

**CWP South Lahontan Regional Workshop Summary
Apple Valley, CA – March 5, 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 South Lahontan hydrologic region was held on March 5, 2008 in Apple Valley, 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 South Lahontan 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 South Lahontan. 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

- water resource supply enhancement – stormwater recharge and imports
- funding incentives and opportunities
- ecosystem protection and restoration
- NEPA and CEQA challenges for implementation (e.g. recharge)
- water rights – reliability and access; encroachment/infringement; Tribal supplies; stewardship considerations
- discussion on water conservation
- land use and water use are (sub)region specific (i.e. 70% of urban water use is for landscaping in south – info source: LA County)
- effect of fires in San Bernardino Mountains: qualitative discussion, quantify?
- alternative energy development discouraged by inability to sell back to utilities
- reorganize outline of regional report: use IRWMs as headers (Mojave, Antelope, Owens) and describe objectives and strategies; challenges; flood and drought; accomplishments; and future for each
- need consistency and level of detail with other regions
- privatization of water supply – Cadiz
- data collecting, finding, sharing

Suggestions for South Lahontan Regional Report

- Antelope Valley conditions and issues need more attention (see AVIRWMP for data);
www.avwaterplan.org

Setting

- provide link to access existing hydrologic data
- Antelope Valley East Kern (AVEK) Water Agency water bank project

Watersheds

- add Indian Wells Valley watershed: issues include overdraft and high TDS
- need to discuss improvements that have occurred since the adjudication
- page 10-2, text on Mohave watershed mentions “numerous” water quality issues – these need to be identified and a discussion of scale provided (e.g. not occurring in San Gabriel)

Ecosystems

- discuss fish hatcheries and impacts on water quality
- critical habitat, endangered species issues, types of ecosystems
- sources of information: Anne Fege, Natural History Museum; Tom Oberbauer, MSHCP
- loss of wetlands and ephemeral streams from urbanization: affect on water quality; integrate with land use planning (recharge protection)
- sources of information: BLM West Mojave Plan; Southern California Forest Plan – Mountain Top R.D. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland/projects/forestplan/toc.shtml>; BLM Resource Management Plan – Owens Valley
- get plans and elements from DFG

Climate

- increased wildfire risk

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Demographics

- change in per capita (landscape) water use from population influx from LA
- contact Tribal chairs for Tribal demographics: Bishop – Tilford Denver; Lone Pine – Dave Moose; Fort Independence – Carl Dahlberg; Lone Pine – Richard Button; Benton – Mike Keller

Land Use Patterns

- in Antelope Valley, shift from agriculture to aerospace
- land use decisions and water supply must be linked (county and city planners)
- integrate with recharge protection with land use planning (wetlands, ephemeral streams)
- septic as a source of nitrates
- energy development in desert: solar power uses water (info source: BLM)
- ensure that information provided is accountable and solid (SB 610, 221)

Regional Water Conditions

Water in the Environment

- environmental water demands are not fully accounted for in water supply available decisions (DFG for habitat needs for water)
- DFG produced a habitat management plan (link between plan and judgment)
- in Mojave IRWM there is a habitat-related objective

Water Supplies

- identify new technologies for the treatment of potable water supplies
- long-term reliability has declined
- reliance for land use planning and near-term demand (affected by smelt)

Water Uses

- agricultural demand has hardened with transition to permanent crops
- per capita water use for region compared to other regions

Water Quality

- arsenic is a big issue in the region
- disinfection by-product: groundwater has low T.O.C → is blended with high T.O.C. state water → reduced disinfection by-product
- emerging contaminants? new detection technologies → lead to discovery of new pollutants → lead to new requirements
- separate out the water quality for eastern Sierra and for Mojave and Antelope valleys, point back to water quality text in watershed sections
- add nitrates to the list of issues (info source: Mike Plaziak at Lahontan Water Board)
- define more clearly the scale of water quality: local versus widespread conditions
- post-fire runoff
- Tribal EPA-approved water quality standards: Bishop Paiute Tribe (Tilford Denver or Brian Adkins) and Big Pine Tribe (Dave Moose or Alan Bacock)

Project Operations

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Governance

- evaluate and consolidate regulatory processes (stormwater capture, water reuse)
- discuss water rights (e.g. federally reserved rights)
- Tribal water rights: Teri Cawelti, Owens Valley Indian Water Commission
- Inyo-Los Angeles Long-Term Groundwater Management Plan (Bob Harrington, Inyo County Water Department); Inyo-Los Angeles MOU (Carla Scheidlinger, Bishop or Bob Harrington)
- court decisions: Mono Basin, Lower Owens River Project (Bob Harrington)

Flood Management

- add: evaluate effect of flood facilities on water quality
- flash flood in lower area, runoff from burn area

Historic Floods

- monsoon-based events

Flood Hazards

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Institutions

-

Existing Flood Damage Reduction Measures

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Relationship with Other Regions

- region is located along east branch of California Aqueduct and has groundwater space, which is an opportunity to store SWP and stormwater

Regional Water and Flood Planning and Management

- show nexus of IRWM to Urban Water Management Planning
- need for IRWM for areas not already covered; need to address small, closed basins (e.g. eastern Mojave and Ridgecrest have similar issues and climate – BLM is a common entity – what other agencies?)

Integrated Regional Water Management

- working together across jurisdictional boundaries – “Tear Down This Wall!”

Accomplishments

- water has become a much more readily recognized issue in the region; all stakeholders know about it – media, water agencies, ag, homeowners, etc.; there is a wider range of interested parties
- aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) – a few in Lancaster; LA County Water Works
- AVEK groundwater banking EIR http://www.avek.org/EIR_2007.htm (main webpage: <http://www.avek.org/index.html>)
- Lancaster recycled water delivery backbone (programmatic EIR being prepared)
- adjudication in Mojave has helped keep a balance within the area as water users maintain their rights and has increased awareness of water issues
- percolation system in Yucca Valley; wastewater treatment in Yucca Valley

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- Morongo pipeline
- conceptual water resource model for Morongo Basin
- Bighorn Desert View Water Agency Water Master Plan

Challenges

- first part of this section focuses on Palmdale – need to look at other areas
- include discussion on water supply reliability and future development – SB610 and 221 impacts; differences in understanding of water supply between water planners and land use agencies; balancing water demand as population grows
- use of recycled water and strategies to increase use
- sustainable land use planning for region; region-specific development standards
- water policy is often dictated by water law (lawyers) and is difficult to keep current or informed about
- water rights system is broken and needs to be fixed
- aquifers are depleted or often of good water quality – concern that recharge will damage groundwater basins
- no brine outlet for salt management from recycled water
- conservation challenges: reducing per capita consumption, landscaping practices, enforcement of water conservation measures
- reducing carbon footprint
- regulatory issues for water quality and trying to keep up with latest technology
- increasing the use of recycled water and graywater
- water quality: arsenic from gold mining; radioactive material; nitrates from septic; chemical contamination from fire suppression activities
- project planning and the process
- regulatory in terms of water treatment – trying to enforce conservation, but increases in water prices hurt the water agencies

Drought and Flood Planning

- identify the issues for groundwater banking program (should lead to comprehensive study)
- identify the issues related to the capture and use of stormwater flows (policies and regulations – governance)
- quantify amount of stormwater available for recharge
- Owens Valley drought recovery policy exists, but is not always followed by all parties
- ensure that drought plans put together by agencies are validated
- involvement of FEMA in flood planning

Looking to the Future

- bottom line of what's important for this region to move forward (e.g. environmental protection)
- reference existing IRWMPs

Future Scenarios

- potential for decreasing water supply and increase in demand

Climate Change

- challenges that make it difficult to sell solar power and other renewable power sources to utilities – need to require buy back policies

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Response Strategies

- water storage conditions – existing and potential (e.g. private lakes, dams for recharge impoundments on state and Federal lands; research new reservoir location for new storage)
- capturing stormwater for storage or groundwater recharge
- tremendous groundwater banking potential, but need to work with land use agencies to preserve areas for recharge
- addressing true cost of water

Implementation Next Steps

- actions need to be focused on priority areas identified in IRWMPs, not just where there is available funding
- where is the state going with climate change → energy → carbon footprint?
- local interests need to build relationships with agencies outside of individual region, and also within the region, working to address issues like overdraft (MWD)
- the State should provide oversight and assistance to the region to help build their plans and smooth things over; provide better policy to facilitate cooperation between water users

Water Portfolios from 1998 - 2005

- reference existing IRWMPs

Selected References

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