

Water Plan Regional Workshop Summary – El Dorado Hills, 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 San Joaquin hydrologic region and Delta area was held on August 13, 2007 in Stockton, CA. Copies of the workshop presentations, handouts, and materials are available on the Water Plan website at 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.

Kamyar Guivetchi, Program 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, Karl Winkler, Chief of the Central District for the Department of Water Resources (DWR), and Paul Dabbs, Project Manager for Update 2009, reviewed the Regional Reports for the Delta and San Joaquin areas. 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 Delta and San Joaquin areas. 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. addressing “area of origin” protection statues and water rights in water allocations
- b. drought protection and small storage projects, meadow restoration, reoperation
- c. water quality (mercury, arsenic, copper, pesticides)

Other topics that were identified by multiple group reports included:

- d. add new term to address mountain water resources in cracked rock as “sub-surface retention and storage systems”
- e. all regional reports should identify source of water
- f. risks to upper watershed: climate change, catastrophic fire, flood peaks
- g. supply: reliability; regional self-sufficiency for water resources; leveraging stormwater
- h. recognize, address, and reconcile regulatory implications for project review and permitting (e.g. reuse of stormwater and wastewater)
- i. dedicated funding for small water systems, recycling, wastewater treatment
- j. need better coordination between planning and water agencies (growth, land use); acknowledge and support collaborative projects and planning

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:
 - improve watershed discussions and terminology; assign a value to watershed functions/services; look at watershed viability and “carrying capacity”
 - expand information on the FERC process and how it impacts water (e.g. local supplies, in-stream flows)
 - include interstate systems and issues
 - emphasize importance of area of origin to State’s water balance (65%), economy
 - bring in land use and energy policies; public lands management
 - focus on unique aspects of the region
 - add separate sections for: water supply; supply reliability; agricultural water use; water quality and contaminants; hydro; ecosystem impacts; fire/forest management
 - need regional schematic
 - identify regional and State priorities
 - use IRWMP summaries of status, challenges, strategies
 - include conservation measures (current and historic); conveyance systems

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- b. water supply/demand/quality data:
 - in the section on “looking to the future,” consider what might be possible with smaller reservoirs/storage scattered throughout the region
 - add statements of diversions, appropriated water rights
 - include the relationships between fractured rock and groundwater in the Sierra
 - evaluate other flow regulators (meadows, forests) in absence of snowpack
 - quantify losses (potential savings) from aging conveyance facilities (open canals)
 - evaluate infrastructure needs: for replacing aging systems and for new development
 - “demand offset” – how is conserved water used
- c. identify sources of data used in regional report challenges:
 - environmental concerns: in-stream flows, endangered species
 - address and reconcile regulatory conflicts
- d. resource management strategies:
 - include conjunctive use opportunities
 - add meadow restoration (unique to mountains)
 - multi-objective reservoir reoperation
- e. regional planning:
 - use IRWM cases studies: describe how plan was developed and priority projects being implemented
 - provide links to IRWMPs, describe status, discuss IRWMP implementation and funding strategies
 - include screening component of alternatives and issues

DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL APPROACH, OUTREACH, AND NETWORKING

At the workshop, participants commended DWR for developing a good foundation for the regional approach. Additional strategies and contacts were suggested for successful regional outreach and involvement:

- a. process suggestions:
 - include breakout sessions
 - don't limit large group discussion
 - clarify expectations for the workshop
 - find right balance of information needed for groups to be productive
 - need water at tables, breaks, cookies
 - best Water Plan process so far, with regional outreach and bottom up approach
 - diversify workshop locations
 - provide workshop materials in advance

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- b. evaluate representation:
 - watershed groups, conservation groups, resource conservation districts
 - flood control districts, recreation districts, community services (fire, vector control)
 - academics
 - county and city government (planning and land use); county supervisors; legislative staff
 - local, state, federal land managers (including BLM, USFS, National Park Service)
 - coordinate outreach with existing networks
 - FERC, Ca. Energy Commission
 - cattlemen's association, river rafters group, land trusts, churches, farm bureaus, private sector groups, Mokelumne River Forum, Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
- c. regional follow-up:
 - create working groups to address content
 - develop multiple drafts of regional reports, specify report timeline
 - get agency representatives involved in writing sections of the water plan
 - provide future schedule and highlight key events
 - create a repository for people to send comments and information

CLOSING REMARKS

At the close of the workshop, Kamyar Guivetchi expressed thanks to all who attended and participated in the session. A special thank you was extended to the Natural Resources Institute and School of Engineering and Computer Science, University of the Pacific, for hosting the workshop.

A final reminder was given to participants on contacts for the Water Plan: Pierre Stephens is serving as the point of contact for regional coordination in the Central District. He can be contacted via email at jrstephe@water.ca.gov or by phone at (916) 651-0700. Ernie Taylor is the regional lead for the San Joaquin District of DWR. Ernie can be contacted via email at 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 or by phone at (916) 653-5666.

CWP Regional Workshop – Flip Chart Transcripts
No. Lahontan Region and Mountain Counties Area – El Dorado Hills, August 10, 2007

Table A

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * resource allocation
- * climate change
- * making water recycling affordable

Other issues:

- recharge watershed
- identify IRWM plan
- water quality

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- improve watershed discussions and terminology in regional reports
- new term and definition: “sub-surface retention and storage systems” to refer to and address mountain counties water resources (not “groundwater”)
- IRWM case studies: how plan was developed; priority projects being implemented
- make mountain counties its own region (remove “special area” label)
- assign a “value” (dollars or points) to the headwaters in the estuary plan

Regional outreach and networking:

- not limiting discussions [report outs] to the top two
- include breakout sessions
- background on Water Plan, groups, agencies issues
- clarify the expectations of the day
- prioritization of issues for the regions
- involve other stakeholders:
 - watershed groups
 - resource conservation districts
 - conservation groups
 - academics
 - county and city government (planning, land use)
 - community services (fire)
 - local, state, and federal land managers
 - coordinate contact list with existing networks

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Table B

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * address “area of origin” and “rights” and rule in water allocation
- * drought protection for supplies
- * water quality (agricultural runoff)

Other issues:

- floodplain and FEMA designations
- private levee evaluation and restoration
- recognition incentives for compliance and upkeep
- need clarification and consistency for terms relating to water uses – currently, they don’t match with how the Water Rights Division of the Water Boards defines water use
- look at whether Water Plan is growth inducing
- all regional reports should identify source of water

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- add statements of diversion, appropriated water rights
- addresses losses (potential savings) because of antiquated conveyance (open canals)
- infrastructure needs: for replacing aging systems and for new development
- reliability (redundancy)
- mitigation requirements need to be followed-up (QA/QC)
- integrate wastewater treatment with water supply
- in the section on “looking to the future” consider what might be possible with smaller reservoirs/storage scattered throughout the region
- expand information on FERC process and how it impacts water (e.g. in-stream flow dedication)
- definition and assignment of values – broaden concept of cost/benefit analysis to value non-property value only

Regional outreach and networking:

- need breaks and water at tables; cookies; fewer lectures
- involve other stakeholders
 - FERC, Ca. Energy Commission
 - flood control districts; resource conservation districts; recreation districts
 - National Park Service
 - cattlemen’s association
 - river rafters group
 - land trusts

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Table C

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * water quality for the State depends on water quality at the source (e.g. mountain counties origin); from the source down
- * self-sufficiency in regions (e.g. desal in coastal areas); regional reports should identify water supplies in their own region
- * water plans need to recognize or give greater weight to multi-stakeholder efforts

Other issues:

- Water Plan needs to take into consideration population increase and protection of water rights
- Plan needs to recognize regulatory agency planning and coordination, permitting, and project review (rural vs. urban)

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- how to address inter-state systems and issues?
- population growth in rural/farm infrastructure
- include recycled water
- “demand off-set” – how is conserved water used?
- describe watershed viability and the region’s “carrying capacity” – how close are we to full utilization?
- describe relations of mountain counties watershed to State’s water balance (65%)
- emphasize the importance of area of origin to State’s economy, environment, etc.
- mountain counties are stewards of a large portion of State’s water – “downstream” water users should help support/fund their activities
- State government needs to recognize and support the area of origin’s stewardship
- need to bring in land use and energy policies

Regional outreach and networking:

- best Water Plan process so far – good to have the regional outreach
- good/helpful to mountain counties to fill information gaps – how to define the mountain counties in the Water Plan
- diversify workshop locations (more mini-workshops, webcasts); options to address the rural/long-distance nature of region
- craft a process to get content – as a working group (CAFÉ format)
- others who need to be involved:
 - National Forest Service and other federal agencies
 - watershed groups

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Table D

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * funding is key need: dedicated funding to rural water systems (supply and quality); more funding for recycling and for wastewater treatment systems
- * new surface storage evaluations needed – consider reoperation and off-stream studies
- * discuss water exchange opportunities involving surface and groundwater

Other issues:

- need recommendations to improve planning coordination between county planning agencies and water agencies – related to growth and resource needs
- mountain counties issue of regionalization – ways to provide funding and services to small, rural communities within District service area
- water systems should maximize flexibility to deal with droughts and climate change

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- identify sources of data used in regional report
- update of characterization
 - regionalization
 - urbanization
 - agricultural growth
- conjunctive use opportunities
 - water quality concerns (arsenic, copper, temperature)
 - multiple beneficiaries
- environmental concerns
 - in-stream flows
 - special status species

Regional outreach and networking:

- multiple drafts of regional reports – what are the timelines for the regional report?
- reach out to technical staff in IRWMPs
- get information to ACWA regions through ACWA newsletters
- build in more networking time at the workshops (perhaps 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. time slot)
- less PowerPoint slides, less background, less reiteration – give people enough information to be productive
- provide workshop information in advance

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Table E

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * look above dams at watersheds that feed into reservoirs below for improved water quality and water supply
- * what are the real risks to the upper watershed and how are they being addressed? by whom?
 - catastrophic fire
 - flooding – flash/peak flows
 - climate change (snow melt/snow pack; increased runoff)

Other issues:

- key is to implement

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- identify funding sources for project implementation
- discuss public lands management (federal) and working landscapes (farms, ranches)
- look at worst-case drought scenarios
- quantify value of watershed potentials (i.e. water quantity and quality) to provide community values (environment, supply, fire safety)
- integration of growth vs. water resources (i.e. land uses based on available water)

Regional outreach and networking:

- yes, right approach
- include private sector groups
- include churches, farm bureaus, cities
- include BLM and Forest Service

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Table F

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * water supply focus; water supply upstream, storage, reliability
- * water quality (mercury, temperature)
- * climate change will impact mountain counties very much

Other issues:

- endangered species
- streamline process for new storage; storage projects are easily derailed by environmental lawsuits
- fire/forest management and water supply impacts
- aging and deteriorating infrastructure
- competition for funding
- dredging for storage and flow capacity – why has this stopped?

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- focus on unique issues of the region
- recognize IRWMP efforts and multi-agency coordination
- hydro (FERC relicensing) needs to be reported out; leverage FERC efforts
- recreation impacts: benefits for upstream and downstream interests; economic benefits
- funding for mountain counties (storage) such as it benefits the Delta
- area of origin protection statutes
- impact of increased population on water supply and the environment
- add meadow restoration (unique to mountains)
- downstream flooding
- add sections on: agricultural use of water; water quality; hydro; ecosystem impacts; and fire management

Regional outreach and networking:

- coming to regions is essential
- bottom-up approach is good
- get agency representatives engaged in writing sections of the water plan
- involve other stakeholders
 - watershed coordinators
 - county supervisors
 - legislative staff

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Table G

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * consider other agencies (SWRCB and DPH) and permitting when proposing strategies
- * leverage flood control for water supply
- * consider water rights issues in Water Plan (including groundwater)

Other issues:

- reuse: consistent regulations are needed to allow re-use of stormwater and wastewater
- water supply is not defined as a beneficial use during PG&E CPUC hearings (Pacific Land Stewardship Council)
- address transfers and flexibility issues between regions
- consider how increasingly stringent water quality standards will affect water supply and availability
- prioritize “global” projects (e.g. leaking infrastructure fixes)
- consider county-of-origin rights when doing downstream stormwater re-use
- give extra-credit for inter-regional projects/cooperation

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- use IRWMP summaries of status, challenges, strategies/projects; encourage adjoining IRWMPs to coordinate regional write-ups
- provide links to IRWMP and status
- include wastewater disposal and reuse in challenges and strategies sections
- how are IRWMPs being implemented? regional integration – links to other IRWMPs; financing/cash flow for smaller groups; recognize/support regional projects in CWP
- priorities:
 - identify regional priorities; set state priorities
 - how can state help give options, flexibility
 - emphasize clarity; understand regulatory issues; address regulatory conflicts
 - standardize cumulative impacts context
- need regional schematic

Regional outreach and networking:

- communicate future schedule, highlight key events
- sent draft CWP content to IRWMP stakeholders/review group
- cookies for afternoon
- document a repository for people to send information for the Water Plan
- clarify if focus is on region or entire Water Plan
- how to handle groups that are in multiple regions?
- involve other stakeholders
 - Mokelumne River Form
 - vector control districts
 - Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

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Table H

Regional considerations to include in Update 2009:

Top issues:

- * future non-consumptive use scenarios
- * plan for public outreach for conservation
- * impact of aging infrastructure

Other issues:

- climate change
- how to blend state/local water plans
- ensure mountain counties are not consumed by other regional interests
- address impacts of wildfire on water quality and quantity
- develop and implement salinity plan

Suggestions regarding regional reports:

- separate sections for water supply, water quality, flood control and supply reliability, ecosystem, recreation, integration (add more bullets to #5 in outline)
- include conservation measures (current and historical)
- include the relationships between fractured rock and groundwater specifically in the Sierra
- discuss contaminants (e.g. mercury, pesticides) above dams and in headwaters
- multi-objective reservoir reoperation
- evaluate other flow regulators (meadows, forests) in absence of adequate snowpack
- include challenges and solutions in other regions that may help mountain counties
- description of conveyance facilities evaluated
- include screening component of alternatives and issues

Regional outreach and networking:

- more meeting throughout regions at each planning stage
- widely distribute meeting material to request written comments (via web link)
- more cookies
- more breaks for networking opportunities
- not being afraid of “big” group discussion [i.e. group of the whole]