



**MEETING SUMMARY**

**CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN UPDATE 2013**  
**WATER PLAN PLENARY MEETING**  
**BREAK OUT SESSION: CULTURE, RECREATION AND WATER**  
**1:45 P.M. – 3:45 P.M.**  
**SALON 3, DOUBLE TREE HOTEL SACRAMENTO, CA**

**Meeting Objectives**

- Increase awareness and consideration of water-dependent recreation and cultural uses, resources, practices and perspectives within water management decisions.
- Discuss statutory requirements for protecting recreational and cultural assets.
- Initial review and discussion on draft for Water-dependent Recreation RMS.

**Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review**

Judie Talbot, CCP Facilitator, opened the session with a review of the agenda and introductions around the room. She also provided an overview of Resource Management Strategies (RMSs) in the Water Plan and a recap of how new strategies have been introduced.

**Background**

Update 2005 of the California Water Plan included a new volume on RMSs, comprised of 25 strategies. Most of the strategies were focused on traditional water management issues: supply, water quality, water use efficiency and stewardship activities – one strategy looked at a different type of water use: water-dependent recreation. This was a brief chapter that introduced some of the key themes relating to water considerations and recreation.

In the 2009 Update, the Water-dependent Recreation strategy was significantly expanded. It also contained text that addressed the loss of cultural resources. During the Update 2009 outreach and engagement process, the Water Plan was encouraged to look at social aspects of water: the cultural and historic connections to water; how social perceptions influence water planning and management; and the role of outreach and education regarding water-related issues.

Update 2013 is responding to those suggestions by adding two new RMSs: Outreach and Education; and Culture and Water.

**Introduction: Relationships with Water**

Ms. Talbot observed that throughout the course of human existence, there have been individual and collective relationships with water. Water shapes our communities and our own personal experiences. A diagram was introduced to help illustrate the range of topics that surface when discussing people and water.



The topics were as follows:

- **Community Identity:** The location of many communities was dependent on the proximity to water. The legacy of community and economic relationships to water is celebrated through festivals and ceremonies. Even today, “Fleet Week” is a testament to the maritime history of the state.
- **Traditional Lifeways:** Water flows and riparian features are a fundamental component of traditional communities – spanning the range of Tribal communities to family ranches and farms. Those who live and work on the land have a daily relationship to water in the surrounding landscape.
- **Subsistence Activities:** Whether by choice or necessity, many depend on water-dependent and riparian resources for the fabric of their existence. This may include subsistence fishing, collection of medicinal plants, or the harvesting of foods and materials.
- **Recreation:** Water-dependent activities provide opportunities for exercise and relaxation. These activities can involve direct contact with water – such as swimming, boating, rafting, or sport fishing; or they can involve less direct contact with water – as with wildlife viewing, bike riding or picnicking along water ways. While turf sports (such as soccer or golf) occur on grass, and are water *intensive*, these are not considered as water-dependent recreation.
- **Historical Assets:** Much of California’s history as a state is directly tied to the availability of water. State Parks preserve the story and legacy of placer mining. Wooden plumes not only serve as reminders of early water diversions – they also continue to provide water supply in rural and mountain communities.
- **Perspectives on Water and Water Management:** Our ideas about water influence the level of support (for or against) regarding water planning and management options. These perspectives are shaped by our experiences and understanding of the issues.

## Links to RMSs

The above topics, that reflect the relationships of People and Water, are connected to a range of RMSs. For example, the water issues relating to subsistence activities are tied to the RMSs for water quality such as: Pollution Prevention, Ecosystem Restoration and Watershed Management. The issues of concern for traditional lifeways are likely to be discussed in the RMSs for Forest Management, Agricultural Lands Stewardship and Ecosystem Restoration.

Perspectives on water and water management are directly related to the RMS on Outreach and Education. This session will preview the Water-dependent Recreation RMS. An update will also be provided on the Culture and Water RMS, which addresses the topics of community identity and historical assets.



## **Water-Dependent Recreation RMS**

### **Presentation**

Cheryl Essex, with the Planning Division of State Parks, explained that she would be providing a walk-through of the Water-dependent RMS and seeking input on how to improve the document. She started off with a presentation on background information that is pertinent to the content of the RMS.

Recreation is a vital economic driver in California and recreationists view proximity to water as highly desirable. State Parks conducts user surveys every 5 years and more than half of the population partakes in water-dependent recreation. California is second only to New York in terms of foreign visitors. Two-thirds of all visitors engage in water sports or sunbathing.

There are significant protections for public access to waterways. Ms. Essex listed Federal statutes that protect public access to navigable waterways, beaches and lakes. Similarly, California has requirements to protect access to waters and to protect public trust uses. More specifically, there are state and local directives to provide for recreational opportunities.

Planning for, and managing, water-dependent recreation ties into several Water Plan objectives. Multi-objective planning can provide recreational opportunities while providing benefits for:

- environmental stewardship
- integrated flood management
- data collection and sharing
- Tribal water and natural resources
- equitable distribution of benefits

A CalTrout video of fly-fishing on the Pit River was played, which highlighted the dynamics of instream flows, fisheries and fly-fishing experiences.

### **Walk-through of Draft RMS**

#### *Benefits*

Ms. Essex described how water-dependent recreation provides public health benefits and opportunities to refresh and relax. Interactions with nature and other recreationists promote an environmental stewardship ethic and sense of larger community. The American River Parkway provides multiple benefits: the floodplain accommodates high water flows and creates a wildlife corridor; there are rowing facilities and bike paths; and a fish hatchery has been established.



### *Costs*

Potential costs include: facility development (e.g., structures, boat ramps, access), operation and maintenance, planning and data costs, and land acquisition.

### *Challenges*

There are several key drivers that pose challenges to water-dependent recreation:

- rising seas will restrict access
- reduced snow pack reduces snow sports, as well as summer lake and river levels
- cities and counties are struggling to keep parks open, reduced hours and aging facilities may lead to closures
- degraded habitat reduces fishing and hunting stock
- impaired water quality limits body contact
- invasive aquatic species reduces boating access
- California children have less contact with natural resources than ever before.

### **Discussion**

Session participants were asked to think about their own experiences with water-dependent recreation and to identify key aspects that should be included in the RMS to help inform water resource management decisions. The goal is telling the RMS story to a broad audience, including water managers. The responses are summarized below:

#### *Benefits (and associated challenge)*

Comment: Hot springs provide therapeutic benefits that should be connected with recreation. Geothermal energy development is impacting hot springs and water quality. Tribes are especially aware of these trends.

Comment: Provide examples of public health benefits associated with outdoor recreation, reference studies and resources that others can point to.

Response: The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism can provide examples.

### *Costs*

Comment: Public access often comes at a cost – there are fees and permits required for use. This is contradictory. The background section needs to explain why there are costs for using these resources – which might be very difficult in some cases.

Response: Case law has set precedence to allow fees and the process for imposing fees.

Comment: Regardless of law, a critical piece of the story involves cost to the individual and equitable distribution of benefits.



*Challenges*

Comment: There can be public safety issues around competing recreational uses. For example: dredging and swimming, fishing and swimming, boating (motorized and non-motorized) and swimming, snow boards versus cross-country skiing.

Comment: Hydroelectric projects affect water releases and flows affect fisheries.

Comment: Poor water quality can cause health problems with submersion and water contact (including irritation of skin, eyes, ears, nose and throat)

Comment: There are liability issues that may restrict certain types of recreation. For example, some reservoirs or lakes will allow motorized boats and others will not.

Comment: Regarding invasive species, water districts may not understand how to address this issue through an integrated approach. Water districts may have to deal with the effects of invasives on infrastructure, without having influence over the processes where the species are being brought in. Some lakes require a thorough inspection of boats, but other lakes do not. There is a need for consortiums and a regional coordination.

Response: It would be helpful to have sources that give examples of best management approaches.

Comment: Water resources are managed for a variety of uses. The natural rivers are over-allocated and it is challenges to balance all the interests. Our county has a recreational lake that is owned and operated by PG&E. Water levels are being lowered for instream flows, which diminishes lake recreation opportunities.

Comment: In other areas, instream releases are made to accommodate instream recreation.

Comment: Likewise, removal of diversion dams may benefit fish passage while negatively impacting another use.

Comment: There is a major issue that our upcoming youth are more interested in indoor activities, rather than outdoor activities. This has implications for planning and budgets.

Comment: It is a huge challenge for recreation planners to convey that indoor activities need to be balanced with outdoor activities. This is important for individual health and protection of our natural areas. People need to be outside in order to appreciate these areas.

Response: The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism created the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights to focus attention on that issue and describe the benefits associated with 10 children's activities.

Comment: Access to navigable water has been compromised by Homeland Security measures. Also, environmental and public health is sold out through the sale and transfer of water.



### *Terminology*

Comment: The term “project” is used extensively in the Water Plan. Terminology should be included in a glossary to provide a standard definition. Where a discussion deviates from the standard definition, explain what is meant for a particular discussion.

Action Item: Flag the “project” definition and the need for consistency among RMSs.

### **Next Steps**

- The [cwpc@water.ca.gov](mailto:cwpc@water.ca.gov) email for comments will be posted online.
- Participants are asked to look at the recommendations for the Water-dependent Recreation RMS sit if they fit within the broader discussion of water and recreation. The recommendations must supported by text in the document – either addressing a challenge or maximizing a benefit maximized.
- Please submit RMS comments by Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **Culture and Water RMS Update**

### **Overview**

Kimberly Johnston-Dodds, DWR Tribal Liaison, introduced the new RMS for Culture and Water and noted that her presentation will build on some of the concepts discussed for water-dependent recreation. The Culture and Water RMS involves a wide range of issues and diverse participants. There are different cultures in the state that are very connected with water, beyond recreational use. Some of the issues for cultural and recreational use may be similar – since both areas involve people with close relationships to water. There are also conflicting uses between recreation and native lifeways.

As co-author for the chapter on Culture and Water, Ms. Johnston-Dodds is focusing on Tribal relationships with water. This new RMS provides a venue for informing various audiences of the Water Plan about what is important to different cultures and communities. She remarked that the CalTrout video featured the Pit River, where anglers and PG&E worked together on restoration. This river is vital to the Pit River Tribe and other California Native Americans.

The RMSs for recreation and culture will cross-reference to provide consistency with language. The Culture and Water RMS provides an opportunity to voice cultural perspectives and issues. The goal is to create a framework for informed decision-making. There are two focus areas: historical and cultural resources; and Tribal and traditional communities. In working with Tribes, the process is different from developing other RMSs. Informal listening sessions are being convened to discuss this topic with Tribal leaders and traditional practitioners.



### **Walk-through of Annotated RMS Outline**

The goal for the Culture and Water RMS is to increase the awareness and understanding of relationships to water beyond use and supply. It will look at the diverse range of perspectives on natural resources. It will look at local knowledge. Whether provided by fishermen or Tribal practitioners there is an understanding of local processes by those who are closely connected to the land and water. Tribal members have knowledge about traditional management practices that contribute to effective water resource management.

Representing rich oral histories and lifeways through text is a challenging proposal. Photos can help bridge cultural differences and convey cultural interactions with water. A USFS interpretive display served as an example of using photographs to capture cultural traditions.

The major themes for this RMS are to highlight:

- cultural relationships to water (perspectives, places, practices)
- statutory frameworks and policies
- approaches for collaborating with Tribes

The Resources Agency is developing a state policy on Tribal consultation, which includes a component on Tribal Ecological Knowledge. Resource Agency departments, including DWR, will be working to effect the commitments within that consultation policy. The Culture and Water RMS can serve as a model on Tribal consultation, by going to Tribal communities and meeting face-to-face to listen and gather information on Tribal perspectives. Tribes will be asked to identify what they see as fitting in this chapter.

Question: The RMSs on Outreach and Education, as well as Culture and Water, seem more fundamental. Other RMSs seem to be more oriented towards objectives and outcomes. Will there be a distinction between the two types of RMSs?

Response: Several overarching themes were identified throughout the process of Update 2009, including groundwater data, climate change, flood management, and outreach and education. The Water Plan project team looked at options to elevate those themes. For example, caucuses were formed to address groundwater management, flood management, water technology and disadvantaged communities/environmental justice. Another caucus is working on developing a finance framework. Local information from these caucus efforts are being incorporated into the Regional Reports. People and Water is a little bit different as a theme – stakeholders suggested Outreach and Education as an RMS; and the Culture and Water RMS was suggested at a Tribal workshop.

Comment: Tribes have special concerns regarding indigenous hunting rights and the ability to gather foods and medicines to support healthy families. Federally reserved water rights must be protected.