

2002-2004

BIENNIAL REPORT



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION

RESEARCH, LEGISLATION, AND FUNDING

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Section Background

The Research, Funding, and Legislation Unit was created to provide watershed management services that support and enable efficient and successful delivery of watershed management projects. In the past two years, the Unit's responsibility has expanded from its initial functions. In order to address the growing workload, the Unit has added positions to provide support services in five major categories: technical guidance and research on watershed management-related issues; preparing and monitoring WMD's budget and expenditures; reviewing, distributing, and compiling analyses on regulations and legislations; performing special administrative assignments and projects; and reporting, contract administration, and scheduling support for the division.

One new objective of the Unit is to keep WMD's watershed sections

abreast of new products and changes to design standards and criteria affecting watershed development and water quality. Working with Public Works' Technical Review Committee, the Unit participates in and coordinates departmental efforts to evaluate existing design standards and assess opportunities to provide watershed management benefits through effective reengineering.

The Unit continues to facilitate funding related issues that include reviewing, distributing, coordinating, and documenting WMD's responses on inquiries for grants and funding opportunities. Another challenge which the Unit has undertaken is the centralization and standardization of project and budget information, which is an effort to help streamline operations and improve accuracy and responsiveness of the division.



Mission

To provide watershed management services in a manner that achieves WMD Goals 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.

Accomplishments

In the 2002-2004 biennium, the Research, Legislation, and Funding Unit continued to provide a number of supporting functions for WMD and accomplished the following:

- Proactively pursued grants. This includes developing and updating marketing and lobbying packages that were sent to legislators and lobbyists in both Sacramento and Washington D.C. The packages highlighted information on a selected number of watershed management projects and the benefits of multiuse projects.
- Coordinated legislative analysis. The Unit is responsible for compiling and providing analyses for regulations and proposed legislation affecting watershed management issues and policies.
- Transitioned from program-based budgeting to project-based budgeting. The funding component of this Unit is responsible for preparing WMD's annual budget request. In the past two years, WMD has successfully transitioned from the traditional program-based budgeting to project-based budgeting, an effort that has provided an additional level of detail to the budget estimate.
- Administered contracts. In order to build consensus among the stakeholders, the Unit is responsible for providing scientific and technical information, assisting in the development of public policies to promote watershed management, and supporting planning efforts of the Basin Plan. WMD entered into contracts with the Los Angeles and San Gabriel



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P r o j e c t A u t h o r i t y
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- Measured and

reported on performance. In support of the Public Works' Strategic Planning Process and the framework set forth by the Chief Administrative Office's *Performance Counts*, WMD provided result-based measurements for activities under a selected number of programs related to increased flood protection and water conservation and water quality.

- Centralized project information. In 2003, the Unit developed and launched the Project Management Database that enables WMD staff to access and enter project information from and into a centralized database.
- Managed and prepared watershed management studies and concepts. The Unit continues to manage and is actively involved in the development of studies and concepts that support the implementation of watershed management projects.
- Coordinated efforts among the divisions that participated in the Technical Review Committee. As a co-chair of Public Works' Technical Review Committee, WMD participates and coordinates departmental efforts in identifying existing policies, hydrologic analysis, flood control inlet and outlet standards, design criteria, nomographs, and maintenance requirements that warrant reengineering to provide watershed management benefits.



- Provided administrative and operational support. The Unit continues to provide a wide range of administrative and operational support services to help increase efficiency and responsiveness of WMD. This ongoing support includes processing training and Information Technology Division requests, P3 scheduling, Proposition A administration, updating the watershed stakeholder directory, and providing monthly updates to the Countywide Contracts Monitoring System.

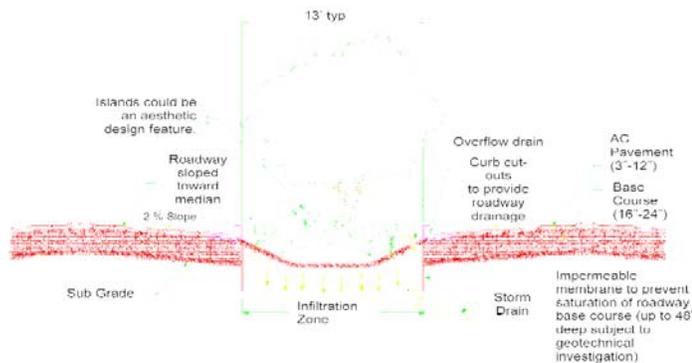
Projects in the Funding, Research, & Legislation

The Unit is unique in that most of the work performed is 'behind the scenes.' Some of these 'behind the scenes' projects include contract administration, budget preparation, project information management,

compilation of periodic project status reports, review and dissemination of grants and funding information, and legislative review. However, the Unit is also working on a number of special projects and studies.

Median Swale Design

In coordination with the Public Works' Technical review committee, WMD completed and received administrative approval on the depressed landscaped median design concept in February 2004. The concept provides technical guidance on the design of landscaped medians with the objective to



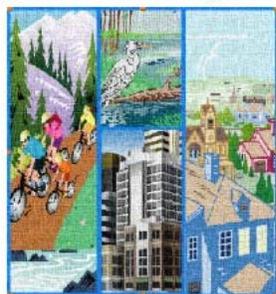
increase watershed management benefits, such as improved water quality and increased opportunities for groundwater infiltration, beyond the habitat and aesthetic enhancement features delivered by traditional landscaped medians.

Marketing Package

As the importance of watershed management projects increased due to TMDLs and the NPDES Permit, the amount of funding did not increase. However, grant opportunities through Proposition 12, 13, 40, and 50 did arise. 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:

- Compton Creek Beautification
- Dominguez Gap Wetland Study
- Los Angeles River Master Plan Implementation
- LACDA Stormwater Management Plan
- Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash Restoration Feasibility Study
- San Gabriel River Rubber Dams
- Santa Clara Groundwater Feasibility Study
- Sun Valley Watershed Multiuse Project
- Tujunga Wash Greenway Project
- Tujunga Wash Restoration Project

Improving Quality of Life



Watershed Management

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

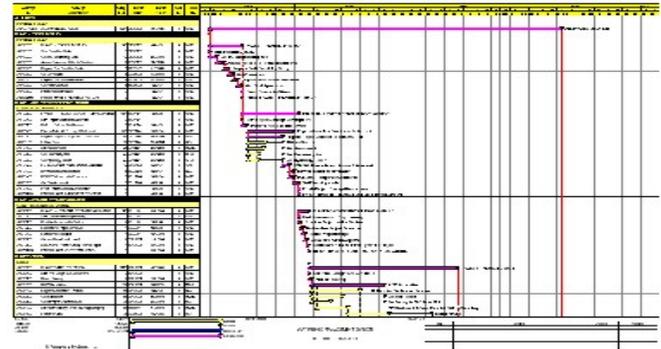
- Antelope Valley Water Replenishment and Flood Control Project
- Arroyo Seco Watershed Management Plan

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

P3 Scheduling Support

In November 2003, WMD assumed the responsibility of providing project management support for multiuse projects. This added responsibility requires a WMD project manager to oversee the entire project delivery cycle from initiation through completion. In support of WMD's project management efforts, the Research, Legislation, and Funding Unit is responsible for providing scheduling support for the division. The Unit develops and maintains all active project schedules through use of Primavera Project Planner (P3). To better assist WMD project managers in developing baseline schedules, the Unit established a library of

fragments containing typical durations and relationships for activities in each phase of the project delivery cycle.



Project Management Database

In order to better manage project and budget information for the division, the Unit initiated and



completed the development of a project management database in 2003. The objective of creating a project management database is to streamline, standardize, and centralize project information. The database is accessible to all WMD staff, enabling project managers to enter project status and budget information into one centralized location. The Unit works with WMD staff to enter contract and labor estimates for watershed projects into the database by service providers. A centralized database for budget information will help increase accuracy and efficiency in the WMD's preparation of the annual budget request.

Special Studies and Projects

In addition to providing operational and administrative support to the division, the Unit is also charged with conducting and managing special studies and projects that can help establish the basis or facilitate the implementation of watershed management projects. Some of these special studies and projects include:

- Establishing an Economic Value for Watershed Management Techniques-The goal of this study is to develop a methodology for establishing the monetary value provided by the application of watershed best management practices. The ability to quantify the monetary value of a project is often needed to justify the implementation of the project.
- Project Initiation Memos - In an effort to comply with trash and bacteria TMDLs, WMD completed and received administrative approval on the County-wide implementation programs for low-flow

diversions, partial-capture and full-capture systems in April 2004.

- Maintenance and Patrolling Costs for Multiuse Corridors - The Unit performed an assessment of the costs required to properly maintain and patrol multiuse corridor projects that may be implemented in the next 15 years. The result of the assessment indicated that the annual costs total approximately \$115 million.
- Langford Street Community Greening Project-A Project Concept Report was developed to improve a parcel of County-owned roadside property into a landscaped open space for the Community of East Los Angeles.
- Holmes Avenue Drain - The Holmes Avenue Drainage Project Concept Report, proposing the construction of a limited capacity storm drain to

reduce ponding and improve street drainage in the Glen Avenue Drainage System, was completed in July 2004.

- Buelah Circle Road Drain Feasibility Study - The

study evaluated three best management alternatives and identified the most effective and feasible solution to reduce odor emitting form nuisance flow in the unincorporated community of City Terrace.

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. In the past two years, budget preparation has changed to "Project Based Budgeting" from the former program based. Budgeting by project has added another level of detail to the budgeting process. The Unit continues to prepare justifications for staffing increases and to establish 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 in providing long-term projections. 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 of Los Angeles contracting process and the use of consultants to achieve cost-effectiveness without loss of continuity. The Unit has learned that although research and evaluation of new technology and standards is time consuming and resource demanding, providing technical guidance and research is a growing need for the Division.

The Future

The challenges of the Unit continue to be seamlessly integrating the current unit functions with those of the watershed sections. The Unit will need 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.

Developing and continuously maintaining project schedules will support both the Unit and Management in tracking and managing progress and resource needs

of watershed projects.

The Unit will continue to coordinate with WMD's project managers to centralize and

standardize project and budget information through effective use of the Project Management Database. The database will ultimately serve as a centralized reservoir of information to support WMD's budget preparation and project management of watershed multiuse projects.



The Unit expects to become more involved in specialized engineering projects, such as managing the study for water quality catch basins, establishing the monetary value of applying watershed best management practices (BMPs), and assisting WMD's watershed sections in evaluating and prioritizing regional drainage needs throughout Los Angeles County.

