

**CWP Central Coast Regional Workshop Summary  
San Luis Obispo, CA – May 1, 2009**

**OVERVIEW**

The 2009 Regional Workshops for the California Water Plan featured the Public Review Draft of the Highlights document, as well as an overview of current conditions for the respective hydrologic region or area of special interest. Each workshop also included a presentation on the scenario planning approach used to consider future uncertainty for water management. In the agenda, several hours were dedicated to small group review and comment of the draft Highlights and Regional Report for that region or area. Based on suggestions made during the 2007 and 2008 workshops, time was also provided for updates on related planning processes.

A workshop for the Central Coast hydrologic region was held on May 1, 2009 in San Luis Obispo, 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 and worksheets were used to record ideas generated during the discussions and transcripts of the recorded results are incorporated into the summary.

Paul Dabbs, Project Manager for Update 2009, made the first presentation and outlined the planning process and status of major 2009 Update activities, culminating in the release of the Public Review Draft. Paul described the sections of the Highlights booklet, which serves as an Executive Summary for Update 2009. The Highlights begins with a description of existing water conditions in California that require urgent attention and response. The following pages outline the range and variation in water resources throughout the State.

The Highlights also discusses Climate Change and the existing framework for Integrated Water Management, which links to the Resource Management Strategies outlined in Volume Two and Regional Management Strategies provided in Volume 3. Other features of the Highlights include a discussion on scenarios and a fold-out section describing the Strategic Plan for Update 2009, including key objectives. The concluding recommendations represent “policies, strategies, and approaches that will help reduce and remove impediments, and leverage resources and opportunities” to implement Water Plans goals, objectives, and related actions.

In the second presentation, Brian Smith, with the San Joaquin District for the Department of Water Resources, reviewed the key characteristics of the Central Coast hydrologic region. The overview included items contained in the Regional Report, with special focus on local and regional issues, and management and planning activities. Paul Dabbs presented a third focus on the scenario approach being developed for future water planning. Work is currently underway to quantify potential water demands, with a subsequent phase to evaluate water resource management strategies.

Workshop attendees reviewed, discussed, and provided suggestions for each section, as recorded on the following pages. The agenda ended with several updates on related statewide water and planning initiatives: Cindy Forbes with the California Department of Public Health described the department’s Drinking Water Program, and representatives from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board gave an overview of local efforts and activities.

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**Discussion A – Public Review Draft: Highlights and Table of Contents**

- Need discussion of water law and suggestions for changes. One change needed is law that allows better management of groundwater and better watershed management (holistic).
- Update California Water Code to recognize groundwater as a common public resource (similar to surface water). (Recommendation #10?)
- Evaluate and improve planning to connect conveyance systems regionally and statewide
- Identify performance measures to determine whether objectives and goals are being met and a way to report out the success of meeting tangible results (implementation of goals and objectives)
- Show different level of recycled water b different areas of state/hydrologic area
- Show volume of wastewater (DPH has figures) [Note: mutual water companies provide service for 5 or more families. DPH permit does not require metering if less than 3,000 service connections.]
- Provide links (url addresses) to other sources; have clickable links on CD
- Page 4, “Greater Drought Impacts” should reach further back in history and contrast those wet or dry patterns with state’s population at the time
- Page 5, Future Stresses: add a bullet on earthquake threat to other statewide water facilities/conveyance structures
- Page 5: declining ecosystems should be last item on list
- Page 19, Recommendation #3: remove “whenever feasible”
- Needs/challenges
  - increase population = increase demand
  - would like additional information on population growth
  - funding for smaller agencies and entities
  - Integrated Flood Management needs to discuss upstream issues at the source.
  - not balanced in covering regions
  - discuss unfunded mandates
  - regulatory hurdles
- There is a disconnect between issues and recommendations
- Holistic watershed information = better IRWM
- Opportunities:
  - More coordination with private industry on water conservation
  - Statewide consideration of low impact development and LEED
  - Evaluate and improve planning to connect conveyance systems regionally and statewide
  - Identify performance measures to determine whether objectives and goals are being met and a way to report out the success of meeting tangible results (implementation of goals and objectives)
- Continued field verification of numerical model outputs
- Would be helpful to show environmental/ag/urban uses by percentages
- Page 11, sustainability box: Where did definition come from? The aspect of economic vitality is obscure.
- Page 10b, #6: What are the sustainability indicators?
- Page 13: Show changes in water demand by sector, back to 1998.
- Page 14: would be nice to see how water quality affects each type of supply/source
- Page 16: bottom of page should have one of the highlighted boxes indicating the location of information for each region
- Page 19, “Increase Public Awareness” – how about championing those communities or agencies who are ahead of the curve

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- How to track process of Water Plan
  - successes and failures
  - changes in plan to plan
  - how have you learned from last plan?
  - progress report to show if recommendations implemented
  - historical discussion of previous plans
- CD-ROM should be in format that you can update it on line
- Action item: Mike Winn and Jim Irving will send example to Paul Dabbs
- Page 19, Recommendation #9: Show areas of success or where improvement is needed
- Director's Message should highlight major messages.
- "Likes" – the breadth of the highlight; the CD-ROM; nice approach on foldout
- Water conservation:
  - Need to emphasize most effective means of increasing residential conservation
  - Give a more prominent place to water conservation, with more detail regarding Urban WUE (especially urging agencies and purveyors to adopt conservation tiered commodity rates)
- Explain data challenges in the report. We need more current data. A mechanism is needed to speed up this process.
- Funding: discuss effect of Prop 218
- Overall: fewer photos and more graphics
- Add discussion of alternative energy production (particularly solar energy) on low-grade farmland that needs to be idled due to salinity, etc. (e.g. Westlands Water District).
- Volume 1, Water Governance: When referring to "local agencies," it would be useful and (in rural counties especially) important to include Community Services Districts (CSDs) that serve water. Cities and County government are most important, but in some places it would be useful to include even the larger CPUC-regulated water companies.
- In the Water Plan, there should be a discussion of water rates: tiered rates, trends in water pricing, add-on costs, actual costs and value of water.

**Discussion B – Regional Report (Issues)**

- update info on desal plants (have been brought on line)
- data collection is an issue – there should be recommendation to speed data collection; such as legislation for a web portal to submit data electronically. DPH requires annual consumption reports to be submitted electronically. There are large groundwater data challenges.
- Some regions correspond reasonably well with underlying watersheds, but the Central Coast region does not. The two large watersheds here are Salinas River (N. SLO inland and Monterey counties) and Santa Maria River (S. SLO and N. Santa Barbara counties); but it is difficult to adopt one set of regional plans that serve these two well and still work for the 6-10 much smaller creekshed systems between them (aka the "coastal" area)
- environmental water needs in our region need to be quantified, assistance is needed with this data development; minimum flows need to be calculated for riparian needs.
- page 4-5: Morro Bay – where does San Luis Obispo fit in WMA system? Where is this area addressed? Coastal WMA needs to include SLO land use information
- pages 4-5 and 4-7: keep same order (update these descriptions); Coastal WMA
- increased fire hazard in Cambria due to extremely limited water supplies; their desal project has been held up by the Coastal Commission which hasn't been responsive to the needs of the five departments. The town's fire department may not have enough water to fight fire this summer.

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- should emphasize the rainfall of the Coastal mountain range. There is potential to capture more runoff, especially in Lake Nacimiento if MCWRA are allowed to modify their use permit and increase storage above 800' elevation.
- page 4-9:
  - Central Coast Vision for Healthy Watersheds
  - groundwater recharge areas protection
  - riparian habitat protection
  - LID
  - triennial review for Basin Plans
- page 4-10: For historic floods, add the years 1995, 1998, and 2005
- page 4-10: conditional irrigated ag order up for renewal in 2010 with Water Boards
- page 4-16: Restate, "~~Augment non-groundwater supply to City of~~ Replenish Seaside groundwater basin overdraft."
  - salinity and nitrates in groundwater and sources in Los Osos (drop 1983 reference date)
- page 4-16: challenge – preventing proliferation of invasive species (aquatic/terrestrial)
- page 4-17: table/discussion of challenges with local groundwater basins
- page 4-17: delete Salinas Reservoir sentence
- page 4-17: for recovery planning, add steelhead
- page 4-17: flood management:
  - second bullet: before “upgraded infrastructure” should be development standards to promote infiltration
  - third bullet: defeatist and too specific to an apparently dysfunctional situation
  - five bullet: after “future flood control infrastructure” add “flood prevention strategies”
- page 4-17: change “Environmental Species Act” to “Endangered Species Act”; add “steelhead trout” after “coho”
- page 4-20: delete “for agriculture” in 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence regarding seawater intrusion
- groundwater monitoring quantity and quality issues, legal and etc.
  - huge data gaps that affect modeling and management
- groundwater contamination as it affect supply
- groundwater discussion should be basin specific, declining water table in northern San Luis Obispo County
  - Santa Maria is being adjudicated
  - Paso Robles
  - Los Osos
- challenge: wastewater disposal and aging (delivery and treatment) infrastructure
- water quality: high manganese and iron (increases cost of groundwater supply)
- should emphasize the rainfall of the Coastal mountain range. There is potential to capture more runoff, especially in Lake Nacimiento if MCWRA are allowed to modify their use permit and increase storage above 800' elevation.
- regional presentation slides 5 – 9 (Central Coast Group and Regional Water Conditions): how to characterize and show ocean resource (especially as a supply)
- presentation slide #18 (project components): talk to folks at Monterey to get Nacimiento Dam status update (spillway completed)
- presentation slide #12 (region water conditions): add column for desal
- challenges: talk to Cambria CSD – may run out of water this summer
- page 4-26: Nipoma pipeline from Santa Maria to La Mesa is 6.2 MGD (add); EIR is final and at 30% design; will break ground in January
- receiving stimulus funding to improve Santa Maria levee
- encourage alternative energy (photovoltaic) for water projects

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**Discussion B: Regional Reports (Management, Planning)**

- authority for land use decisions disconnected from water purveyors; two permitting agencies (for planning permits v. water permits)
- accomplishments: county project for wastewater treatment
- seawater intrusion/nitrates how to mitigate development project impacts; how to assure compliance
- for regional RMS: are waterbag transport/storage technology, fog collection actual RMS or someone's wish list?
- regionally important RMS:
  - desal (the Coast's only sustainable water supply – droughtproof, no political allocations, but expensive)
  - conservation (not to facilitate growth but to "bank" groundwater as a hedge against droughts)
- regional advisory committee: issue of competing results from consultants on availability and supply
  - Can DWR serve as reviewer to evaluate reports?
- rethink water resource management, watershed restoration, and protection
  - bigger picture basis
  - need for healthy, functioning watersheds
  - "control" of resources ultimately impacts higher beneficial uses
  - look at RMS effects on watersheds
    - performance metric; EPA healthy watershed initiative
  - floodplain habitat corridors
  - Ventura Flood Control District is now the Ventura County Watershed Protection District
  - fits with LID and healthy riparian corridors
  - ecosystem functions include carbon sequestration

**Discussion C – Scenarios**

- Continued field verification of numerical model outputs
- Modeling by hydrologic region may not accurately match population growth with water supply (areas)
- For climate change, higher sea levels will impact on job and population growth
- The slide presentation and written report are too different from each other.
- Stress cyclical nature of water supply but continuing growth of population.
- Recognize that "build-out" is a moving target, not a contract for future cessation of growth.
- Seems that at least one future scenario needs to analyze the impacts of a policy that dedicates Sierra snowmelt water to the inland of the State, because the coast has the ocean nearby. [Probable by 2050; very possible by 2032 (end of contracts)].

**Other Comments**

- Volume 2: Chapters 20 and 23 – is ag land stewardship the same as rangeland management?
- Proposals for 20% per capita use reductions are suggesting 2005 water use levels as the baseline. The Central Coast has been implementing water conservation since 1999. The 2005 baseline penalizes the Central Coast for preceding conservation.

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**Attendance**

Christopher Alakel, Paso Robles Water Resources  
Monica Barricarte, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
William Bianchi, San Luis Obispo County Water Advisory Committee  
Tim Bryan, Paso Robles Association of Realtors  
Sig Christierson, Major Farms Inc.  
Sylas Cranor, San Luis Obispo County Public Works Department  
Oscar Daza, Provost and Pritchard  
City Doll, Pismo Coast Association of Realtors  
Cindy Forbes, California Dept. of Public Health, Division of Drinking Water  
Louise French, Paso Robles  
Eric Greening, San Luis Obispo County Water Advisory Committee  
Gary Henderson, City of San Luis Obispo  
Courtney Howard, San Luis Obispo County Public Works Dept.  
Jim Irving, Paso Robles Association of Realtors  
Rob Johnson, Monterey County Water Resources Agency  
Matthew Keeling, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Sue Luft, San Luis Obispo County Water Advisory Committee  
Dawn Mathes, Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office  
Robert Mires, WRAC member, Grover Beach City Council member  
William O'Brien, City of Ojai  
Michael Randall, City of Morro Bay  
John Ricker, Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Service  
Rick Riedl, City of Seaside  
Fred Strong, City of El Paso de Robles  
Thea Tryon, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Rochelle Turner, student  
Betty Winholtz  
Michael Winn, San Luis Obispo County Water Advisory Committee

Paul Dabbs, DWR, Water Plan Project Manager  
Barbara Cross, DWR, Tribal Liaison  
Ernie Taylor, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Robert Fastenau, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Dane Mathis, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Mike McGinnis, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Cynthia Moffett, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Neil Rambo, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Gholam Shakouri, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Brian Smith, DWR, San Joaquin District  
Judie Talbot, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS