific water resources management.
- Facilitate compliance with regulatory requirements for Agency projects and programs.
- Develop and implement the Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP) and Salinas River Operations Habitat Conservation Plan (SRO-HCP) in coordination with the Operations Section.
- Support professional development.

Engineering and Dam Safety

- Maintain regulatory compliance for both Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD).
- Project delivery (delivering projects and engineering support on time and within budget).
- Provide technical engineering design expertise and knowledge to support all Agency divisions.

Administration

- Provide efficient and effective support to the Agency and external stakeholders.
- Develop new approach to maintaining and managing records to increase efficiency.
- Expand and support processes and trainings related to governance.
- Improve internal contract policy and procedures.
- Support staff compliance with County and Agency policies.

Shaunna then wrapped this segment of the workshop by summarizing the key priorities from the January 2024 workshop, highlighting the agency's upcoming challenges, and previewing the agency's priorities for the coming year. The slides she presented are provided below.

Update on 2024 Key Priorities

A

B

C

D

E

- **Recycled water system master planning** has commenced with data collection and scoping and will be a multi-year effort to complete.
- Staff will continue to participate in **project feasibility studies to address seawater intrusion/groundwater sustainability** and make recommendations.
- **Condition assessments of facilities to support capital replacement and improvement plan** have begun and will need to continue for all Agency facilities.
- **Relationship building with other water resources agencies** continues to be developed and expanded through both informal ways and formal participation efforts.
- Focusing on a **public information and community engagement plan** is a priority for future efforts to be successful.
- New efforts towards forecasting and fees have been developed to support **funding strategies and implementation plan** and will continue moving forward.
- The Agency has furthered its **legislative platform and engagement strategy**



Agency Challenges / Areas of need

- Attracting, maintaining and developing Agency Staff
- Sustaining adequate resources to support Agency core functions
- Implementing standardized procedures and clear process control mechanisms to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Consistent, functional communication with stakeholders
- Clear direction on Agency priorities and an understanding of the level of effort needed to complete those priorities



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Summary of Agency Priorities for next year

- Develop and implement **training plans** for new and existing staff to increase knowledge and skills
- Re-evaluate **organizational processes** and make changes as necessary to increase efficiencies and effectiveness
- Prepare for the future by investing in **longer-term planning** efforts
- Increase **financial sustainability** through development of new funding, reviewing costs of providing services to the community and outreach
- Continue to **maintain** facilities, lands and operations to plan for long-term efficacy & resiliency



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General Manager's Vision

Following a break for lunch, the General Manager spoke about his vision for the next few years. Ara emphasized the importance of recruiting and retaining staff, and financial sustainability, as two means to achieve the Agency's mission of maintaining service and system reliability. He explained the importance of being realistic about what can be accomplished successfully over the next five years and keeping in mind which activities are funded or unfunded. He suggested that being realistic will help staff stay focused and manage public expectations. Ara also stated that the Agency's strategic goals may not change much, as they are mostly multi-year efforts.

Key topics that Ara touched upon are listed below.

- Groundwater Monitoring Program fee study;
- Dam Safety Program regulatory fee study;
- Historical Benefits Analysis update;
- Potential dam safety cost allocation methods;
- Local share financing strategy;
- Monterey County financing authority;
- Salinas River operations and Habitat Conservation Plan;
- MCWRA's strategic plan update;
- Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) cost allocation and recovery; and,
- Reclamation Ditch.

The General Manager wrapped his segment by complementing the Agency's mission, vision, and people. He noted that while MCWRA faces some challenges ahead, strong strategic planning will help maintain focus and minimize distractions. Ara emphasized that success requires the following elements:

- Dedication, intelligence, discipline, optimism;
- Improved public awareness;
- Sufficient stakeholder support; and,
- Consistent support from Directors and Supervisors.

Comments from the Board of Directors on the General Manager's vision are summarized below.

- The funding structure has changed, and it is important to acknowledge the original stakeholders who invested in the dams. Beyond environmental benefits, the County gains several advantages. We strongly believe that operations should remain under local control, as we manage them more effectively than the state.
- The Agency's vision and creativity will drive our success. Legal water rights are crucial, and while the county and ratepayers are innovative, they may require some resistance. We offer the cheapest water in the state, but costs are rising, and without water, the value of everything declines.
- There is an opportunity with the strategic plan. The attendees of our meetings are knowledgeable, and we need to clearly outline the benefits for ratepayers. The Board must advocate for the agency, and the strategic plan should detail the benefits for each goal and strategy.

Round Table Discussions

Board members were invited to move to a selected round table to sit among staff. The small tables participated in an icebreaker exercise, where each participant shared their name and title or connection to MCWRA, and then shared a water metaphor that they have heard or used in the past.

Following the icebreaker activity, participants engaged in small group discussions about section-specific challenges and priorities. Each table had a section leader, who presented the challenges and priorities to the small group. Following the brief presentation, the other members of the table group asked clarifying questions and then discussed how the challenges and priorities align with the Board-identified challenges and priorities. After about ten minutes of small group discussions, each table reported out a one-minute summary of their group's discussion.

The challenges that were discussed are listed below.

- Attracting, maintaining and developing Agency staff
- Sustaining adequate resources to support Agency core functions
- Implementing standardized procedures and clear process control mechanisms to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Consistent, functional communication with stakeholders
- Clear direction on Agency priorities and an understanding of the level of effort needed to complete those priorities

The priorities for each Agency section were also discussed, which are listed above under the staff presentations section of the report.



Upcoming Strategic Planning Project

AI presented a summary of the upcoming five-year strategic planning project milestones. The upcoming process will include focus groups, a staff questionnaire, and two strategic planning workshops, tentatively scheduled for the Summer and Fall 2025. The milestones that were reviewed are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan Project Milestones

Activities and Tasks	Tentative Schedule	Schedule Modifications After Workshop ¹
First management team workshop	September 11, 2024	Complete
Final 2020-2025 Strategic Plan update workshop	February 18, 2025	Complete
Staff questionnaire	March – April 2025	<i>April – May 2025</i>
External stakeholder questionnaire	March – April 2025	<i>April – May 2025</i>
90 minute in-person and virtual focus groups	March – April 2025	<i>June – July 2025</i>
Prepare background summary	March – May 2025	
First 2026-2031 Strategic Plan workshop	June 2025	<i>Early August 2025</i>
Second 2026-2031 Strategic Plan workshop	September 2025	<i>Late September 2025</i>
Second management team workshop	September – October 2025	<i>October 2025</i>
Draft 2026-2031 Strategic Plan	May – October 2025	<i>October – December 2025</i>
Finalize 2026-2031 Strategic Plan	January 2026	<i>April 2026</i>
Update Implementation Action Plan	April 2026	<i>May 2026</i>

¹A workshop debrief meeting was held with the General Manager and Deputy General Manager in which the tentative project schedule was modified to allow time for the comprehensive engagement activities and to not impact the Agency's budget process.

Following the overview of the next strategic planning engagement with Baker Tilly, the Board reviewed and affirmed the priority projects for the next two years.

Finance Section

- Developing and providing Agency training programs regarding contracts, budgets, payments, travel claims, etc.
- Maximization of revenue opportunities, e.g. adoption of the Groundwater Monitoring Fees
- Implementation/training of new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and setting up programs and projects
- Recruitment of senior account clerk

Operations and Maintenance Section

- Achieve and maintain optimal staffing levels and performance
- Implementation of Interim Operations Plan
- Generate property-related revenues to support adequate infrastructure on those lands
- Continue Recycle Water Project implementation with long-term sustainability in mind

Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

- Conduct timely and high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting of groundwater, surface water, water quality, and biological parameters
- Complete development of an online well registration portal
- Continue preparation of an administrative draft of the Salinas River Operations Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

Engineering & Dam Safety Section – San Antonio Dam

- San Antonio Dam Spillway Replacement project
- Fully utilizing SB104 funds
- Support funding opportunities
- Standardizing internal project procedures to improve workflow and staff onboarding
- Developing a Capital Improvement Projects program

Engineering & Dam Safety Section – Nacimiento Dam

- Complete CSIP hydraulic modeling and optimization design
- Design Nacimiento Plunge Pool projects
- Perform annual spillway inspection, maintenance, and repairs
- Design low-level intake chamber replacements and modifications
- Complete design of penstock protection wall
- Address Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) recommendations and reporting

Administration Section

- Enhance efficiency and accessibility of public meeting processes
- Explore research options for improved records file management
- Create a comprehensive filing system for managing and organizing agency records
- Provide targeted training to ensure continuous development and operational excellence for Board members and staff

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

To wrap up, Al explained that Baker Tilly would prepare this summary report and summarize the key agreements and commitments from the day. Al then invited the Board Chair to reflect on the morning's discussions.

Chair LeBarre expressed appreciation for the staff presentations, and shared that it was impactful to see all the work that has been accomplished toward achieving the Agency's goals. Staff members responded that it was great to hear from the Board and learn more about their backgrounds and interests in water.

Board members and workshop participants shared some additional thoughts, which are summarized below.

- Over the past five years, we have fostered trust and transparency with the community. The environment used to be volatile. The next five years should focus on how to build the Agency stronger moving forward.
- Progress has not been made on dam and finance because we have been telling the truth and the public, County and stakeholders know where we are and what we need.
- Communication about who we are and what we do needs to be a top priority.
- People need to know and understand the true cost of the Agency's needs.
- A benefit analysis needs to be conducted to ensure ratepayers are paying for what they get.
- Conflicts of interest needs to be added to the guiding principles, as some Board members have ties that could present as conflicts of interest.
- We need to have a long view, to determine what it will take to create sustainable water (i.e., where do we want to be in 10 years?).
- The staff presentations were excellent; it is government functioning at its best.
- How do we best support the Agency and get out of the way of the good work being done?
- MCWRA is now a highly functional Agency.
- The support being received from and by the Board is different than it was, so the Agency is functioning differently – better.
- One of our biggest problems is people cannot let go of historical decisions. After a vote is taken, we need to move on to avoid frustration.
- The MCWRA has the responsibility for over \$1 billion in infrastructure.
- Trust and transparency are critical for decisions moving forward.
- How are we going to solve the saltwater intrusion problem? This is a multi-agency issue and the MCWRA is part of the solution.
- We may need to enhance trust that the Board is making decisions that are for the best of the County. There are perceived conflicts of interest.
- Staff are seeing improvements at the Board level; there are more professional questions and engagement.

Closing Comments

To conclude the workshop, the Board members and each participant were invited to offer a one-word key takeaway from the day's discussions, which are summarized below.

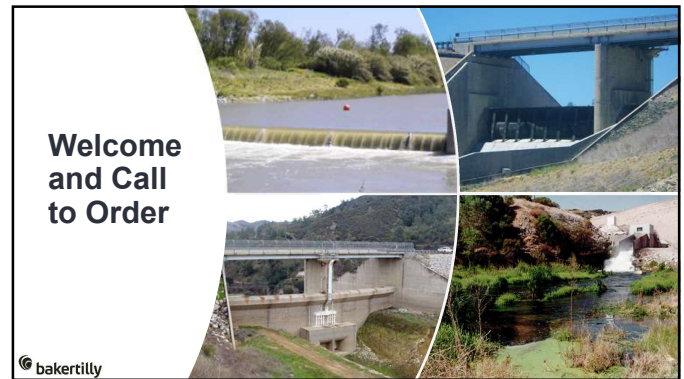
- Staff being heard, getting support needed from directors

- Full of knowledge
- Productive
- Optimistic
- Creative
- Amazing
- Refreshing
- Appreciative
- Grateful
- Unresolved
- Under construction
- Hopeful
- Debateful

Attachment A– Workshop Presentation



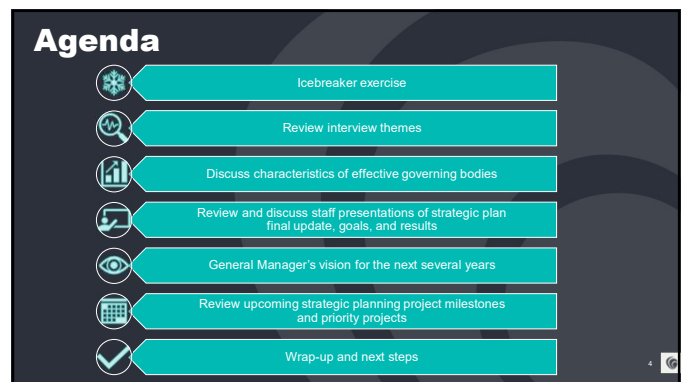
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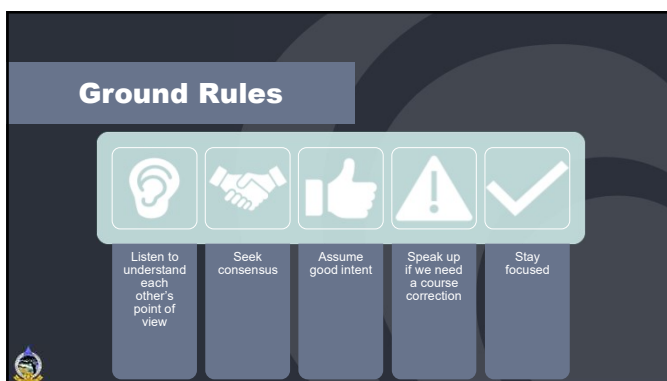
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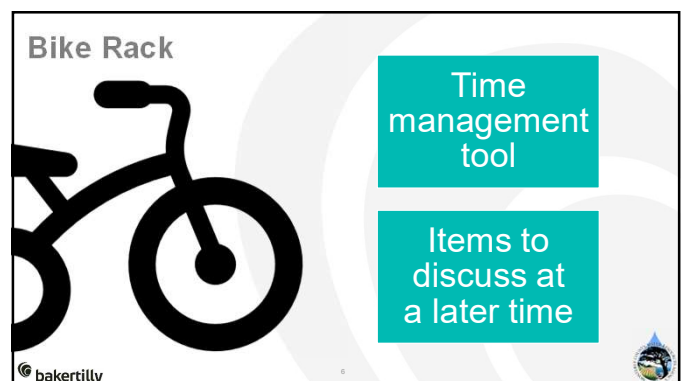
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5



6

Board Icebreaker

Share a brief story about
the first time you realized water
was an important resource...



7

Interview Themes

bakertilly

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Board Interview Themes: Success and Accomplishments

- Progress on the CSIP initiatives, habitat conservation plan, and strategic plan goals
- Improved communication and public engagement in planning
- Grant funding successes and strategic financial planning
- Leadership's ability to focus on vision and mission
- Staff's progress in recruitment, retention, and promoting within
- Staff morale has improved
- Enhanced relationships with other agencies and leveraging partnerships

bakertilly

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Board Interview Themes: Challenges

- Financial constraints and the need for sustainable funding
- Overcoming regulatory challenges
- Staffing challenges related to wage rates and recruitment
- Addressing infrastructure disrepair and environmental issues
- Navigating a complex governance structure and relationships with other water agencies
- Addressing flooding issues and seawater intrusion
- Ongoing litigation



bakertilly

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Board Interview Themes: Opportunities



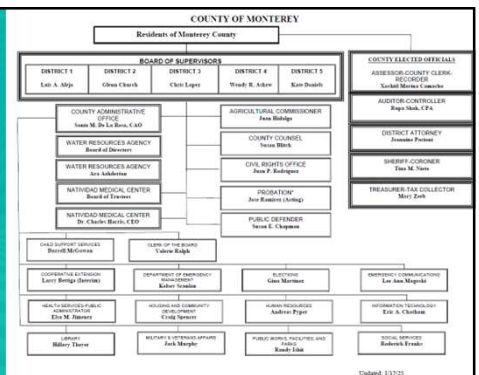
- Explore new revenue streams
- Improve governance practices
- Enhance Board member onboarding
- Address financial challenges and seek funding for sustainability
- Enhance transparency and collaboration with stakeholders

bakertilly

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Overview of Roles and Responsibilities



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Governance of MCWRA

- Governed by 9-member Board of Directors (4-year terms)
- Each of the 5 members of the Board of Supervisors selects 1 member for the Board of Directors
- Remaining 4 are appointed by a majority vote of the Supervisors from nominees submitted by:
 - Monterey County Farm Bureau
 - Grower-Shipper Association
 - City Select Committee
 - Monterey County Agricultural Advisory Committee



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Board Committees

Personnel & Administration Committee

Finance Committee

Planning Committee

Advisory Committees

Basin Management Advisory Committee

Reservoir Operations Advisory Committee



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Roles and Responsibilities

- Applicable Governing Bodies and Individual Roles
 - MCWRA Board of Supervisors
 - MCWRA Board of Directors
 - MCWRA General Manager/MCWRA Staff
- Sources of Authority
 - MCWRA Act* (aka, Agency Act)
 - MCWRA ordinances+
 - Monterey County General Plan, 2010+ (where MCWRA is specifically mentioned)
 - Monterey County Code of Ordinances*, (where MCWRA is specifically mentioned)
 - MCWRA Resolutions+
 - MCWRA Board of Directors Bylaws*
 - Memoranda of Understanding+

Notes:

*Review complete

+ Currently being researched/reviewed



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MCWRA Board of Supervisors Sampling of Key Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish and amend zones within the Agency.
- Adopt procedures, rules, and regulations to implement the Act and manage nuisances.
- Make and enforce rules for the administration and government of the Agency.
- Employ consultants and employees for flood and stormwater control plans.
- Determine projects or works of improvement to be carried out.
- Impose water tolls or charges for the use of water served by the Agency.
- Seek recommendations from the Directors before taking any action.
- Adopt the Agency's budget after approval by the Directors.
- Grant authority to the purchasing agent to execute contracts on behalf of the Agency.
- Approve contracts for which funds have not been previously budgeted.
- Select or reject candidates for General Manager and retain the authority to terminate the General Manager.
- Take actions such as adopting Agency ordinances, creating zones, levying assessments or taxes, authorizing bonds, and adopting an Agency budget.
- Initiate and conduct litigation by the Agency and settle any litigation.
- Hold a joint meeting with the Directors semiannually.



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MCWRA Board of Directors Sampling of Key Roles and Responsibilities

- Advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters relating to the Agency.
- Establish long-term and short-term policy objectives for the Agency.
- Prepare and submit an annual budget for the Agency.
- Oversee the work of the Agency to ensure policy objectives are pursued.
- Approve and execute all contracts of the Agency.
- Establish procedures for the recruitment and hiring of the General Manager.
- Prepare an annual performance evaluation of the General Manager.
- Hold regular meetings and public hearings on Agency matters.
- Adopt bylaws for the conduct of their business.
- Establish and appoint advisory committees to assist the Agency.
- Exercise Agency powers not reserved to the Supervisors.
- Refer matters with potential litigation to the Board of Supervisors.
- Communicate major policy changes to the Supervisors for review and concurrence.



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MCWRA General Manager Sampling of Key Roles and Responsibilities

- Submit contracts within the purchasing agent's authority for approval by the Directors.
- Compile and recommend to the Directors an annual budget for the Agency.
- Refer matters with potential litigation to the Board of Supervisors.
- Report actions taken by the Board members to the Board of Supervisors in a timely manner.
- Prepare and submit quarterly reports to the Board of Supervisors.
- Report actions taken by the Board of Supervisors to the Directors in a timely manner.
- Cite violations for infractions or civil violations within regulatory responsibilities.
- Serve on the Monterey County Disaster Council.
- Consult with the Director of Parks on matters regarding the use of boats or water contact in Lake San Antonio or Lake Nacimiento.



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Effective Governance

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What is Governance?

Purpose and Role of Governance

Governance is the **way** that decisions are made in an organization

Definition of Good Governance

The act of **intentionally creating** effective conditions for making decisions

Source: *Good Governance Isn't What You Think It Is: Matt Fullbrook Dismantles the Status Quo*

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Good Governance Is About...



Building relationships through:

- Effective leadership by the General Manager and Board
- Responsive management and leadership by the General Manager
- Meaningful communication that is honest, direct, respectful, proactive
- Understanding roles and fulfilling expectations
- Fostering mutual respect and building trust
- Ethics

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What Makes a Board Work Well

Effective Boards

Unity of Purpose

Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Positive Governance Culture

Norms, Protocols and Policies



Institute for Local Government

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Exceptional Elected Governing Bodies (see workbook)

Institute for Local Government

- Have a **sense of team**; a partnership with the town manager to govern and manage the city
- Have **clear roles** and responsibilities that are understood and adhered to
- Honor the relationship with staff and each other**
- Routinely conduct **effective meetings**
- Hold themselves and the town **accountable**
- Have members who practice **continuous improvement**

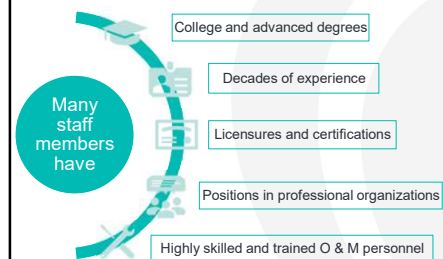


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Professional Staff: Relying on Expertise for Success



Staffing may be limited, but they are competent



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Discuss Governance Best Practices



What is going well?



What could be improved?



What else would improve the Board's ability to govern?

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Meeting Management

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Characteristics of Effective Board Meetings

Read materials and ask questions of staff in advance

No surprises for staff at the Board meeting; we're all on the same team

Show respect to every person

Be efficient in comments

Have clear procedures for recognizing Board members to speak

Limit debate and discussion to the agenda item and stay focused

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Tips for Promoting Civility in Public Meetings

(see workbook)

1. Embrace **different** points of view
2. **Everyone** gets a chance to share their views
3. With rights come responsibilities; respect **time limits**
4. **Avoid** debates and interruptions
5. **Reduce uncertainty**; assure people they will get a chance to be heard
6. **Listen** as a sign of respect
7. Be compassionate about the **fear factor**; heckling and applause are not allowed
8. **Attack the problem**, not the person (separate people from the problem)
9. Consider using **titles** (Councilmember..., Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.)
10. Take a **break** if things get heated



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Tips for Dealing with Conflict



1. Rely on **active listening** strategies/tactics (what I hear you saying...)
2. Use a bike rack to **stay focused** on the agenda topic
3. Ask clarifying **questions**
4. Track **agreements**
5. Take a **break**
6. At each meeting show **appreciation** to the team (Board and staff)
7. Know **your role** and stay in your lane
8. Use a **script** to stay on track
9. Establish **guiding principles**
10. Read the **guiding principles** at each Board and Committee meeting
11. Hold one another and commissioners **accountable**
12. Continue to learn and participate in **training** (anti-harassment, prejudice reduction, ILG, NLC)
13. **Reflect** together on the shared experience
 - What did we do well?
 - What can we improve?

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Governing Norms and Guiding Principles

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Developing Our Guiding Principles to Achieve Success

The team's success is the result of each person's contributions and commitment to the whole.

Guiding Principles: Agreed upon standards of behavior and practices that form the basis of rules of order, conduct and procedure that can be included in the Agency Bylaws.



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Sample Guiding Principles (see workbook)

- 1. Follow the Rules:** Respect and comply with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Act, applicable laws (e.g., Political Reform Act, Brown Act), ordinances, resolutions, and bylaws adopted by the Agency's governing bodies.
- 2. Lead with Purpose:** Govern professionally by fostering collaboration, promoting the Agency's mission, staying committed to learning, and engaging stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for our community.
- 3. Respect Leadership:** Support the presiding officer's role in maintaining order, guiding meetings with fairness, and setting a positive tone through knowledge of parliamentary procedure.
- 4. Practice Civility:** Treat everyone with respect, act with honesty and integrity, and engage in disagreements professionally and constructively.
- 5. Be Prepared:** Review meeting materials in advance and familiarize yourself with agenda topics to participate effectively.

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Sample Guiding Principles - continued (see workbook)

- 6. Communicate Proactively:** Discuss questions or concerns about agenda items with the General Manager before meetings to ensure productive discussions and prevent surprises.
- 7. Listen and Learn:** Pay attention to staff and consultant presentations, ask thoughtful questions, and seek to understand their recommendations.
- 8. Engage Thoughtfully:** Contribute to discussions by sharing your perspective clearly, avoiding repetition, and focusing on building consensus or mutual understanding.
- 9. Work as a Team:** Model teamwork, maintain civility during debates, and express dissent respectfully to uphold decorum and constructive dialogue.
- 10. Respect Decisions:** Once a vote is taken, support the majority's decision while honoring and respecting differing opinions.

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Guiding Principles Discussion



Of the examples, which ring true and resonate with you?



Is anything missing?

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Implementing Guiding Principles

How can the guiding principles be implemented?

- Board approval of guiding principles
- Review the guiding principles at the annual Board workshop
- Publish the guiding principles on Board agendas
- Include on the Board webpage
- Incorporate into Bylaws
- What else?

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Staff Presentation of Strategic Plan Progress



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Implementation of Strategic Plan: Mission and Vision

Vision Statement

Be recognized throughout the region as a leader in water resource management through demonstrated knowledge, integrity and the quality of our actions.

Mission Statement

Manage water resources sustainably while minimizing impacts from flooding for present and future generations.

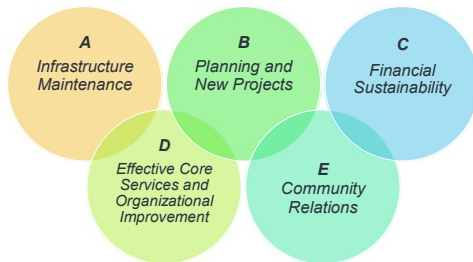


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Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals



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Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies: Overview of Final Year

- Closing out the Agency's First Strategic Plan (2020-2025)
- Significant progress has been made across the goal categories
- Goals and Strategies are interrelated building blocks – efforts come from different sections at the Agency, and progress in one area often affects and influences other areas
- Alignment with Agency operations has increased with a focus on critical work
- Implementation effort was not clearly identified
 - Many strategies require new activities, outside of normal operations
 - Area for improvement going forward to define and meet success

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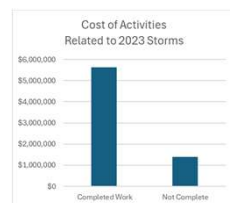
Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies: Infrastructure Maintenance Moving Forward

2023 was dominated by winter storm activities

2024 included the significant completion of recovery efforts and start of other projects

Outstanding repairs include the SRDF, Salinas Lagoon Levee Road improvements and Naci Dam access road

45+ Incidents



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Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies: Organizational Improvement Moving Forward

Increase in Staff Retention and Growth in 2024, vacancies still high



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Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies: Organizational Improvement Moving Forward

1. *Sections are continuing to refine their goals, objectives and responsibilities through their significant accomplishments and re-prioritization of tasks and duties to align with current focus and to prepare us for the future.*
2. *Ready to move forward*
 1. *Develop policy and procedures to increase effectiveness and efficiency*
 2. *Provide opportunities for growth and development in specialized fields to be the leaders in water resources management*
 3. *Encourage individual and team growth to support future success and resiliency at this small and nimble Agency*
 4. *Prepare for the future through investing in longer-term planning efforts*
 5. *Evaluate current approach and shift where needed for better success*



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Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies: Organizational Improvement

Goal D: Effective Core Services and Organizational Improvement

Strategy D2: Establish clear goals, objectives and responsibilities for each section of the Agency.

- Multi-year effort to develop, update and maintain
- Provides focus, direction and purpose
- A way to measure successes
- Advances other goals and strategies in the plan



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Finance Section

Presenters:

Nan Kim, Finance Manager III
Tanya Lewis, Accountant I



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Finance Section - Goals

1. Effective Management of Agency's **Financial Transactions**
2. Timely Facilitations of **Budget** Development, Adoption and Implementation
3. Successful **Implementation** of adopted budgets
4. **Maximization of Revenue** Opportunities
5. Improvement of **Team Competency**



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Finance Section - Accomplishments in 2024

Goal #1 Effective Management of Agency's Financial Transactions

- Processed Agency's invoices, timecards and payrolls in a timely manner
- Reduced numbers of retro-adjustments
- Monitoring step advancements, longevity anniversary eligibility criteria
- Established MYA for the Enterprise lease program
- Completed an audit of M1W financials



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Finance Section - Accomplishments in 2024

Goal #2 Timely Facilitations of Budget Development, Adoption & Implementation

- Participated in the **BoD Budget Workshop**, a **Grower's workshop**, two **public hearings** for FY 2025 fees and charges
- **COWCAP** presentation to Finance Committee and Board of Directors



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Finance Section - Accomplishments in 2024

Goal #4 Maximization of Revenue Opportunities

- Centralized grant and MOU billing of the Agency to the Finance Team
 - 8 Grants and 4 MOUs
- Timely billing of Water Delivery and Service Charges, and follow-up on delinquent accounts
- Continued working on FEMA claims



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Finance Section - Accomplishments in 2024

Goal #5 Improvement of Team Competency

- All Finance staff completed the Contract academy offered by the County
- Filled Accountant I vacancy
- Attended BoD Committees
- Quarterly contract monitoring meetings



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Finance Section – Priorities for 2025

#1 Effective Financial Management

- Developing and providing Agency training programs regarding contracts, budgets, payments, travel claims, etc.

#4 Maximization of Revenue Opportunities

- Adoption of the Groundwater Monitoring Fees

#5 Improvement of Team Competency

- Implementation/training of new ERP system
 - Setting up programs/projects
- Recruitment of Sr. Account Clerk



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Operations And Maintenance Section

Presenters:

Jason Demers, Senior Water Resources Engineer
 Charles Lingenfelter, Water Maintenance Superintendent
 Peter Kwiek, Associate Water Resources Hydrologist
 Mallory Roberts, Water Resources Hydrologist
 Pete Vannerus, Associate Water Resources Engineer



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Operations And Maintenance – Goals in Support of the 2020-25 WRA Strategic Plan

- Operate all Agency facilities for optimal water resource management.
- Maintain Agency facilities, equipment, and real property to ensure safe and reliable function for the present and future.
- Ensure ongoing capability of effective emergency response to critical situations related to water resource management.
- Plan for long-term efficacy and resiliency of Agency facilities, lands, and operations.
- Achieve and maintain optimal staffing levels and performance.
- Monitor and conform to regulatory requirements for facility operations and maintenance.



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Operations and Maintenance - Achieve and Maintain Optimal Staffing Levels and Performance

Ensure maintenance staff obtain essential certifications to enhance operational capabilities.

Over the past year, we have strengthened our maintenance division by training Maintenance Workers to earn three key certifications:

1. Class A CDL (without restrictions)
2. NCCCO Crane Operator Certification
3. Qualified Applicator Certification (Right-of-Way & Aquatic Herbicide Endorsements)



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Operations And Maintenance - Achieve and Maintain Optimal Staffing Levels and Performance

Class A CDL (without restrictions)

Enables staff to legally operate and transport heavy equipment and supplies up to 40,000 lbs.

Our in-house training covered vehicle operation and best practices for equipment transport.

A

D



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Operations and Maintenance - Achieve and Maintain Optimal Staffing Levels and Performance

NCCCO Crane Operator Certification

This qualification allows staff to operate the agency's 17-ton crane for heavy lifts, debris removal, and supply staging.

By doubling our certified crane operators from two to four, we've increased our efficiency and built redundancy into our maintenance department.

Practical training was conducted in-house, ensuring proficiency in real-world maintenance activities.

A

D



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Operations and Maintenance - Achieve and Maintain Optimal Staffing Levels and Performance

Qualified Applicator Certification (Right-of-Way and Aquatic Herbicide Endorsements)

This allows staff to mix & apply herbicides without direct supervision, strengthening our vegetation management program.

We have expanded our certified applicators from two to four, enhancing our operations.

A

D



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Operations and Maintenance - Achieve and Maintain Optimal Staffing Levels and Performance

SUMMARY

These accomplishments demonstrate our commitment to employee development, operational efficiency, and continuity of service.

Through one-on-one training and in-house expertise, we are equipping our staff with the skills needed to meet agency demands now and into the future.



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Operations and Maintenance – Implementation of Interim Operations Plan for Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs

Germane to Two Section Goals:

- Operate facilities for optimal water resource management;
- Plan for long-term efficacy & resiliency of Agency facilities, lands, & operations.

Review of IOP:

- Adopted by BOD in November 2022
- Gives agency staff discretion to respond quickly to modify reservoir releases to capitalize on storm events to enhance steelhead migration opportunities
- Designed to address Flow Prescription shortcomings and related National Marine Fisheries Service concerns during dry periods while the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is under development.
- Triggers: Deficiency of Passage Days, Occurrence of Reservoir Inflow, Salinas-Arroyo Seco Connectivity and an Open Lagoon

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Operations and Maintenance – Implementation of Interim Operations Plan for Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs

IOP...

- Enables the Agency and stakeholders to assess and address operational and water rights challenges under a realistic interim scenario while the HCP is being developed.
- Provides informed, objective adaptive management criteria that support fish passage outside the limitations of the Flow Prescription.
- Provides an opportunity to beta test a specific re-operation protocol, designed to address flow prescription shortcomings.
- Demonstrates to regulating authorities a good-faith effort to prevent take of listed species in the absence of take coverage.
- Provides incidental recharge to the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

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Operations and Maintenance – Implementation of Interim Operations Plan

IOP Implementation:

- 2023: All Triggers Met on January 5
 - IOP Action not needed.
- 2024: All Triggers Met on February 1
 - IOP Release Action initiated but quickly terminated.
- 2025: Triggers not Met as of February 17

Summary:

- Year three of implementation
- No significant IOP action so far



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O&M - Goal 2 Maintain Agency facilities, equipment, and real property to ensure safe and reliable function for present and future.

D. Generate property-related revenues to support adequate infrastructure on those lands.

Property Management Grazing Key Highlights:

- 8 Cattle lease areas (10,400 acres above High Water)
- \$ Fees AVERAGE, \$205,000/year from local ranchers
- Benefits to Agency land
- Economic Importance
 - Support rural community, helps to preserve open space and wildlife habitat

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O&M - Goal 2 Maintain Agency facilities, equipment, and real property to ensure safe and reliable function for present and future.

Staff support (designee, management specialist, and hydrologists)

- Protocols in lease agreement
- Regulate grazing and optimize land stewardship



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Operations and Maintenance – Recycled Water Projects

Progress within Goals 2, 4 & 6: Maintaining Agency Facilities, Plans for long-term efficacy and resiliency, and regulatory compliance updates.

- Recycle Water Projects Implementation/Progress this year with these goals in mind:

Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) Condition Assessment: Phase 1

- Assessment project beginning the CSIP facilities and equipment condition evaluation, preventative and corrective maintenance evaluation, component lifespan evaluation, etc.
- To be utilized for more accurate budget planning, prioritizing of maintenance activities, prioritization in Capital Improvement Planning and improvements for CSIP Project Sustainability



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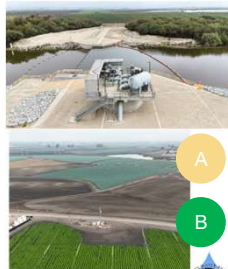
Operations and Maintenance – Maintenance, Long-term Efficacy and Sustainably

• SRDF Post Winter Storm Cleanup and Repair

- Large-scale cleanup effort to return facility to pre-storm condition
- Repairs made to damages out of the river channel with ongoing inspections for in-channel disturbances

• Replacement Groundwater Well Project

- Replacing aging/deteriorating infrastructure, supporting backup water source availability for CSIP system
- Evaluation of potential locations for additional well(s) in relation to current mapped Seawater Intrusion Front continuing once this well is completed



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Operations and Maintenance – Sustainably and Regulatory Compliance

• Booster Station Optimization Project

- Rebuilding and optimizing CSIP's Three Booster Station sites
- Improving efficiency and reliability in managing distribution system pressure and avoidance of unnecessary Groundwater extractions

• Recycled Water Usage Permit Update

- Maintaining regulatory compliance with migration to the New General Recycled Water Usage Order
- Updating Title 22 Engineering Report to include updated operations and addressing new regulation/compliance actions



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

Presenters:

Ricardo Carmona, Water Resources Hydrologist
Marinn Browne, Water Resources Biologist
Amy Woodrow, Senior Water Resources Hydrologist
Guillermo Diaz Moreno, Water Resources Hydrologist



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section -

Section goals apply to a wide range of projects and programs

- **Goal #1:** Effective data collection and reporting to support water resources management and environmental compliance.
- **Goal #2:** Provide subject matter expertise on regional and project-specific water resources management.



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

- **Goal #3:** Facilitate compliance with regulatory requirements for Agency projects and programs.
- **Goal #4:** Develop and implement the Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP) and Salinas River Operations Habitat Conservation Plan (SRO-HCP) in coordination with the Operations Section.
- **Goal #5:** Support professional development.



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section - Section goals align with the current Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Goal	Strategic Plan Strategy	Section Goal #1	Section Goal #2	Section Goal #3	Section Goal #4	Section Goal #5
Goal B Planning and New Projects	Strategy 2 - Collaborate with local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), define MCHRA's role, and implement a GSA integration plan.	✓	✓		✓	
	Strategy 4 - Create a Habitat Conservation Plan for the Salinas River.		✓	✓	✓	
	Strategy 6 - Complete the planning phase of the Interlake Tunnel.		✓			
Goal C Financial Sustainability	Strategy 7 - Use data and analysis to make informed decisions based on science.	✓	✓		✓	
	Strategy 8 - Pursue grant funding and cost saving opportunities from all available sources, including collaborating with the GSA.	✓	✓		✓	
Goal D Effective Core Services and Organization Improvement	Strategy 5 - Improve how the Agency coordinates internal efforts and measures progress.		✓	✓	✓	
	Strategy 6 - Develop an improved staff training, professional development, and safety program to meet the needs of the Agency.					✓
Goal E Community Relations	Strategy 3 - Update and maintain the Agency's website.	✓				



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

Our Section made meaningful contributions in 2024.

- Completed accurate, timely, and safe data collection:
 - 2,400+ groundwater level measurements
 - 470+ water quality samples from wells, reservoirs, and the Salinas Lagoon
 - Streamflow measurements for Salinas River Series
- Contributed to Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP) completion and implementation, and Salinas River Operations Habitat Conservation Plan (SRO-HCP) development, including fish monitoring surveys.



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

Our Section made meaningful contributions in 2024.

- Produced and publicly shared multiple data products.
- Supported other Agency sections with mapping, field work, and data analysis.
- Maintained readiness for storm monitoring and sandbar management.



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

Our Section made meaningful contributions in 2024.

- Development of the Groundwater Monitoring Program (GMP) ordinance (Ord. No. 5426)
- Preparation of a GMP Manual to accompany Ordinance No. 5426
- Expansion of associated data collection programs
 - Well Registration
 - Groundwater Level Monitoring
 - Groundwater Quality Monitoring
 - Groundwater Extraction



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Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

Section priorities for 2025 encompass multiple objectives.

- Conduct timely and high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting of groundwater, surface water, water quality, and biological parameters.
- Complete development of an online well registration portal.
- Continue preparation of an administrative draft of the Salinas River Operations HCP.



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Engineering and Dam Safety

Presenters:

Elise Harden, Senior Water Resources Engineer
Mark Foxworthy, Senior Water Resources Engineer

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Engineering and Dam Safety – Section Goals

- Goal 1: Maintain regulatory compliance for both FERC & DSOD
 - Supports inspections, reports, studies, maintenance, repairs, and improvements to ensure safe dam operations
- Goal 2: Project Delivery
 - Deliver projects and project engineering support within budget and on time.
 - Emphasis on delivery of externally-funded projects to meet funding program deadline/termination dates
- Goal 3: Provide technical engineering design expertise and knowledge to support all Agency divisions.
 - Provide engineering support to internal customers across all Agency divisions

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Engineering and Dam Safety – San Antonio

MAJOR AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- San Antonio Dam
- Hydroelectric Plant
- Agency-wide Engineering Support
 - Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project
 - Salinas River Diversion Facility

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Engineering and Dam Safety – Recent Focus / Accomplishments

- Executed SB104 Funding Agreement \$16.1 million dollars
- San Antonio Dam Spillway Replacement Project
 - Project Completion Extension Granted through December 2031
 - Environmental and Engineering Phase funded by SB104
- Grant Applications / Funding Opportunities
- Nacimiento Hydroelectric Plant Unit 2 Repairs
- Monterey County Recycled Water Projects Master Plan – CSIP component



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Engineering and Dam Safety – Upcoming Priorities

- San Antonio Dam Spillway Replacement Project
- Fully utilizing SB104 funds
- Regulatory fee support
- Funding Opportunities
- Standardizing internal project procedures to improve workflow and staff onboarding
- Developing a Capital Improvement Projects Program



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Engineering and Dam Safety – Accomplishments

CSIP

- Completed data collection and began hydraulic modeling of system for evaluation of system capacity, hydraulic deficiencies, and potential enhancements

Nacimiento

- Completed Geotechnical field investigation for the design of the Nacimiento Dam Spillway Plunge Pool Rock Outcrop Removal. (Grant)
- As part of the Nacimiento Dam Seismic Evaluation Study, completed Geotechnical field investigation and installation of two piezometer wells.
- Negotiated and executed amendment 1 to State Funding agreement to include panel 14R repairs.



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Engineering and Dam Safety – Accomplishments

Nacimiento

- Completed inspection and repairs of voids and spillway drains under spillway panel 14R (Grant)
- Completed annual spillway maintenance inspection and repairs
- Completed design of repairs to the Dam South Access Road damaged during the 2023 storms. (FEMA funded)



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Engineering and Dam Safety – Priorities

CSIP

- Complete hydraulic modeling and optimization design

Nacimiento

- Plunge pool (Grant)
 - Complete investigation, design and permitting for full improvement
 - Complete Rock outcrop removal
- Perform annual spillway inspection, maintenance, and repairs (Fund 116)
- Design Low-Level Intake Chamber Replacements and Modifications (Grant)
- Complete design of penstock protection wall (Grant)
- Address FERC & DSOD requirements and reporting (Fund 116 and Grant)
- Perform Emergency Action Plan functional exercise (Fund 116)



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Administration Section

Presenter:

Jessell Fenley, Administrative Services Assistant



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Administration – Section Goals

1. Provide efficient and effective support to the Agency and external stakeholders
2. Develop new approach to maintaining and managing records to increase efficiency
3. Expand and support processes and trainings related to governance
4. Improve internal contract policy and procedures
5. Support staff compliance with County and Agency policies



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Administration – Notable Accomplishments

- Admin Staff Cross-Training (Goal #1)
 - Cross-train administrative staff on key processes (BOD meetings, Committee meetings, etc.).
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) & Internal Processes (Goal #4)
 - Develop and standardize SOPs for contracts, BOD/Committee processes, and other internal functions.
- ADA Compliance Progress (Goals #1, #5)
 - Advance progress toward full ADA compliance across all operations.



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Administration – Notable Accomplishments

- File System Research (Goal #2)
 - Continued research to enhance and optimize the agency's file management systems.
- CSIP Organization (In Progress, Goal #2)
 - Organization and structuring of CSIP documents for overall efficiency.
- Ordinance Organization (Goal #2)
 - Streamlined and categorized ordinances for improved accessibility and functionality.



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Administration – Priorities for the coming year

- Streamline Public Meetings
 - Enhance efficiency and accessibility of public meeting processes.
- File System Optimization
 - Explore research options for improved records file management.
 - Create a comprehensive filing system for managing and organizing agency records.
- Comprehensive Training for BOD and Staff
 - Provide targeted training to ensure continuous development and operational excellence for both Board members and staff.

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SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

Presenter:

Shaunna Murray, Deputy General Manager

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Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies: 2024 Review

- Goal A: Infrastructure Maintenance** was critical to maintaining services to the community
- Goal B: Planning and New Projects** progressed well with completion of numerous studies and completion of the Lagoon Low Effects HCP
- Goal C: Financial Stability** launched new initiatives such as development of Fee Studies and maximizing grant opportunities
- Goal D: Effective Core Services and Organizational Improvement** focused on section goals and objectives, trainings, and procedures to increase effectiveness and efficiencies
- Goal E: Community Relations** showed growth in legislative initiatives and stakeholder outreach



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Update on 2024 Key Priorities



- **Recycled water system master planning** has commenced with data collection and scoping and will be a multi-year effort to complete.
- Staff will continue to participate in **project feasibility studies to address seawater intrusion/groundwater sustainability** and make recommendations.
- **Condition assessments of facilities to support capital replacement and improvement plan** have begun and will need to continue for all Agency facilities.
- **Relationship building with other water resources agencies** continues to be developed and expanded through both informal ways and formal participation efforts.
- Focusing on a **public information and community engagement plan** is a priority for future efforts to be successful.
- New efforts towards forecasting and fees have been developed to support **funding strategies and implementation plan** and will continue moving forward.
- The Agency has furthered its **legislative platform and engagement strategy**

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Agency Challenges / Areas of need

- Attracting, maintaining and developing Agency Staff
- Sustaining adequate resources to support Agency core functions
- Implementing standardized procedures and clear process control mechanisms to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Consistent, functional communication with stakeholders
- Clear direction on Agency priorities and an understanding of the level of effort needed to complete those priorities

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Summary of Agency Priorities for next year

- Develop and implement **training plans** for new and existing staff to increase knowledge and skills
- Re-evaluate **organizational processes** and make changes as necessary to increase efficiencies and effectiveness
- Prepare for the future by investing in **longer-term planning** efforts
- Increase **financial sustainability** through development of new funding, reviewing costs of providing services to the community and outreach
- Continue to **maintain** facilities, lands and operations to plan for long-term efficacy & resiliency



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Lunch Break



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Table Introductions & Icebreaker

Getting to Know Your Table Team

- Rapid Roundtable: Introduce yourselves
- Name, Agency Role, Community Member, etc.
- Then describe how you feel today using water-related metaphors. For example, someone might say, "I feel like a calm lake," or "I'm as energized as a rushing river."

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Strategic Planning

GM's Vision

- February 18, 2025
- Ara Azhderian
- General Manager
- azhderiana@countyofmonterey.gov



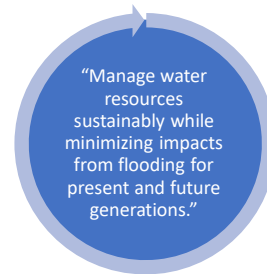
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2025 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



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The Agency's Mission:



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Achieving the Mission – Goal



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Maintain Service & System Reliability – Objectives

- Perform water management systems condition assessments:
 - ✓ Reliability
 - ✓ Sustainability
 - ✓ Resilience
 - ✓ Vulnerability
- Develop staffing structure and maintenance plans prioritized by:
 - Risk of failure
 - Improved Efficiency Potential – short-term cost reduction
 - Rate of Return on Investment – long-term cost reduction
- Develop Capital Replacement and Improvement Programs
- Timeframe: 5 Yrs.

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Achieving the Mission – Goal



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Recruit, Retain, & Reward Quality Staff – Objectives

- Culture
 - Promote the Agency's Vision to "Be recognized throughout the region as a leader in water resource management through demonstrated knowledge, integrity and the quality of our actions."
- Compensation
 - Create a "Compensation Philosophy" — monetary and otherwise, including opportunity — that recognizes and motivates our talent to develop and support the Agency's Vision.
- Commitment
 - Marry culture and compensation to nurture and sustain commitment to the Agency and its Mission.

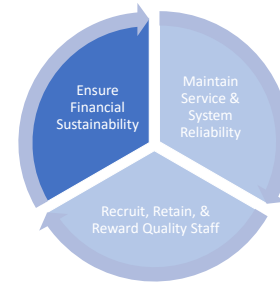
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Recruit, Retain, & Reward Quality Staff – Objectives

- Work with the County to develop an Agency specific Compensation Philosophy and simplified recruiting process;
- Develop Agency specific policies that:
 - value and reward training, achievement, and loyalty;
 - promote teamwork, cross-training, and advancement from within, and;
 - provide flexibility to achieve sustainable work-life balance.
- Reevaluate the Agency's staffing and organization to improve alignment of needs and skills to reduce talent outsourcing and improve employee engagement, opportunity, and satisfaction.
- Timeframe: 3 years

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Achieving the Mission – Goal



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Ensure Financial Sustainability – Objective

- Develop balanced budgets and Programs & Projects specific reserve targets;
- Develop financial forecasting, cost allocation, and recovery methods;
- Reevaluate Programs & Projects funding sources to ascertain potential revenue enhancements;
- Consider de-obligating un/under-funded activities to align remaining efforts with sustainable revenues;
- Develop funding strategies to support capital replacement and improvement;
- Expand grant writing and public funding capabilities.
- Timeframe: 3 years

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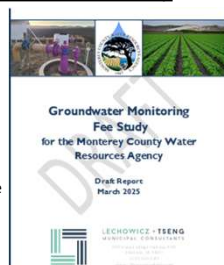
A PREVIEW OF MAJOR 2025 INITIATIVES



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Groundwater Monitoring Program Fee Study

- Authority granted under the Agency Act
- Ordinance 5426 adopted October 1, 2024
- The GMP Regulatory Fee Study
 - Consistent with Proposition 26
 - Initiated July 2024
 - Finance Committee Update Nov. '24
 - Draft Study Release – March 7 Finance Committee
 - ~30-day stakeholder outreach & feedback
 - Finalize May 2025
 - Adopt June 2025



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Dam Safety Program Regulatory Fee Study

- Authority granted under the Agency Act
- Consistent with Proposition 26
 - Fee Study Budgeted in FYE2025
 - Postponed to accommodate GMP Fee Study
 - Initiate in Spring 2025
 - To address cost of FERC & DSOD compliance
- Includes:
 - Nacimiento Dam
 - San Antonio Dam
 - Salinas River Diversion Facility Dam



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Historical Benefits Analysis Update

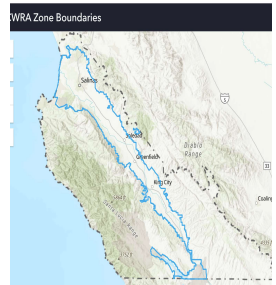
- Originally Published 1998
- Update began 2023
 - DWR Grant Funded ILT Project
- Two Components
 - Hydrologic Analysis
 - Economic Analysis
- Draft Studies Release
 - April 2 Planning Committee
- Stakeholder Outreach
 - ~3-6 month review period



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Potential Dam Safety Cost Allocation Methods

- Need sustainable Dam Safety funding
- Zone 2C O&M Assessment outdated
- Z2C Geographic Boundary unaligned with some Dam Purposes
 - General Benefits
 - Environmental & Habitat Management
 - Recreation
 - Flood Management
 - Groundwater Recharge
- Requires stakeholder & public outreach



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Local Share Financing Strategy

- February 7 Finance Committee Presentation:
 - "Overview of Safety of Dams Projects Financing Options"
- Examples of long-term debt repayment options include:
 - General Obligation Bonds
 - Lowest cost of borrowing, two-third's voter approval, can finance 100% of projects
 - Special Benefit Assessment Bonds
 - Mid-cost of borrowing, 50%+1 voter approval, can finance 100% of projects
 - Government Loans e.g. WIFIA
 - Currently highest cost of borrowing, 50%+1 voter approval, can finance 49% of projects
- Commercial paper
 - Short-term funding, cash flow management
 - Flexibility managing project delay, costs incurred regardless of draw



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Monterey County Financing Authority Revival

- Established in 1995 to fund CSIP/SVRP
- Utilized in 2018 to refinance Agency debt
- Officers
 - Executive Director – WRA General Manager
 - Ass. Ex. Director – Assistant CAO
 - Secretary – WRA Assistant GM
 - Treasurer – County's Treasurer
 - Controller – County's Auditor-Controller
- Investigating status with County
- Potential for other uses?



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Salinas River Operations HCP

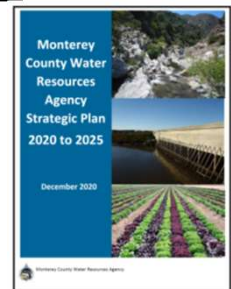
- Essential to meet federal ESA requirements
- Planning initiated in 2015
- To date, primarily grant funded
- Covered Activities defined
- Operational scenarios in development
- Will need to develop funding strategy for implementation



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Agency's Strategic Plan Update

- Developed in 20-teens – a 5-year Plan
- The 2020 Plan has a comprehensive list of Agency activities, many unfunded
- The update will focus on:
 - Setting priorities over the next 5 years
 - Improving clarity, managing expectations
 - Maintaining a "roadmap"
 - Improving public awareness
- Inform revisions to the Agency's Bylaws



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LOOKING AHEAD, 2026 AND BEYOND



TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO ONE HAS GONE BEFORE.

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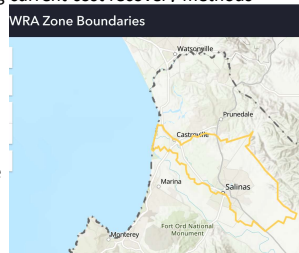
CSIP Cost Allocation & Recovery Overhaul

- Day-to-Day O&M expenses outpacing current cost recovery methods
- Challenge to fund extraordinary maintenance:
 - Well replacement
 - SRDF 2023 storm damage repair
- How to fund CSIP "optimization"?
- How to fund M1W upgrades?
- Challenge to establish appropriate reserve levels
- Disparate funds difficult to administer, constrain "Program" management
- Leverage Master Plan to develop new rate structure

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Reclamation Ditch

- Day-to-Day O&M expenses outpacing current cost recovery methods
- Originally constructed in 1917
 - Mainstem, tributaries, 5 pump stations
 - Drains 157 square miles of watershed
 - Home to ~170,000 residents
- Zone 9 established by Ordinance 2626 in 1980
- Future of drainage area maintenance requires reconsideration.



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SGMA, CSIP, and the Salinas River

- The dams contribute significantly to the health, safety, and quality of life for residents of Monterey county and beyond
- The anticipated financial demands of SGMA are adversely impacting the ability to develop suitable cost recovery mechanisms for Dam Safety Projects and other aspects of the Agency's work
- The existing CSIP program cost recovery system is financially unsustainable; notwithstanding, the Agency will be looked to to optimize and "expand" the program
- Future of the Salinas River Operations HCP and Stream Maintenance Program are entangled in SGMA plan development

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The Agency is not a monolith

- Identity versus awareness
- Remarkable mission, vision, and people (especially the people)
- Many challenges ahead
- Success requires:
 - Dedication, Intelligence, Discipline, Optimism
 - Improved public awareness
 - Sufficient stakeholder support
 - Consistent support from Directors and Supervisors
- Strong strategic planning to maintain focus, minimize distraction

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General Manager's Vision



What stands out to you?



What needs clarification?

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Challenges & Priorities

Going Forward: Challenges and Priorities

- Identify Roles:
 - Discussion Leader:** Section leader/manager
 - Timekeeper:** to keep team moving
 - Notetaker:** to capture insights
 - Presenter:** Director
- Instructions:
 1. Discussion Leader reviews section-related challenges and priorities (5-7 minutes)
 2. Table asks clarifying questions, discusses how the challenges and priorities align with the Board-identified challenges and priorities, and shares ideas and insights (10-13 minutes)
 3. Presenter reports out insights from the discussion (1 minute per table/9-10 minutes total for all nine tables)

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Upcoming Strategic Planning Process Milestones

Activities and Tasks	Tentative Schedule
First management team workshop	September 11, 2024
Final 2020-2025 Strategic Plan update workshop	February 18, 2025
90-minute in-person focus groups (up to 3)	March – April 2025
Staff questionnaire	March – April 2025
External stakeholder questionnaire	March – April 2025
Prepare the environmental scan slide deck	March – May 2025
First 2026-2030 Strategic Plan workshop	June 2025
Second 2026-2030 Strategic Plan workshop	September 2025
Second management team workshop	September – October 2025
Draft strategic plan	May – October 2025
Finalize strategic plan	January 2026
Update IAP	April 2026

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January 2024 Priorities

- **Recycled water** master planning
- Project feasibility studies to address **seawater intrusion/groundwater sustainability**
- **Relationship building** with other water agencies
- **Legislative platform** and **engagement strategy**
- **Conditions assessment** of facilities to support capital replacement and improvement plan
- **Public information** and community engagement plan
- **Funding strategies** and implementation plan

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Priority Projects (see workbook)

Finance Section

- Agency training programs regarding contracts, budgets, payments, travel claims, etc.
- Maximization of revenue opportunities
- Implementation/training of new ERP
- Recruitment of senior account clerk

Operations and Maintenance Section

- Achieve and maintain optimal staffing levels
- Interim Operations Plan
- Generate property-related revenues
- Continue Recycle Water Project implementation

Hydrology & Environmental Resources Section

- Conduct timely and high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting of groundwater, surface water, water quality, and biological parameters
- Online well registration portal
- Administrative draft of the Salinas River Operations Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

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Priority Projects *(see workbook)*

Engineering & Dam Safety Section – San Antonio Dam

- San Antonio Dam Spillway Replacement project
- Fully utilizing SB104 funds
- Support funding opportunities
- Standardizing internal project procedures to improve workflow and staff onboarding
- Developing a Capital Improvement Projects program

Engineering & Dam Safety Section – Nacimiento Dam

- Complete CSIP hydraulic modeling and optimization design
- Design Nacimiento Plunge Pool projects
- Perform annual spillway inspection, maintenance, and repairs
- Design low-level intake chamber replacements and modifications
- Complete design of penstock protection wall
- Address FERC and DSOD recommendations and reporting

Administration Section

- Enhance efficiency and accessibility of public meeting processes
- Improved records file management
- Comprehensive filing system for agency records
- Provide targeted training to ensure continuous development and operational excellence



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Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Review
decisions from
today's
workshop

Board
commitments

Prepare for
stakeholder
engagement

Prepare
environmental
scan

First workshop
for next
strategic plan:
June 2025

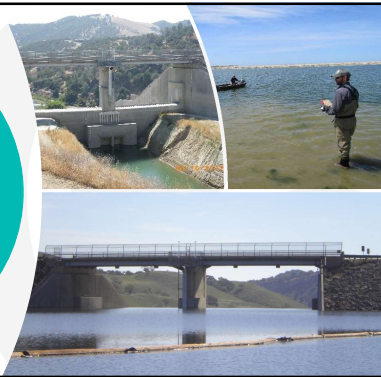


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Closing
Comments
Please share a
one-word takeaway
from today's
discussion



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Thank you!

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Mary Locey | mary.locey@bakertilly.com



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