Water Plan Update

Objectives Web-a-thon
Expand Environmental Stewardship
June 13, 2013

MEETING SUMMARY

CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN UPDATE 2013
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OBJECTIVE
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.
815 S STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA

Meeting Objectives

Discuss and suggest revisions for the Related Actions associated with the Update 2013 Objective relating to Environmental Stewardship:

> "Practice, promote, improve, and expand environmental stewardship to protect biological diversity and sustain natural water and flood management systems in watersheds, on floodplains, and in aquatic habitats."

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

The Update 2013 Objectives Web-a-thon was held on June13-14, 2013 to discuss the draft 17 Objectives and the associated Related Action for the Water Plan. Introductions were made around the room and online. Paul Massera, DWR, Update 2013 Program Manager, welcomed everyone and noted that an online wrap up session will be conducted on July 9th, to conclude any items needing additional discussion. He explained that the workbook was prepared by DWR staff and subject matter experts, and is for discussion purposes only. The first few pages of this draft document provide definitions of terms and the Water Plan mission, vision and goals – which sets the context for the objectives and related actions. A brief review of the Environmental Stewardship objective and related actions (found on pages 17-18 of the workbook) would be followed by discussion on the text.

Overview

Jose Alarcon, DWR Project Team, provided brief background on how the objectives and related actions were developed. He and Francisco Guzman have reviewed the 37 Featured State Plans, related state agency plans with bearing on the Water Plan, and correlated the respective recommendations with the Water Plan objectives. These were forwarded to the subject matter experts for consideration in updating the related actions for each objective. Collectively, the objectives identify what is needed to accomplish the goals of the Water Plan. The related actions represent what is needed to accomplish each particular objective.

The workbook contains a column for performance measures, which will help track each action and inform the next Water Plan Progress Report. Draft measures have been proposed for some of the objectives, and feedback is welcomed on potential performance measures – as well as the objectives and related actions.

Document Walk Through

Michael Perrone, DWR, Update 2013 Project Team, Environmental Services Lead, reviewed the Environmental Stewardship objective. The objective and related actions are a first draft from staff. Suggested edits and additions are welcome to the initial proposal. These focus on goals for expanding habitat, with less emphasis on how to accomplish the goals.

Related Actions

The proposed Related Actions, and the ensuing discussion, are presented below. Please note that the actions below have been abridged from the original text and the sub-actions are not included:

General Discussion

- Natural systems piece – removing beaver dams, increasing flows benefits urban water users.
- Comment for part one. We are currently grappling with over-dense forests in uplands in Northern California forests. Snow is being intercepted and evaporated. The Forest Counties have been in dialog to thin forests and reduce fuels back to early 1920s levels. Riparian forests suck up the water and reduce flows - bad for salmon. Your agenda seems to be in conflict with that.

- **Additional actions:** Add an environmental water use efficiency element that quantifies the benefits since new science shows that it is flow volume, water quality, not just reallocating water. Need an action on engaging and educating the public – it should fit in this piece somewhere. Add avoided costs discussion to ecosystem services discussion. Balance the environment, economic and social.

1. Agencies overseeing water and flood management systems should include actions, in their respective natural resource management plans, that restore natural processes of erosion and sedimentation in rivers and streams and increase and improve riverine and floodplain habitats. Local planning activities should include objectives to meet these goals.

   Item #a: By 2020, re-establish one million acres of contiguous natural riparian and floodplain habitat (subject to periodic flooding) for at least 50% of river miles. Item #b: re-establish 500,000 acres of floodplain forest vegetation and restore 500,000 acres of upper watershed forests. Item #c: regional water and flood management plans should receive additional credits for grant programs when providing corridor connectivity and restoration of native habitats.

   Discussion:

   - This action focuses on riverbank habitat Carbon sequestration – in the 2009 update, grow more trees – keep in.

- 1 mil acres seems extremely ambitions and needs to be explained more clearly.
    - They are considering dropping the date – others feel that makes sense
    - Specify the land sources for the acreage. The targets seem to be more performance measures so move them.
    - It's not clear who is responsible for delivering this.
    - What is the accounting system for determining credits and overall totals?
- For item #b: Add wetlands
- Item #b doesn't seem to fit.

2. State government should partner to evaluate opportunities to introduce or re-introduce anadromous fish to upper watersheds.

   Discussion:

   - Delete the word "introduce." This is about re-introduction.
   - Climate change makes this more important. Concerned with general prescription being applied unilaterally. Reads too open ended – think through with water agencies and do pilot projects. Using the word evaluate helps. Should we list all agencies involved? Yes – if it raises the level for legislative oversight. Maybe introducing this concept does make sense – rather than delete it, just explain what that might mean.

3. By 2015, State government should identify and prioritize lands, within the SF Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, for protection to provide tidal wetlands habitat that can adapt to sea-level rise.

   Discussion:

   - Protection of lands due to sea level rise.

4. By 2015, State government should prioritize and expand Delta island and Suisun Marsh subsidence reversal and land accretion projects to equalize land-estuary elevations.

   Discussion:

   - There is a comprehensive management plan for this already so mention that and how it is separate from Delta plan. Subsidence comment LB read goes here – state law 2100.

5. By 2030, State and federal government should encourage, prioritize and financially support actions to protect, enhance, and restore at least 1 million acres of upper watershed forests and meadows.

Discussion:

- There needs to be a stronger link back to water quality.
- There are questions regarding the cause of degradation and who should pay and who beneficiaries are. The USFS has data and there is biomass research available
- Much of the effort is in rehabilitating un-forested meadowland that has been dewatered by the removal of beaver dams.
- The value of commodities taken from the Sierra, mainly water, is enormous at $2.2 billion," says Don Erman, a University of California biology professor and leader of the ecosystem science team. "But reinvestment is vanishingly small" at less than 2 percent. Reinvestments are needed for ecosystem. His team suggests that a tax or fee on water exports to the rest of California be used to fund watershed restoration in the Sierra.
- The increased flows that may result from thinning uplands could benefit downstream municipal water users. These users may be a revenue source.

6. State and federal government should fund natural resource protection agencies to study and support reallocation of water to protect fish and wildlife and their habitats.

   Discussion:

   - For 25 years, there have been water diversions in the Delta for fish, wildlife and habitat purposes. And the Delta is in the worst shape ever for the species there were intended to benefit from those diversions. The language here ignores that the current strategy has failed. Much of the new science shows that flows, timing, water quality and restoration efforts may be more important than water quantity. It's more than reallocating water from one use to another.
   - There should be a discussion of environmental water use efficiency, efficacy and long-term needs – at a statewide level. Water quantity is part of the solution in restoring estuaries.
   - Does this imply involuntary reallocation of water? It needs some further work. There are some red flags regarding the way this is currently worded.
   - This advocates for taking private property (pre-1914 water rights) and reallocating it to environmental use. This is forcing these property owners to bear the cost of environmental "benefits" that should be borne by society as a whole.

7. Government and the private sector should develop and support programs that partner with private landowners and managers to protect and improve habitat and ecosystem services, including flood protection, water quality, groundwater recharge and storage, reversal of land subsidence, prevention of large wildfires, shading of rivers and streams, and reduced soil erosion.

Discussion:

- If public is paying then they need to gauge the value of dollars invested. Unless activities are driven by the Endangered Species Act, these actions are voluntary. The public should have input on what gets funded.
- There needs to be a balance ("triple bottom line" - the three EEEs) between human needs and "environmental" needs. The reallocation of water is destroying communities and rural economies
- When thinking about returns on investment, there is quite a bit of discussion around ecosystem services and using market systems to help evaluate the benefits of a societal investment – such as restoration or water allocation. Consider adding an action regarding the need to quantify the value of environmental stewardship actions and show that there is a return on investment.
- That should include returns to nature not just to society.
- Consider looking at environmental costs.
- There should be an item to engage and educate the public. For example, groundwater item #1 addresses public outreach.

This item will be continued until July 9th.

Attendance

In Room

Carl Hauge, California Water Foundation
Karl Longley, California Water Institute, UC Fresno
Bob Siegfried, Carmel Area Wastewater District
Vicky Whitney, State Water Board

Jose Alarcon, DWR, Water Quality Lead
Megan Fidell, DWR, RMS Coordinator, Progress Report Lead
Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR, Manager, Statewide Integrated Water Management
Francisco Guzman, DWR, Companion Plans and Objectives Lead
Paul Massera, DWR, Water Plan Program Manager
Lewis Moeller, DWR, Water Plan Project Manager
Peter Navas, Los Angeles County Sanitation District
Elizabeth Patterson, DWR, Land Use Lead
Maury Roos, DWR, Chief Hydrologist

Lisa Beutler, MWH, Water Plan Executive Facilitator
Heidi Hill Drum, CCP, Facilitator

Webinar

Erika Barraza, Carollo Engineers
Marilyn Boehnke, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Dave Bolland, Association of California Water Agencies
Bruce Burton, California Department of Public Health
Elissa Callman, City of Sacramento
Grace Chan, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Rebecca Crebbin-Coates, Planning and Conservation League
Jerry De La Piedra, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Debbie Espe, San Diego County Water Agency
Aaron Fukuda, Tulare Irrigation District
Milasol Gaslan, Santa Ana Regional Water Board
Carol Hall, Kleinfelder
Jack Hawks, California Water Association
Ashley Indieri, Family Water Alliance
Sachiko Itagaki, Kennedy Jenks
Jeff Lynch, Cortina Rancheria
Kathy Mannion, Regional Council of Rural Counties
Eric Osterling, Kings River Conservation District
Jodi Pontureri, State Water Board
Chris Potter, California Resources Agency (Ocean Grants and Wetlands)

Laleh Rastegarzadeh, State Water Board
Sandra Schubert, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Tony St. Amant, Water Policy Advocate
Sergio Vargas, Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Mike Wade, California Farm Water Coalition
Betsy Walton, California Emergency Management Agency
Marsha Westropp, Orange County Water District
Emilia Wisniewski, East Bay Municipal Utility District
Betty Yee, Central Valley Regional Water Board
David Zoldoske, California Water Institute, UC Fresno

Carmel Brown, DWR, Executive Assistant, Integrated Water Management
Abby Carevic, DWR, Northern Region Office, Water Supply Evaluations
Rich Juricich, DWR, Data and Analysis Lead
Nancy King, DWR, Water Recycling and Desalination
John Kirk, DWR, South-Central Region Office, Groundwater Section
Dan McManus, DWR, Groundwater Caucus Co-lead
Scott McReynolds, DWR, Northern Region Office, Water Quality
Nancy Miller, DWR, Water Recycling and Desalination
Salomon Miranda, DWR, Floodplain Management
Mark Nordberg, DWR, North-Central Region Office, Groundwater Investigations
Toni Pezzetti, DWR, Water Recycling and Desalination