

**CWP Colorado River Regional Workshop Summary
Desert Hot Springs, CA – March 4, 2008**

OVERVIEW

As in the prior update, the 2009 Update of the California Water Plan includes a volume consisting of Regional Reports, which describe the conditions for each hydrologic region in the State – as well as two areas of special interest (the Delta and Mountain Counties areas). Each regional report uses a standardized format in describing the current conditions for each region or area. The content for each report is being developed with the involvement of regional and local interests through a series of public workshops conducted in each region or area.

Each workshop consists of three major presentations to describe: an update on the state of Update 2009 activities; revision of Regional Report outlines, based on previous workshop results; and overview of the initial draft outline. For each workshop, most of the time is dedicated to small group review and comment of the initial draft outline of the Regional Report for that region or area. A workshop for the Colorado River hydrologic region was held on March 4, 2008 in Desert Hot Springs, 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 and worksheets were used to record ideas generated during the discussions and transcripts of the recorded results are located on the following pages.

Kamyar Guivetchi, Program Manager for Update 2009, made the first presentation regarding the status of major 2009 Update activities. A key element is the integration of the FloodSafe and IRWM (Integrated Regional Water Management) programs with the Water plan. This new content will be reflected in each Regional Report, as well as the scenarios and Resource Management Strategies (RMS). Other additions to the Water Plan include: quantification of scenarios and potential response packages; assessment of climate change impacts and recommended adaptation actions; and incorporation of other State plans with strong connections to the Water Plan.

Outreach efforts to regional, Tribal, and local interests are continuing to expand. A total of six drafts will be available for each Regional Reports and RMS, with opportunities to comment on the five drafts preceding the final report. Workshop sessions for RMS will occur during July and August 2008, with a conference line to facilitate participation. In addition to the feedback solicited for Regional Reports and RMS, review and comment is requested by June 30, 2008 for the Draft Assumptions and Estimate report released at the end of 2007.

In the second presentation, Mark Stuart, Chief of the Southern District for the Department of Water Resources (DWR), reviewed the key characteristics of the Colorado River hydrologic region. A recap of the comments heard during the previous workshop was also provided, along with a revised outline for the Regional Report format. The final presentation, by Vern Knoop and David Inouye of the Southern District for DWR, described each section of the Regional Report for the Colorado River region. Workshop attendees reviewed, discussed, and provided suggestions for each section, as recorded on the following pages.

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Suggestions for Topics in Regional Report Outline

- subsidence aspects, including economic impacts (infrastructure damage, pumping costs)
- groundwater overdraft and impacts on ecosystems, subsidence, and water quality (seawater intrusion)
- reuse/recycling (discuss need for subsidies in challenges, resource management strategies)
- Coachella Valley Water District raising awareness of water supply constraints – reliability (not always able to issue a water supply agreement)
- water conservation – what are agencies doing
- public education and information, e.g. ACWA water crisis website
- water rights – priorities during shortages and emergencies
- tribal issues and water rights
- describe storage rights and storage capacity
- where does groundwater get discussed, including allocation of groundwater
- mitigation water needs to be discussed
- emergency (water) planning and response; seismic impact on groundwater
- Quantification Settlement Act – increased focus on cities
- extension of Coachella Valley Aqueduct
- describe impacts of other transfer and water banking projects (e.g. MWD banking agreement – ask Arden at Mission Springs about impacts relating to State Water Contract agreements, such as water transfers)
- impacts of “Green Path” power line towers from LA – how will blasting affect water quality, ecosystems
- regarding ecosystems and climate – green credits and planning mitigation not addressed (might be part of master plans)
- regulatory setting – court decisions, agency responsibilities, regulations, acts and resolutions, planning law (regarding water availability)
- list smaller water districts (beyond IID, CVWD, DWA), include cities and Tribes – need voice and access to funding (shouldn’t have to partner)

Suggestions for Colorado River Regional Report

Setting

- include geology

Watersheds

- USGS provide detailed description of watershed
- show how watershed are
- add White Water River

Ecosystems

- need to refer to Department of Interior information (BLM, USGS, USFWS)
- show how ecosystems relate to watersheds
- relates to water in the environment, needs to be integrated
- natural treatment systems impact ecosystems (e.g. wetlands)
- Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan: how it works with development in the region

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Climate

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Demographics

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Land Use Patterns

- cities need to give estimates of population expansion to determine if they have water available for growth
- discuss population and economic goals and impacts (get from Coachella Valley Water District, Southern California Association of Governments)
- low-impact development
- water quality management planning (counties and Regional Board); long-term O & M BMPs
- CEQA process: needs to take a statewide view; 610 and 221 analyses and water supply agreements – agreements do not take into account changing conditions (e.g. smelt); disconnect between development approval and water supply

Regional Water Conditions

Water in the Environment

- refer to US Bureau of Reclamation yearly operational plan for Colorado River

Water Supplies

- discuss competitive agendas regarding how much water for different uses (have urban water management council and ag water management council, need environmental water management council)
- recharge enhancements associated with conversion to sewer systems, as wastewater is returned to sewer plants
- first paragraph on page 11-13 and current text of “vast underground reservoir” paints a rosy picture for water supply, needs to be rewritten

Water Uses

- see US Bureau of Reclamation Lower Colorado water data for actual use
- see USGS water use report (found on their website)
- need to define terms

Water Quality

- describe municipal sewer systems
- include TMDLs
- stormwater runoff
- naturally occurring contaminants – arsenic
- septic systems and conversion to sewer systems (development is approved and construction started ahead of sewer lines)
- groundwater recharge issues using Colorado River water
- Salton Sea water, perched water intrusion
- agricultural water intrusion
- TOPOC compressor station (near border with Arizona) and impacts on water quality (chromium and other contaminants)

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Project Operations

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Water Governance

- water districts, water agencies, hydrologic regions, IRWM regions – how do they fit together? how are they defined?
- State Water Contractors relationship to Federal agencies; State Water Contractors obligations to water purveyors – roles and how they relate
- include role of elected State legislature
- Tribe subject to NEPA requirements

Flood Management

Historic Floods

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Flood Hazards

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Institutions

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Existing Flood Damage Reduction Measures

- addressing alluvial flood hazards has huge costs

Relationship with Other Regions

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Regional Water and Flood Planning and Management

Integrated Regional Water Management

- how are disadvantaged communities represented
- call out that there are disadvantaged communities (call Marilyn at Mission Springs)

Accomplishments

- US Bureau of Reclamation grants to promote coordination
- larger agencies helping small disadvantaged communities (e.g. Mission Springs Water District is applying on behalf of a privately-owned trailer park for Prop 50 grant funds to pay for sewer hookups. Nitrate has contaminated wells, making them unusable.)
- water education programs with schools (Bighorn Desert View Water Agency, Mission Springs Water District)

Challenges

- How to integrate district planning into regional planning (governance and infrastructure)
- Irrigation districts are quite small – how would they participate in IRWM planning? Grants for consultants? Partnering with neighboring entities for funding?
- How are IRWM groups defined? Why is a group appropriate? What are the boundaries? (IRWM program wants bigger groups addressing larger issues where possible)
- planning efforts should be tied to watershed and ecosystem conditions

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Drought and Flood Planning

- look at recently approved operational plan for the operation of Lake Powell and Lake Mead during shortages (US Bureau of Reclamation?)
- landscaping ordinance (Coachella Valley Water District)
- drought ordinances to go into effect during times of drought
- updating emergency drought ordinances
- drought planning by Bureau of Reclamation, Coachella Valley Water District, Mission Springs Water District, and Imperial Irrigation District
- include flood impacts of development on those downstream, include Tribal lands
- need to define terms (e.g. Riverside, Army Corps of Engineers, DFG, and Regional Board have different definitions of “floodplain”)
- flood control districts need to think about recharge opportunities
- need interaction on regional aspects of flood control and treatment of flood issues
- Riverside County, Coachella Valley, and Riverside Flood Control Districts have different outflows – incentives to collaborate

Looking to the Future

Future Scenarios

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Climate Change

- impacts on natural recharge

Response Strategies

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Implementation Next Steps

- water agencies need to reach out to city and county planning agencies (point to this in regional reports and CWP); include county health departments (vectors and recharge facilities)
- land use planning and development needs to relate to water supply (“will serve” and entitlement conditions)
- perhaps city ordinances against new septic systems?

Water Portfolios from 1998 - 2005

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Selected References

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