

# Colorado River Regional Forum Summary



The second Colorado River Regional Forum was held on September 11, 2013 at the Indio Water Authority conference room. An option was also available to participate via webinar and conference call. Copies of the workshop presentations, handouts, and materials are available on the Water Plan website: [www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/materials/index.cfm?subject=sep1113](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/materials/index.cfm?subject=sep1113). Judie Talbot, regional facilitator, reviewed the afternoon's agenda and introductions were made around the room and online.

## Overview of Update 2013 Public Review Draft

Lewis Moeller, Project Manager for Update 2013, provided an overview of key features of the Public Review draft. The release is scheduled for the end of September and will be announced through the Water Plan eNews. All content will be posted on the Water Plan website, under the heading of Update 2013. Volumes 1-3 will comprise the Strategic Plan, Regional Reports and Resource management Strategies. Volumes 4 and 5 represent the online Reference and Technical Guides.

The three major themes for Update 2013 are: Integrated Water Management (IWM), Government Agency Alignment and Investing in Innovation and Infrastructure. New features for Volume 1 include a chapter addressing the finance framework for IWM activities. This considers the state's role in supporting IWM, and examines previous and existing funding and expenditures. Future activities will delve into funding options and tradeoffs. Other new features include information on groundwater conditions, discussion on near-coastal resources, the mid-cycle Progress Report and three new Resource Management Strategies: Sediment Management, Outreach and Education, and Culture and Water.

Update 2013 also includes several areas of expanded content: enhanced discussions of surface and groundwater quality; additional detail on climate change, adaptation and mitigation; and pilot efforts to model local conditions. Chapter 8, the Roadmap for Action, builds on the Objectives from Update 2009 and provides related actions formatted to support the next Progress Report. Greater emphasis on regional planning is reflected throughout Update 2013, with additional content in the Regional Reports.

## Review of the Colorado River Regional Report

Vern Knoop, Chief of the Water Supply Evaluations Section for the DWR Southern Region Office, is the author for the Colorado River Regional Report. In many ways, the authors serve as editors in compiling information from many sources. Content was provided from regional contributors, as well as DWR staff representing a wide range of expertise. New areas were highlighted, including the sections on groundwater conditions, disadvantaged communities, climate change, and project operations. Additional details are still sought for the descriptions of project operations.

Working with a new outline for Update 2013, authors created an initial draft for each of their respective Regional Reports. The different documents were then compared, and revisions were made to provide greater consistency across the reports. A brief walk-through of the document was provided, emphasizing the major sections of the Regional Report: Current State of the Region: Regional Resource Management Conditions; and Looking to the Future.

This draft is about 80% of what will be included in the PRD. Also, additional details will be added through IRWM summaries including lists of Resource Management Strategies used by each IRWM group. Participants were invited to comment and provide edits for the document. It was noted that this is an initial review, and that a 45-day public comment period will follow the release of the Public Review Draft. Comments may also be submitted online to [cwpc@water.ca.gov](mailto:cwpc@water.ca.gov).

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## Discussion

Question: When the PRD is released, will the IRWM review the document on behalf of all the agencies – or do the agencies need to look at this for themselves?

Response: The IRWM will take a close look at the section addressing coordination with the IRWMs. The lead agency will not conduct a thorough review of the entire document.

- a) The content for **groundwater conditions** seems too extensive, considering that groundwater represents 10% of the supply. It's well written, but perhaps provide references for the information and condense the text in the document
- b) Increase the discussion on **surface water conditions**.
  - **QSA transfers** between Coachella to Imperial Irrigation District represent about 450,000 AF/year. Increase the discussion on the QSA.
  - Add more discussion about **current issues**: experiencing a 14-year drought in the Colorado Basin, Lake Mead is at 50% and IID is already under restrictions. The Lake Mead critical elevation level is 1,075 feet and the Lake is already below 1,100 feet. Hitting the critical level will affect all agencies receiving Colorado River water. There needs to be a discussion about conditions in the larger Colorado River basin. The report says this is the most severe drought, and needs to say that it is a 14-year drought.
  - Pages 60 and 61 describe **challenges**, with one page on flood challenges. It is necessary to discuss challenges on a sub-regional basis. (Point to challenges text in IRWM Plans summaries, and pull text on challenges from IRWM Plans.)
- c) For **IRWM summaries**, keep stakeholder lists if information is readily available. Check content with the respective IRWMs.
  - Provide footnotes to other materials, e.g.: specific IRWM plans, UWMPs, Ag WMPs, MSHCPs, etc.
  - Think about using the IRWM summaries to create the 2-4 page Regional Highlights (and perhaps the Regional Report Executive Summary).
- d) Look at **Tribal content**, consider adding in population. Coachella Valley Water District has worked extensively with Tribes and might be a good source of information.

## **Updates on Related DWR Programs**

### Flood Future Report

Brian Moniz, Regional Coordinator for the DWR Southern Office, provided information on the Flood Future Report. This document represents a joint effort between the California Department of Water Resources and US Army Corps of Engineers. The Highlights document illustrates the flood risks associated with each hydrologic region, showing number of individuals living in a floodplain, value of structures and agriculture exposed to flood risks, and number of at-risk species exposed to flood hazards. The report also describes the types of flood hazards, and maps the number of flood agencies and proposed local flood management projects.

All of the flood risk information is available on a county basis in Technical Appendix D of the Flood Future Report. The entire report, executive summary and technical attachments are available online at: [www.water.ca.gov/sfmp/resources.cfm#floodreport](http://www.water.ca.gov/sfmp/resources.cfm#floodreport).

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The report developed seven recommendations addressing:

- Flood risk assessments – to determine high risk areas and prioritize risk reduction efforts
- Flood risk awareness – to increase awareness and support decision-making
- Flood readiness – to support flood emergency management planning and emergency response
- Land use planning – to reduce consequences of flooding and improve floodplain management
- Regional, systemwide and statewide planning – to coordinate multiple-benefit projects
- Agency collaboration – to enhance planning, permitting and implementation activities
- Sufficient and stable funding – to avoid larger future costs associated with flood recovery

### IRWM Strategic Plan

Mr. Moniz also reported on the IRWM Strategic Plan activities. He began with a recap of Round 1 workshops held in April and May of 2013 on Vision and Goals. The feedback obtained at these meetings has been summarized and is now posted online. Upcoming reports will address the *Institutional Setting for Water Resources in California* and a summary and analysis of existing IRWM Plans.

Building on the first set of workshops, a second round of workshops will address objectives and strategies to improve the process, outcomes and alignment of IRWM. The meeting dates and locations are as follows:

- Thursday, October 17: Clovis, CA (Veterans Memorial District, 808 Fourth Street)
- Tuesday, October 22: Temecula, CA (City Hall, 41000 Main Street)
- Wednesday, October 23: Burbank, CA (Buena Vista Branch Library, 300 N. Buena Vista Street)
- Thursday, November 14: Stockton, CA (San Joaquin County Ag Center, 2101 East Earhart)
- Wednesday, November 20: Redding, CA (Veterans Hall, 1605 Yuba Street)

The Strategic Plan is scheduled for release in 2014. Additional information is available on the IRWM website at: [www.water.ca.gov/irwm/stratplan](http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/stratplan).

### **Forum Evaluation**

Forum participants were asked to evaluate the overall approach for regional outreach. Using a worksheet, the following feedback was provided:

- Most valuable part of the Forum: Gaining a better understanding of the “big picture” – how IRWM groups fit within the State’s program, how the Regional Reports are developed, providing an opportunity to focus and comment on the draft document. (These were rated from somewhat valuable to highly valuable.)
- Should in-person regional meetings continue: In-person meetings provide better focus and fewer distractions compared to webinar sessions; 6 – 12 month frequency
- Suggestions: Coordinate with IRWM groups to increase awareness about the meetings and increase representation and participation at the meetings; include a start-to-finish project schedule showing milestones, meetings and comment periods.

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### Participation

Patricia Cooper, Riverside County, Supervisor Benoit's Office  
John Covington, Morongo Band of Mission Indians  
Casterlo Estrada, City of Coachella  
Mike Gialdini, Riverside County, Supervisor Benoit's Office  
Vern Knoop, DWR, Southern Office Regional Report Author  
Patti Reyes, Coachella Valley Water District, Tribal Liaison  
Jennifer Wong, DWR, Southern Region Office  
Judie Talbot, Facilitator

### Via webinar:

Anisa Divine, Imperial Irrigation District  
Karin Drissi, California Association of Realtors  
Spencer Eldred, University of Chicago, DWR Project Team  
David Inouye, DWR, Southern Office Regional Report Author  
Jimmy Knott  
Salomon Miranda, DWR  
Lewis Moeller, DWR, Update 2013 Project Manager  
Brian Moniz, DWR, Southern Office, Regional Coordinator  
Margaret Park, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians