

2000-2002

BIENNIAL REPORT



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION

FUNDING, RESEARCH & LEGISLATION

STEVEN ROSS, Unit Head

Unit Background

The need for this Unit was first identified in the Long Range Initiative (LRI) created for WMD. The official formation of WMD on August 2, 2000, created this Unit, originally called Research. The initial functions of the Unit included monitoring legislation for WMD and addressing water quality issues related to watershed management.

Within a few weeks, grants and money issues of WMD were added to the Unit's responsibilities. The Unit was renamed Research, Legislation, and Funding.

During the first year, the Unit continued to focus on legislation review, researching water quality issues, and added speech writing and presentation preparation. Typical assignments included legislative analysis, researching BMP's, technical guidance to WMD, and preparing speeches and presentations for Administration. The Unit also facilitated funding related issues that included finding, writing, and administering grants. This included the application of several different grants such as MTA, CalFED, Proposition 12, Proposition 13, and administering the Proposition A Santa

Monica Bay Water Quality Improvement Grant Program.

It was soon apparent that performing legislative analysis would be better coordinated by the respective watersheds and as a result for WMD, that responsibility was distributed to the Sections.

The Unit was subsequently renamed 'Grants and Funding.' The given responsibility of contract administration, assisting with Proposition A issues, P3 scheduling, and managing WMD's budget.



Responsibilities of the Unit expanded to contract administration, watershed engineering and design projects, project management assignments, and P3 scheduling.

In order to address the growing workload of the Unit, new positions were added.



Accomplishments



During the past two years, this Unit has accomplished a number of important functions for WMD. Of note are:

- Proactively pursued grants. This includes the creating marketing and lobbying packages that were sent to legislators and lobbyists in both Sacramento and Washington D.C. The packages included information on several important watershed management projects and the benefits of multiuse projects.
- Reestablished budget expertise within WMD. WMD's first year budget was led by the former Assistant Division Engineer and assisted by a Staff Assistant II.
- Created a contracting program. The various sections within WMD can now efficiently expedite the consultant selection process for watershed engineering services by using the newly created Select List of Engineering Consultants.
- Established an As-Needed Biological/Ecological list consisting of two consultants that is available to WMD. The Unit is responsible for maintaining the list and acting as the contract administrator.
- Started the process of standardizing WMD procedure and protocol. Created sample Project Concept Reports, Board Letters, Notices to Proceed, and other documents commonly used by WMD employees.
- Processed ITD requests. Through the establishment of important contacts and standardizing the requesting procedures, the Unit has been able to reduce the time needed to complete ITD requests and have increased the value of ITD services to WMD. As a result, WMD has become efficient in completing essential responsibilities. A good example of the improved ITD responsiveness was the successful acquisition of a new copier.

Mission

To provide watershed management services in a manner that achieves WMD Goal through: efficient grant, contract, and funding administration, innovative program research, and quality completion of special assignments. The Unit will provide WMD with prompt services and set the standard of direction and leadership.

Projects in the Funding, Research, & Legislation

The Unit is unique in that most of the work done is 'behind the scenes.' Some of these 'behind the scenes' projects include, P3 scheduling, budget, Division data manage-



ment, and legislative review. However, the Unit is also working on a number of more visible projects.

Water Quality Catch Basin Standard Plans Contract

In May 2002, WMD entered into a contract with a consultant to design a water quality catch basin that included several BMPs to address current and future NPDES permits. As part of the contract, the consultant modified the APWA Catch Basin Standard Design to accommodate structural BMPs.



Marketing Package

As the importance of watershed management projects increased due to TMDLs and the NPDES Permit, the amount of funding has contrarily decreased. In order to proactively pursue state monies and grants, the Unit created a marketing package. The package included the descriptions of WMD's high priority multiuse projects:

- SGR Inflatable Rubber Dams Construction Project
- Dominguez Gap Spreading Grounds Enhancement and Wetland Construction Project



- Los Angeles River Master Plan
- Sun Valley Watershed Multiuse Project
- Arroyo Seco Watershed Study and Pilot Project Implementation
- Tujunga Wash Green Way Project
- Tujunga Wash Restoration Project
- Santa Clara River Groundwater Feasibility Study
- Antelope Valley Water Replenishment and Flood Control Feasibility Study

These packages were delivered to the County's lobbyists and State legislators in Sacramento and Washington D.C.

Cleanup Day

In response to a request from the Director, Jim Noyes, this Unit created a Public Works Cleanup Day package. Included in the package was a description of possible cleanup locations, location maps, responsibility waivers that had been reviewed by



County Counsel, and contact information for the Sheriff's Office, Road and Flood Maintenance divisions, and other key personnel. At Administration's request, the package was turned over to Administrative Services Division to implement the actual event.

As-Needed and Select List Contracts

In 2002, two different lists of consultants were created for use by WMD. The first list was an as-needed Biological/Ecological Consultant list consisting of two consultants. The Board of Supervisors approved a two-year, \$3 million contract with the possibility of a one-year extension.

The second contract was a Select List of Engineering Consultants. The list consists of five

pre-approved consultants to provide services in the following areas: Water Resources/Environmental Engineering, Flood Hazard Mitigation, and Storm Water Quality Mitigation.



Budget

The Unit prepares and monitors WMD's budget. Considerable time and effort goes into this endeavor. There are actually two different budgets going on simultaneously: the current "working budget" and the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The



budget has drastically changed from the first year (2000-01) when WMD was formed. Fiscal Year has seen a change to "Project Based Budgeting" from the former program based. The Unit prepared justifications for staffing increases and established duties and responsibility statements for consideration and approval by Human Resources Division.

Lessons learned

In the past two years, this Unit has slowly acquired more and more expertise in the different responsibilities. The budget process has become more efficient and responsive to the needs of WMD but improvement is still needed.



The Unit has helped WMD to become more proactive in obtaining funding and securing grants for our projects. Several lessons have been learned about the County contracting process and the use of consultants to achieve cost-effectiveness without loss of continuity.

The Future

The challenges are to integrate the current functions with those of the watershed sections. The Unit will continue to be proactive in managing the financial and contracting functions. As the Unit's budget expertise grows, it will effectively provide for WMD's needs and growth.

Implement P3 scheduling to effectively manage projects, will provide both the Unit and Management with project progress and resource needs.

The Unit looks to complete the database management functions. Currently, the data management is comprised of numerous nonlinked spreadsheets. They are cumbersome to maintain and update. The move toward databases will allow more efficient and effective

information services. Ad-hoc reports to suit WMD's needs will be developed.

The Unit expects to become more involved in specialized engineering projects, such as BMP testing and design. Projects that are currently being worked are the trash inserts, on-site treatment training, and the catch basin redesign.

