

CWP Mountain Counties Regional Workshop Summary
El Dorado Hills, CA – May 11, 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 Mountain Counties area was held on May 11, 2009 in El Dorado Hills, 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 incorporated into the summary.

Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR, Chief of Department of Planning and Local Assistance, 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, Karl Winkler, DWR, Central District Chief, reviewed the key characteristics of the Mountain Counties area. 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: Pierre Stephens, DWR, Regional Lead for the Central District, gave updates on upcoming meetings related to water management as well as an overview of current drought conditions and activities.

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

- explain that this Update supercedes the previous Update – it's a stand alone document
- time and money are other resources – if looking to make impact with limited resources, document needs to connect with general readers...need an intro, explain the layout
- title of Highlights should say “Update 2009”
- highlights focus on “pie-in-the-sky” that can't be funded
- Outreach is needed to use resources efficiently → conservation and end-user involvement needs to be elevated. State doesn't have the financial resources to make this happen – needs to involve end users. Need appropriate venues to get the word out. (user-friendly information, why important, what they need to do)
- Need useful information that is science-based data to support changes in use.
- state leadership is fine – implementation with other Boards and agencies is a challenge
- State permitting and requirements need to be streamlined to build support
- emphasize the importance of coordination between water planning (e.g. IRWMPs) and local government (General Plans), highlight positive benefits and recommend more voluntary coordination
- need coordination with USFS (major landowner)
- urban areas should be linked to their watersheds that provide their water and share responsibility for the watershed
- page 4, flood risk: define “200-year level” – use different terminology, relating it to probability of flooding (e.g. a 1 in 6 chance of flooding over the course of a 30-year mortgage)
- page 5, Impaired Water Bodies: water quality discussion needs to include legacy pollutants, especially mining pollutants such as mercury
- pages 10a – 10d: foldout seems distracting and unnecessary (probably won't get read); keep the format the same
- page 10a, graphic: implies that mission and vision are the same; they are separate and different in text
- page 10b, guiding principles: add that regional differences inform relevance and efficiency of strategies and proposals; one-size does not fit all – may be easier to legislate at the broad level – NOT true for implementation
- page 10c, objectives: note where the objectives come from (Chapter 3, companion state plans – provide this link or explain that objectives are tied to companion plans)
- page 14, RMS:
 - acknowledge more overlaps between strategies and benefits
 - show regional (or statewide) implementation of each strategy in a table format
 - needs sense of costs and benefits that carry over to other areas
 - need to highlight connections/conflicts between areas of benefit and areas of impact
 - source areas and receiving areas are disconnected institutionally and geographically
 - should consider hydropower aspects
- addressing uncertainty is good approach for framing climate change
- objective #11: new technology investments for water use efficiency
- need greater acknowledgement of re-operation in objectives and recommendations
- page 4, 1st paragraph – is not snappy; highlight immediate problems and needed action; capture what water agencies are telling their customers
- page 4: averages are not good for comparison – be careful in referring to them; better to provide more context and give recent changes, variability

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- page 4 – 5, California Water Today:
 - IRWMs
 - recognize role and momentum of IRWM programs and need to improve, expand and fund them
 - also recommend that the State must reduce the amount of application paperwork required for IRWM funds (incorporation of group, RAP, etc.); IRWM rules change each year
 - for IRWM funding alternative (bonds are slow to arrive and unreliable) consider mechanism to allow counties to increase sales tax ¼ % to fund local IRWM projects
- page 10c-10d, objectives:
 - objective #1: does this create (regional) silos? need cross-regional connection and coordination
 - explain the goal of regional self-sufficiency (supply, \$, energy, sustainability)
 - new objective: add “preserve and enhance recreational opportunities”
- fire and forest management are really important (especially for water quality)
- page 14, RMS table: add a text section with information to show types of impacts from each strategy (energy use, environmental impacts, etc.)
 - look at complexities of how strategies affect other State objectives (e.g. water supplies and energy nexus)
 - look at the total cost/benefit package
 - needs to be part of an evaluation matrix
- system reoperation is really important; federal agencies roles are important – e.g. US ACE and flood reservoirs
 - challenge of Bureau of Reclamation and CVP operations
 - needs Federal and State coordination and cooperation, as well as state and local coordination and cooperation
 - is key, and essential, to meeting some of the goals and objectives
 - there are many Federal agencies that local districts have to work with
 - e.g. in Mountain Counties, most storage and watershed management involved the Forest Service and BLM
- page 16: mention why we have two special overlay areas in Volume 3
- page 16, map: enlarge map and wrap text around it
- page 17: add two more insets for Mountain Counties and Delta (mentioned in 2 groups)
- page 19, Recommendations
 - Recommendation #2: State Finance Plan proposal should have more specific details about how funds will be obtained and distributed
 - need to see money provided to agencies and IRWMs for all of the planning activities conducted
 - consider applying cost-share concepts to IRWMs
 - Recommendation #3, public trust: drop the words “whenever feasible” – should always be considered
 - Recommendation #7: Mountain Counties wastewater issues should receive special mention (must be treated because of downstream users in Valley)
 - Recommendation #7: does infrastructure include reoperation? needs expanded approach
- maps: are hard to distinguish colors
 - use **bold lines** between hydrologic regions; dotted bold lines for areas of interest
 - do test run for color-blindness (make copies in black and white)

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Discussion B – Regional Report (Issues)

- CABY IRWMP text from 2007 report should be used to describe the regional setting and issues
- issue of rebuilding water and wastewater systems – many aging facilities and not much money
 - urban areas should be linked to their watersheds that provide their water and share responsibility for the watershed
- page 13-7 to 13-8, water supplies:
 - emphasize: water supply (area of origin water rights) and sustainability
 - recycled water: El Dorado Irrigation District desired to use more – denied due to downstream water uses
 - supplies should also discuss water diverted for agriculture
 - add “water Recreation Uses” to the water supply section
 - page 8: overall per capita water use – this has the same tone as 20% by 2020 about one-size-fits-all
- update 1999 Borcalli report
- pages 13-8 to 13-10, water quality:
 - connection between forestry practices and runoff
 - page 8, salinity: salinity is not the issue in Mountain Counties – drop this paragraph (inter-regional aspects: CV Salts working groups get assistance from Mountain Counties flows help them achieve standards)
 - page 9: link between reservoir operation and legacy mining pollution – Nevada Irrigation District can’t dredge Combe reservoir due to mercury in sediment
 - is this local or regional? need to improve efficiency of wastewater treatment
 - page 13-9, 3rd bullet under nitrates:
 - tone suggests all septic pollute and that there has been no improvements since the 1970s
 - should also discuss financial aspects
 - DPH regulates facilities, Water Boards set water quality standards
 - this overstate role of Water Boards – who regulate large development; existing systems and small lots are the purview of the County Health Department
 - need to discuss nitrates + phosphates + bacterial contamination
 - issue of old, failing septic tank systems should be discussed and impact on water supply
- page 13-11: climate change discussion of changes to streamflow patterns should state the role of reservoirs to capture and re-regulate flows
- page 13-11, table of reservoirs: note that only the larger ones are listed (over 100,000 AF?); could list other important reservoirs in Chapter Appendix
- page 13-12: flood management discussion is pretty generic – suggest moving into appendices or cut down; it’s out of proportion compared to the other sections
- page 13-14, flood hazards:
 - should discuss the major rivers (e.g. American), not just creeks
 - consolidate flood bullet list into one paragraph (saves space)
- page 13-14, flood governance, federal agencies
 - integrate NWS activities
 - also add USBR to the list
- page 13-16, Table 13-1: area of Mokelumne River watershed is wrong – should be larger than 575
- page 13-20, IRWM: new IRWM forming for upper Merced River – mention on IRWM list

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- funding:
 - bond funding areas typically correlate to the 10 hydrologic regions, not the overlay areas (look at boundaries for Update 2013)
- page 13-23, water supply, 2nd bullet: strengthen discussion on Area of Origin water rights
- page 13-23, challenges:
 - add invasive species as a challenge (arrundo, quagga, northern pike)
 - current key issues: fire and drought
 - economics: many wells are quickly using baseline electric allocation, affecting overall electric bills (wells are significant in residential areas)

Discussion B: Regional Reports (Management, Planning)

- page 24, watershed management:
 - 1st bullet: replace “as addressed by” with “for example”
 - 2nd bullet: replace “preserve” with another term (such as maintain or support)
 - high fuel and threat of catastrophic fire
 - Federal agencies (National Park Svc., USFS, BLM) responsible for watershed management plan; Water Boards’ guidelines apply on private land and State Forestry Board oversees non-federal forested areas
 - need science-based data regarding need for sustainable water quality and storage – incorporate into land management plans
 - replace “mandated” water quality targets; there is support for “scientifically sound” water quality objectives
 - create an open approach to finding workable solutions v. a required solution
- pages 13-19: mention USFS process to update all 7 Forest Management Plan for California, within the next 2 years, as related process
- pages 3-19 to 3-20: clarify RWMGs, provide brief background and where process is going; perhaps reference Volume 1, chapters 1-2.
- page 13-25: climate change effects should discuss forest fire risk
 - impacts from increased forest fires (future climate change) on the watersheds and water quality of surface supplies is a developing issue
- accomplishments:
 - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has 10-year Sierra Nevada Meadows Restoration Project
 - IRWM process to be the venue for water resource communication; there is increased coordination
 - Upper Feather River IRWM and counties are exchanging information on the Toulumne and Stanisluas
 - IRWM and update of GP are working together
 - County of Placer has the Foresthill Divide Community Plan, covering 109 square miles (Foresthill PUD) – looking at land use and population
 - EID drought preparedness and response plans
 - CABY drought preparedness and response plans
 - biomass management (fire reduction and energy production)
- Table 13-6, potential strategy options: raising Pardee Dam (conjunctive use)
- pilot projects – studies for removing mercury (MID, USGS, SB)
- FERC efforts – some completed, some currently in process

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Discussion C – Scenarios

- Wild and Scenic Rivers table should add list of future potential listings
- UC Davis has climate change models for Sierra water yield
- CABY is using WEAP to look at water supply now and in future, and to test response strategies. Elements being looked at include:
 - water temperature
 - land use
 - testing FERC requirements under climate change impacts
- WEAP used to test drought plan – showed greater possible range of climate variation
 - drought impacts on consumer use, rates, revenue
- would be good to create a foundation for water schematics at a regional level, then roll up to statewide
- could also be used for operations – incorporating it to look at capital improvements projects (have been working with this for about 3 years – could fast track it to within 1 year)

Other Comments

- Volume 2, RMS
 - Ag WUE: address types of crops and irrigation efficiencies
 - Ag and Urban WUE:
 - describe methods to educate and raise awareness of water conservation and water management
 - highlight new technology advances from Australia and Israel
- For Volumes 1 and 2 – Update 2009 plan and process more integrated and comprehensive than Update 2005; much better
- IRMPs need to show relationships and benefits of projects to other regions (perhaps discuss in introduction to Volume 2)
- Volume 1, Chapter 4, challenges: What is the maximum number of people that can be supported? (variable and depends on so many different factors)

Attendance

Jim Ambersrombie, Amador Water Agency
Pete Bell, Foothill Conservancy
David Curtis, Carlton Engineering
Bob Dean, Calveras county Water District
Sam Donovan, State Assembly Alyson Huber's Office
Dave Eggerton, El Dorado Irrigation District
Gary Estes, American River Watershed Institute
Carlos Espana, Espana Consulting
Duane Frink, MCWRA Board of Directors
Leslie Gault, PCWA Engineering
Marion Gee, Sierra Nevada Alliance
Uma Hinman, Kleinschmidt Associates
John Kingsbury, Placer County Water Agency
Patrick Luzuriaga, PBI Engineering
Gene Mancebo, Amador Water Agency
Cathy Monaghan, El Dorado County Water Agency

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Clint Meyer, RMC Water
John Mills, Consultant
Walter Sadler, City of Folsom
Brandon Sanders, Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Mike Thornton, Sierra Fund
Dan Wermiel, California Dept. of Conservation.

Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR, Chief, Dept. of Planning and Local Assistance
Paul Dabbs, DWR, Water Plan Project Manager
Pierre Stephens, DWR, North Central Region Office
Gary Lippner, DWR, North Central Region Office
Judie Talbot, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS