

## Water Plan Regional Workshop Summary – Bakersfield, CA

### OVERVIEW

The 2009 update of the California Water Plan, Bulletin 160 (Water Plan) is based on a collaborative approach that engages a wide range of stakeholders and the public in a variety of ways. The Water Plan team is receiving recommendations from a standing Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from 18 State agencies, and an Advisory Committee, with 39 representatives from organizations representing statewide interests. The involvement of regional and local interests is brought in through a series of public workshops conducted in each hydrologic region.

Each workshop consists of three major presentations to describe: the Water Plan, Regional Reports, and regional approach. Immediately following each presentation, workshop participants engage in brainstorming discussions in a small group format. A workshop for the Tulare Lake hydrologic region was held on August 8, 2007 in Bakersfield, CA. Copies of the workshop presentations, handouts, and materials are available on the Water Plan website at [www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/materials](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/materials).

A brief recap of the presentations is provided in the following paragraphs and the remainder of this document provides a summary of the small group discussions. Flip charts were used to record ideas generated during the discussions and transcripts of the flip charts are located at the end of this document.

Paul Dabbs, Project Manager for Update 2009, presented an overview of the Water Plan Update process. This presentation described the approach and structure for the 2005 Update, as well as the process for the 2009 Update – including meeting schedule and opportunities for involvement, key activities and work products, and related content. The major sections of the Update include: data on water supply, use, and quality; water planning scenarios; water management strategies; Regional Reports; and reference materials and technical reports. Following this presentation, workshop participants were asked to identify additional items that should be considered for inclusion in the Water Plan.

In the second presentation, Paula Landis, Chief of the San Joaquin District for the Department of Water Resources (DWR), reviewed the Regional Report for the Tulare Lake hydrologic region. Each regional report describes regional data and hydrologic conditions, regional challenges and accomplishments, and regional water planning efforts. The discussion related to this presentation asked for suggestions to improve the content of the Regional Report for the Tulare Lake area. Participants were also asked to identify and provide contact information for good sources in obtaining and verifying regional data sets.

The final presentation, by Judie Talbot, workshop facilitator, recapped the regional approach proposed for updating the Water Plan. The approach uses regional workshops, an annual regional forum, and an annual plenary session to bring in local perspectives, issues, and concerns into the Update process. The ensuing discussion asked for recommendations to: improve the proposed approach; encourage the continuation of regional dialogue on water management; and identify others who need to be part of the regional conversation on water.

The workshops also included brief presentations on related statewide water initiatives, including the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) grants program, Flood Safe program, and Statewide Water Analysis Network (SWAN). The SWAN is an open forum of technical expertise that serves as a technical advisory group to Update 2009.

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### **DISCUSSION ON WATER PLAN CONTENT**

After hearing the presentation on the approach, content, and structure of Update 2009, workshop participants were asked to brainstorm other topics that should be considered for inclusion in the Water Plan. Workshop attendees were specifically asked to think about regional issues and concerns that might benefit from additional attention. Three key themes that emerged during the group reports included:

- a. the availability, reliability, and affordability of drinking water
- b. better definition of IRWM planning regions – these should correlate with B160 regions; would allow better integration
- c. groundwater issues: overdraft/sustainability; water quality (arsenic and nitrates in Alpaugh community wells)

Other topics that were identified by multiple group reports included:

- d. economic factors: water pricing; economic considerations regarding alternative supply (e.g. water recycling)
- e. agricultural consideration: water quality, ag land conservation, water use efficiency
- f. planning coordination: integration of water planning with land use planning, Basin Plans
- g. supply: additional storage, reliability, drought/shortages, infrastructure improvements
- h. B160 should identify potential solutions to both specific regional and statewide water problems (e.g. enlarge Friant/Kern Canal, new surface and groundwater storage)

### **DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL REPORT CONTENT**

The discussion groups suggested a wide range of additional topics that might be included in the Regional Reports:

- a. regional data:
  - more land use planning information
  - discuss urban development issues/population growth
  - include issues that affect regional water imports (e.g. Delta concerns) and needed amounts
  - information that streamline lengthy institutional processes (e.g. Water Boards point of use permits; exchange water agreements between multiple agencies)
  - identify areas with special sensitivity (from planning departments)
  - include status of legislation related to water quantity and water supply
  - discuss sustainable strategies for providing water to rural and disadvantaged communities (rural water systems, etc.)
  - funding issues: operational and maintenance costs not covered by grant programs
  - regulatory setting; some local ordinances/regulations undermine water conservation

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- b. water supply/demand/quality data:
  - mapping of groundwater conditions, supply, and quality – partner with USGS to determine amount of San Joaquin Valley groundwater; show saltwater intrusion
  - validate and provide better access to all groundwater data
  - surface water treatment – Alta Irrigation District
  - water banking – Friant Irrigation District, CIS
- c. challenges/opportunities, accomplishments:
  - discuss uses for dairy wastes – effluent is not suitable for sensitive crops
  - promote wastewater treatment plants, instead of septic, for problem areas and for new development – combine with recycling infrastructure to provide new supply
- d. resource management strategies:
  - renewed focus on reuse and recharge projects that are economically feasible and protect environmental resources
- e. regional planning:
  - Upper Kings River Forum
  - protect existing and new water supplies (water quality)
  - coordinate with regional plans and Basin Plans
- f. reference:
  - expand mapping/GIS data:
    - table of existing plans (show on map) – generation and type of water plans
    - GIS and extent of groundwater contamination
    - possible point source locations
    - age and conditions of drinking water systems and wastewater systems
    - socio-economic data (water rates as percentage of household income)
    - detailed surface hydrology maps

### ***DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL APPROACH, OUTREACH, AND NETWORKING***

At the workshop, participants viewed the regional approach as being the right approach and effective in stimulating communication between regional agencies and organizations. Additional strategies and contacts were suggested for successful regional outreach and involvement:

- a. evaluate representation:
  - leverage outreach: use mailing lists and newsletters of other organizations: California Partnership for the Valley, regional ACWA agendas and email, “friant Waterline”
  - involve other stakeholders:
    - water committee of Farm Bureau; Water Associations: Kings River, Tule River, Kaweah and St. Johns Rivers; Kern County Water Authority
    - resource conservation districts; watershed groups and coordinators (Dept. of Conservation); local environmental/resource groups; private lands covered by wildlife/conservation easements; large landholders in unincorporated areas
    - cities, counties, County Boards of Supervisors, legislators
    - engineering research centers (smart water systems)

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- b. regional follow-up:
- create water district advisory committees that work with County supervisors
  - grades posted for local/regional plans that are approved by DWR
  - before next workshop – report on previous workshop topics and progress; post-workshop minutes
  - web-based forum to track and discuss topics; ability to email comments
  - regional website created by and for regionals – provide clearinghouse of what efforts are occurring; include important legislative updates involving regions
  - follow-up and outreach once Update 2009 is completed
  - explore using existing coalitions to coordinate on-going discussions pertaining to development of the Water Plan
  - integrate multiple regional plans and minimize adverse actions early on
  - identify inter-regional interests and considerations; queue up conversations on inter-regional systems and concerns; address costs associated with inter-regional efforts and interests (beneficiaries, cost structures)

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

At the close of the workshop, Paul Dabbs and Paula Landis expressed thanks to all who attended and participated in the session. A special thank you was extended to the California Water Service Company for hosting the workshop.

A final reminder was given to participants on contacts for the Water Plan: Ernie Taylor is the point of contact for regional coordination in the San Joaquin District. He can be contacted via email at [etaylor@water.ca.gov](mailto:etaylor@water.ca.gov) or by phone at (559) 230-3352. Paul Dabbs, project manager, provides general oversight for Update 2009 and can be contacted via email at [pdabbs@water.ca.gov](mailto:pdabbs@water.ca.gov) or by phone at (916) 653-5666.

**CWP Regional Workshop – Flip Chart Transcripts  
Tulare Lake Region - Bakersfield, August 8, 2007**

**Table A**

*Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:*

- identify regional water problems
- how are “regions” defined for purposes of IRWM; IRWM regions defined same as Bulletin 160 with sub areas
- umbrella regional plan
- governance favors smaller regions
- coordination of land use and water use boundaries
- water quality: salinity and nutrient issues with both surface and groundwater

*Suggestions regarding regional reports:*

- more land use planning information
- more emphasis and maps regarding groundwater conditions, quality, and supply
- need access to all available groundwater data
- include issues that effect regional water imports and needed amounts
- information to help streamline long institutional processes for water needs
  - SWRCB point of use water permits
  - exchange water agreements with multiple agencies (federal, state, local)
- CWP should identify potential solutions to both specific regional and statewide water problems (e.g. enlarge Friant/Kern Canal; new surface and groundwater storage)
- State should partner with US Geological Survey to define amount of San Joaquin Valley groundwater
- saltwater contamination of groundwater aquifers
- identify areas with special environmental sensitivity (from planning departments)
- discuss uses for dairy waste problems – effluent is not suitable for sensitive crops

*Regional outreach and networking:*

- have ACWA regional coordinators put CWP information on their regional agendas and email lists
- water district advisory committees that work with County supervisors (find contact info from County Supervisors’ front office)
- look for water committee under County Farm Bureau or State Farm Bureau
- Three Rivers District? (Springvale on Tule River)
- Kings River Water Association (contact the manager)
- Kaweah and St. Johns Rivers Association; Tule River Association
- Kern County Water Authority for Kern River issues and future IRWM
- there are resource conservation districts along the valley [Paula Landis has info]
- hard to hear – use separate breakout rooms
- consider district newsletters (e.g. “Friant Waterline”) – contact Ron Jacobsma
- California Partnership for the Valley has large mailing list

**CWP Regional Workshop – Flip Chart Transcripts  
Tulare Lake Region - Bakersfield, August 8, 2007**

**Table B**

*Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:*

Top issues:

- \* environmental justice – availability, reliability, and affordability of drinking water (links to growth and water supply)
- \* agricultural water use efficiency
- \* current groundwater quality problems (arsenic and nitrates in community wells at Alpaugh)

Other issues:

- water quality (agricultural)
- agricultural land conservation
- recycling (example of economics)

*Suggestions regarding regional reports:*

- surface water treatment – Alta Irrigation District
- water banking – Friant Irrigation District, CID
- Upper Kings River Forum
- mapping/GIS:
  - table of existing plans (show on map) – generation and type of water plans
  - GIS and extent of groundwater contamination
  - possible point source locations
  - age and conditions of drinking water systems and wastewater systems
  - socio-economic data (water rates as percentage of household income)
  - detailed surface hydrology maps
- status of legislation regarding water quantity and water quality

*Regional outreach and networking:*

- County Boards of Supervisors
- Department of Conservation: watershed groups and coordinators
- before the next workshop – report on previous workshop topics and progress and post-workshop minutes
- web-based forum to track and discuss topics; email comments
- follow-up and outreach once Update 2009 is completed
- local environmental/resources groups
- grades posted for local/regional plans that are approved by DWR
- planning vs. implementation

**CWP Regional Workshop – Flip Chart Transcripts  
Tulare Lake Region - Bakersfield, August 8, 2007**

**Table C**

*Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:*

Top issues:

- \* safe supplies for new development and disadvantaged communities
- \* better coordination between Water Plan and Basin Plans
- \* build upon what's already been done

Other issues:

- funding needed to update the Basin Plans
- better integration of Water Plan with IRWMPs
- regional land use planning better incorporated into State Water Plan
- effectively address regional groundwater overdraft
- look at additional water storage

*Suggestions regarding regional reports:*

- sustainable regional water strategies
- ensure that existing and new water supplies are protected (water quality)
- renewed focus on reuse and recharge projects (engineered economically and providing environmental protection)
- encourage regional wastewater treatment plants, instead of septic tanks, for problem areas and in areas of new development (relates to new supply)
- develop strategy for providing sustainable water to rural communities (rural water systems, etc.)
- funding does not currently address operational and maintenance costs
- water conservation: some local ordinances/regulations undermine conservation

*Regional outreach and networking:*

- approach is missing coordination with regional plans and Basin Plans
- improve usefulness/comprehensiveness of existing water data
- explore using existing coalitions to coordinate on-going discussions pertaining to development of the Water Plan
- regional website that is by and for regions; provide "clearinghouse" of what efforts are occurring
- who else to involve:
  1. cities/counties
  2. engineering research centers (smart water systems)
  3. large landowners in unrepresented/unincorporated areas
  4. private land areas covered by wildlife/conservation easements (not lands that are part of an established conservancy)

**CWP Regional Workshop – Flip Chart Transcripts  
Tulare Lake Region - Bakersfield, August 8, 2007**

**Table D**

*Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:*

Top issues:

- \* addressing cost factors; keeping water affordable
- \* need to get decision-makers involved early on
- \* putting sub-regions together as a unified regions (fits into the Blueprint planning process)

Other issues:

- regional water problems
- shortages due to Delta issues
- too much development in Kern County; upland areas along I-5
- groundwater overdraft/sustainability
- greater cooperation/coordination among stakeholders
- drought, water pricing, water availability, water management
- improving infrastructure

*Suggestions regarding regional reports:*

- develop statewide incentives for increasing efficiency or sustainability for coordination of regional plans
- discussion on urban development issues
- discussion on land use
- water portfolios
- validate groundwater (and all) data
- population growth
- there are a lot of issues connected with water that need to be considered – don't lose sight that the primary focus is on water supply and availability

*Regional outreach and networking:*

- approach: good regional report
- how can all plans be connected?
- how can we integrate multiple regional plans and minimize adverse actions early on, from one region to the next?
- keep connectivity between regions
- establish inter-regional interests
- need to address costs associated with inter-regional efforts and interests (definition of beneficiary, look at who pays)
- how do you que up conversations on inter-regional systems/concerns?
- address or acknowledge inter-regional considerations in the regional reports
- watershed management
- topics of discussions for future workshops (pre-workshop survey)
- send out important legislative updates involving regions
- identify funding resources
- involve legislators