

Caucus Breakouts

During the afternoon session, meeting participants engaged in two rounds of breakout discussions related to 13 different topic and regional areas. The regional discussions focused on three areas:

- Delta and San Joaquin
- Southern California
- North-Central California.

The topic areas addressed:

- Agricultural Water Supply and Demand
- Data and Tools
- Groundwater
- Integrated Flood Management
- Local Government
- Near Coastal
- Resource Stewardship
- Urban Water Supply and Demand
- Water Quality and Public Health.

At each breakout , participants were asked to brainstorm key factors (scope) associated with the given topic or area. Each breakout group also identified groups and individuals who could contribute to, or would be interested in, further developing a particular topic/area. Highlights of the breakout conversations are summarized below. Transcripts of the notes from each breakout group are posted on the Water Plan *Calendar and Materials* webpage.

Regional breakout discussions emphasized the need for describing **local conditions**, including water quality, local IRWM priorities, regional self-sufficiency, and the relationship between land use and water management – including implications for public safety, economic sustainability, and ecosystem functions. Conversations relating to regional self-sufficiency mentioned conjunctive use approaches (including potential new sources such as flood waters), as well as matching water quality to use (for example, are there agricultural crops that remain viable using water with higher salt content?). Regional considerations also encompass land use patterns and Area of Origin water rights and watershed conditions. The broad scope of regional factors points to the need for coordination of various water management and planning efforts and the need to revisit options for structuring the content and size of the Regional Reports, including online data management.

Brainstorming also included suggestions for outreach and stakeholder engagement. At the regional level, it will be important to involve a wide array of representatives including those from:

- Local government: City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, Councils of Governments, and engineering staff
- Economic activities: Agriculture, industry, Chambers of Commerce, development agencies

- Local entities: Water districts, NGOs, homeowner associations
- Local efforts involved with restoration, planning, water conservation
- Other agencies: State, Tribal, Federal programs, including power and energy

Topic breakout sessions collectively emphasized the need for collaboration and coordination between agencies and organizations associated with all aspects of water management and planning. **Water Supply and Demand** factors were similar for both agricultural and urban water use, including: conjunctive use of alternative supplies (reuse, stormwater); land management influences (productivity and cropping patterns for ag; development and zoning for urban); climate change impacts on hydrology, infrastructure and system operations; funding needs for further gains in efficiency; revisiting landscape concepts (ecosystem services, urban density patterns, agriculture values for habitat).

Comprehensive water management highlights the role of **data and tools** in supporting better understanding of water-related resources, including surface and groundwater interactions and groundwater resource conditions. A comprehensive water planning approach also underscores the need to look at system-wide factors and activities, including water rights allocations, water transfers, and water marketing. **Water quality** is another component of comprehensive water management and planning – factoring into discussions ranging across: community drinking water supplies, sediment loading, pollution sources and patterns, water treatment systems, and costs for new levels of treatment.

Groundwater conditions represent yet another factor of comprehensive water management and planning, again highlighting the need for adequate **data and tools**. The understanding of groundwater resources varies throughout the state. Some groundwater basins are well defined, and their associated characteristics and recharge processes well understood. In other areas, new efforts are targeted at understanding groundwater basin parameters (including water quality, surface elevation levels, connectivity with surface waters, and recharge mechanisms and vulnerabilities). **Energy costs** represent a data point for groundwater use, as well as for system operations of surface supplies.

Integrated Flood Management connects with aspects of water supply, systems operations, conjunctive use and water quality and also links to land use, agricultural lands, ecosystem restoration and wildlife habitat. Regional differences are important in flood management, with different approaches to funding, jurisdiction and regulation found throughout the state. Flood risks vary as well across alluvial, riverine and coastal flooding, as well as differences in flood patterns in upper and lower watersheds. Integrated Flood Management will incorporate elements of water management and planning with emergency planning and response. It was suggested that integrating flood management with local IRWMs will be an important element for implementation efforts and for outreach and education on flood risks.

Local Government activities tie directly into water planning through land use, governance, and funding considerations. Local land use decisions often consider development strategies in the context of water supply. General Plans can provide guidance on other aspects of development, such as impact on water conservation and reuse, drainage patterns, recharge areas, infrastructure needs – as well as energy efficiency and downstream impacts. Local decision-making is supported by shorter-term.

Resource Stewardship and the services of functioning ecosystems and watersheds relate to many aspects of water management and planning including floodplain management, capacity to capture and release stormwater flows, water quality, and habitat. Important considerations for resource stewardship conversations include description of ecosystem values and services, water needs for supporting ecosystem functions, climate change impacts and adaptive capability, and CEQA requirements and review processes. Other concepts include species conservation and addressing challenges of invasive species. The efforts of smaller watershed groups and water districts, with on-the-ground experience, will be especially important for integrating with IRWM planning efforts and funding opportunities.

Near Coastal conditions relate to many of the water management topics already mentioned, including water quality, water supply, conjunctive use. Unique aspects for coastal water management must also be considered. These include the role of ocean desal as a water supply, freshwater flows to the ocean, power and energy (especially tidal energy), ocean acidification, and the importance of coastal wetlands as habitat and breeding grounds.

A consistent theme across the various breakout sessions was to seek best practices and lessons learned from other areas, and to provide success stories and templates. Another consistent message was the need to identify conditions and factors that are consistent across regions and areas, as well as aspects that are unique and location-specific.

Each breakout session also identified key groups and individuals that are working on the respective caucus topics and areas. The specific suggestions ranged across: local, state, Tribal, and federal departments, programs, agencies, and staff; non-government organizations; academia; elected officials; environmental justice and disadvantaged communities, small and individual well systems economic and business interests; agricultural, industry, and environmental interests; and water agencies (at wholesale and retail level). Additional detail is provided in the caucus transcripts, posted on the Water Plan website for the Public AC meeting.