

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) Watershed Work Group met on March 19, 1999, in Sacramento. The BDAC Watershed Work Group (Work Group) was created to address the public's request to have more participation in the CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program). The Work Group provides a forum for stakeholders covering a broad geographic area and wide array of interests. Attendees of the Work Group meetings have direct interaction with the Watershed Program's Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT) and an opportunity to review and comment on Watershed Program draft documents. In addition, the Work Group may provide input to the BDAC on issues related to the Watershed Program.

Introductions

Work Group co-chair, Martha Davis (Sierra Nevada Alliance) began the meeting with introductions. A list of meeting participants (Attachment A) and handouts (Attachment B) is included.

Watershed Updates

Watershed Legislation

Steve Fitch (Office of Assembly Member Dickerson) provided an update on Assembly Bill (AB) 730, entitled Watershed Protection. AB730 was introduced as a "spot bill" on February 26, 1999, by Assembly Member Dickerson. Mr. Fitch explained that AB730 will be a two-year bill instead of a one-year bill. This legislative process will require the development of a polished bill by January 2000. He added that over the next three to four months a watershed legislation committee comprised of stakeholders and agency representatives will be formed to work with Assembly Member Dickerson's office, Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC), and Sierra Nevada Alliance. This team will craft the language of the bill and begin promoting the legislation by mid-summer. It was also noted that there are a total of 29 proposed bills that encompass watershed issues, including SB1088 (Poochigian), SB413 (Burton), and various bills sponsored by Assembly Members Costa and Machado. All of these bills may be downloaded at: <http://leginfo.ca.gov>. Mr. Fitch added that oftentimes when there are multiple bills on the same subject they tend to create confusion and are unsuccessful. It was recommended that the other proposed watershed bills be examined to see if there is potential for consolidation. Dennis Heiman (IWAT/Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board) stated that he is developing a "white paper" on AB730 to address some of the complexities that have been raised in the Work Group meetings. Laurel Ames (Sierra Nevada Alliance) noted that she has received a few comments from Work Group participants. She has summarized these comments on the meeting handout entitled "Commenters on Watershed Act."

California Biodiversity Council Meeting

Ms. Davis provided an update on the March 11, 1999, California Biodiversity Council (CBC) meeting. She stated that there were several inspirational presentations on watershed issues including Professor Jeff Mount (UC Davis). Ms. Davis suggested to the CBC that there may be opportunities for the CBC to support the Work Group and vice versa. Because there are many watershed efforts underway in California it is important to avoid duplication. Ms. Davis also stated that Robert Meacher (Work Group co-chair/Regional Council of Rural Counties) is a member of the CBC. Mr. Meacher raised concern at the meeting regarding CALFED's definition of a watershed. He urged the CBC to work with the Watershed Program to develop and promote a watershed definition that includes areas above and below the dams. Mr. Meacher also suggested that the CBC, or a sub-group of the CBC, meet with the Work Group to discuss how the two groups can collaborate.

John Lowrie (Watershed Program Manager) added that the CBC discussed and consented to support a statewide assessment to address natural resource issues. It was noted that it is important to be cautious and thoughtful regarding how this information and data is gathered. A meeting participant stated that the Natural Resources Project Inventory, a watershed inventory, is a valuable tool to view watershed information.

Integration with the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP)

Ms. Davis announced that the next Work Group meeting on April 16, 1999, will be a joint meeting of the Watershed and Ecosystem Restoration work groups. A question was raised about merging the ERP with the Watershed Program. Ms. Davis stated that attention is being given to the importance of building local support for the ERP and how to go about it; however, a discussion of merging the two programs is premature. There was concern among the Work Group that portions of the greater Bay-Delta watershed would be poorly represented if the program was implemented with the ERP framework. Mr. Lowrie stated that he has relayed the Work Group's concern to members of the ERP staff regarding the development of ERP actions in isolation of landowners and other stakeholders. He added that the ERP has proposed to have a "Tier 1" group of objective scientists to help develop specific restoration projects. A "Tier 2" group of scientists comprised of local and agency representatives would then review the findings and develop an action plan. After which, ERP representatives would meet with the public to present the findings. The Work Group feels that the public needs to be involved in the entire process not just the end-result.

A concern was raised regarding CALFED's omission of Southern California watersheds. Another meeting attendee stated that the Work Group is very sensitive to this apprehension and feels very strongly about encompassing all watersheds that may help improve the health of the Bay-Delta including the Trinity River and Southern California.

A comment was made regarding the original charge of the CALFED Program. It was stated that some organizations, such as the California Forestry Association, did not have much interest in the early development of CALFED because the focus was on the Bay-Delta. However, CALFED has had expansive growth over the last year and now appears to be a statewide watershed effort. He suggested that perhaps CALFED needs to re-visit their charge. Another participant commented that CALFED is not likely to develop a long-term solution to the Bay-Delta system without including the Southern California and Trinity River watersheds. Mr. Lowrie added that these watersheds are directly connected to the Bay-Delta system and these

relationships can not be denied.

CALFED 1999 Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP)

Julie Tupper gave an update on the Technical Review Panel for the 1999 PSP. She suggested that the Work Group notify her with additional suggestions for reviewers of the Local Watershed Stewardship proposals. Ms. Tupper will provide these suggestions to Wendy Halverson Martin, Restoration Coordinator.

It was also noted that based on feedback from the Work Group, Laurel Ames (Sierra Nevada Alliance) has drafted a letter to CALFED expressing concern that the CALFED grants program has reduced its support for community-based groups as an important component of watershed restoration projects. The letter refers to the principles developed by the Work Group and requests that CALFED re-examine the PSP to ensure that the goals of BDAC are included.

Implementation Strategy

Mr. Lowrie began the discussion on the Implementation Strategy for the Watershed Program. He presented a draft copy of the Implementation Strategy which illustrates "desired outcomes" such as improved watershed ecosystem maintenance and enhancement, drinking water, and watershed planning and management. Mr. Lowrie stated that he has received comments from IWAT members, but not stakeholders. Mr. Lowrie and Ms. Davis suggested that the meeting participants break out into three smaller groups to discuss the desired outcomes as well as to brainstorm possible scenarios for administering the Watershed Program implementation. The following are notes from each of the break-out groups.

Break-out Group #1 - Facilitated by Otis Wollan

The initial discussion was designed to focus on outcomes - additions, corrections, and prioritization. The conversation quickly turned to several questions:

- Do the outcomes listed need prioritization?
- Is there a need for a statewide guideline or prioritization of outcomes - do we need an umbrella strategy?
- Or is prioritization at the local level more appropriate which would address site critical needs and outcomes determined locally?

It was observed that watersheds:

- have different profiles and problems;
- priorities change over time;
- watersheds respond/adapt to changing conditions;
- ownership patterns in watersheds are different; and
- composition of watersheds are different.

In general, the discussion moved from the content items of the outcomes themselves, to the process of how the outcomes would be determined at the local level. Perhaps broad categories of watersheds could be determined, and suggested prioritization could be made for the categories, but it was agreed in the group that it was most appropriate to have local level analysis and assessment, with a local process to determine the outcome priorities.

It was noted that there was confusion about how the new outcomes document fit with the existing language in the Watershed Program Plan released in February 1999. It was suggested that attention be returned to the Program Plan to ensure outcomes match the many suggestions listed in the Plan.

There is also a need for guidelines for what makes a local watershed group legitimate, or authentic in representing the multiple stakeholders in the dialogue. There was not specific recommendation beyond need identification.

What's Missing? Three areas were noted as missing in the outcomes. Two had to do with water quantity.

- Much work has been done in restoring upland meadows to have better watershed function, increasing holding capacity, etc. This quantity outcome is not addressed.
- Likewise, much effort is being made to assess the watershed function of old growth and late successional forests versus plantations and their watershed functions, increasing holding capacity, late season release of water, etc. also a quantity outcome not addressed.
- Thirdly, uncertain futures were acknowledged, and there is no outcome able to accommodate uncertainty. An open ended clause was suggested—"other outcomes as arise" or the like.

From other perspectives, for example a Southern California perspective, water conservation is important, as water recycling might be also.

Land use outcomes were discussed, and found challenging, but are not addressed. The balance of social, economic and environmental interests was noted as a challenge. The land use watershed linkage is not found in the outcomes.

There was concern over the Fire and Fuel outcome. It was noted that the focus on fire was stated narrowly. In some cases, fire was a practice that would work, in others, not at this time, and perhaps mechanical intervention is more appropriate. The discussion evolved to suggesting more general outcomes:

- that the site be within the range of natural variability;
- that the site achieve ecosystem processes, (like fire as a natural cycle).

The following language was suggested:

Fire and Fuels Management - Fire Fuel management is an essential ecological process concern in many watersheds that sustain the Bay-Delta system. The frequency and character of fire is a critical factor in determining its impact on the system factor in both fuels management and ecosystem balance. The Watershed Program will support planning and implementation of fire and fuel load management programs that maintain, enhance or restore sustainable ecosystem processes while protecting human safety and property. Such programs may vary according to the needs of individual watersheds.

Other elements were noted on post-its:

- Pull desired outcomes from text of Program Plan, especially pp. 2-2 - 2-17.
- Allow priorities for funding to be defined by the watersheds (bottom-up). Focus on both critical and urgent tasks and critical and chronic tasks.

- Another desired outcome (prefer to say "example") is "assess land use impacts on watershed health."
- Project Implementation
 1. Watershed analysis
 2. Desired Outcomes/Conditions
 3. Implementation Plan
 4. Activate
 5. Monitor
 6. Adjust

The last part of the discussion focused on who would perform the following tasks:

- make the decisions;
- determine projects;
- endorse the locally determined priorities;
- judge the legitimacy of applying groups to the criteria in the Watershed Program Plan;
- be on the science based panel; and
- be on the citizen panel.

Or, is there a completely different alternative, participatory and creative, that might better reflect the roots of this watershed movement?

Break-out Group #2 - Facilitated by John Lowrie

The initial discussion focused on general comments of the implementation strategy framework. The group felt that the current structure of the document is confusing and needs to be simplified. Furthermore, the desired outcomes should clearly state how they will benefit the four overall goals of the CALFED Program. It was recommended that the desired outcomes have two overarching categories: Natural Processes and Socio-Economic Processes.

The following statements were recommended as additions to the Desired Outcomes:

- Coalitions Between Public and Private Parties ("private" includes landowners and stakeholders). This outcome would enable *all* stakeholders to express concerns. These coalitions would reduce conflict and minimize impacts on current land use.
- Water Supply Reliability. This outcome would also help reduce conflicts.
- Improved Economic Stability for Local Resource-Based Communities.
- Educated Public with Regard to Natural Processes. This outcome would lessen future natural resource problems by promoting a watershed approach to land and water management both on small scale and large scale. It is important that the public understand the true value of floodplain management.

The following comments were noted by the Work Group regarding administration:

- No need to reinvent the wheel. Find out what agencies/universities, etc. are already performing this function.
- If agencies administer funds, there needs to be assurances that the community is involved in the process.
- Ensure that money for capacity building is available at local levels.
- Ensure that CALFED funds (distributed through agencies) goes to CALFED's projects and follows CALFED's program objectives.

- The Watershed Work Group has the potential to assist the Watershed Program long-term to act as an advisory group.

Break-out Group #3 - Facilitated by Martha Davis

Comments from the group focused on the following points:

First paragraph of draft implementation program: is this what we want to say?

- the common programs need to be considered in a watershed context.
- the first priority should be watershed planning.

What is the goal of the implementation program? The group felt that the document was confusing. Specific points raised:

- Are we focusing on outcomes of projects or the process by which the projects are done? Recommendation: go through the proposed outcomes and recommend/clarify priorities among the outcomes.
- What are the desired outcomes? How should they be integrated? Examples include improve drinking water and prevent further water quality degradation. Need to assess what actions will achieve what ends:
 - Bromide problem is not necessarily addressed through watershed protection actions;
 - Dissolved solids/salinity require a focus on San Joaquin River system;
 - For Microbial pathogens, there is still much to learn about where the problem is coming from – need more research.
- The desired outcome is watershed planning.
- Need to implement program along the lines of adaptive management...follow CMARP process which puts forward a theory, aggregates data, interprets the data and establishes common protocols. Need to conduct level 1 & 2 assessments: identify problem, identify action, assess, and fix it.

How should priorities be established among implementation actions? A major concern expressed by the group was the need to use an assessment process to identify/allocate priorities for projects. Specific points raised:

- Is CALFED's priority (outcome) in Stage 1? Fish or water quality? Focus appears to be fish; but the bigger/long term concern is water quality *and* fish.
- Need to recognize short period in which to implement program – realistically three years...need to facilitate program, be specific about outcomes, use existing systems as much as possible, and recognize that everyone is labor short.
- Use of existing system is critical. Need to get the biggest bang for the money invested.

Options/Recommendations:

- The program should focus on 1 or 2 watersheds – an assessment should be done and a watershed plan developed.
- During Stage 1 models should be tested and new models developed. The program should identify different types of watersheds which could be: described; concerns identified; and theories on how to address concerns could be tested. From this a better watershed model would be developed.

- The Stage 1 program should focus on actions that address/enhance both fish and water quality (i.e., meadows).
- Concerns identified and other comments noted:
 - Need a document the public can use;
 - Need agreement on what an assessment is (Oregon and Washington examples of disagreements);
 - Use DW assessments;
 - Must meet California beneficial uses;
 - Projects that enhance fish; and
 - Need support of diverse solutions.

Governance Issues

- Need minimum bureaucracy; Is it possible to use the State Water Resources Control Board? What about land management authority?
- Keep local autonomy as much as possible – do not have CALFED “running” program. At the same time need CALFED to provide umbrella guidance/some sort of system.
- Need to tie in to other programs.

Local Watershed Presentation

Shawn Garvey [South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)] and Cara Wasilewski (Nevada County Resource Conservation District) gave a brief presentation on the history of the Yuba Watershed Council. Mr. Garvey stated that the organization has been quite successful in binding collaborative efforts in Yuba and Nevada counties. Mr. Wasilewski explained that despite a failed attempt for Proposition 204 grants in 1988, the Yuba Watershed Council applied again later that year and received funding for all three proposed projects. Since then the Council has received additional funding for other projects including the:

- Coordinated Yuba River Water Quality and Watershed Monitoring Project;
- Sierra Nevada Mercury Assessment and Education Project;
- South Yuba Watershed Habitat Improvement and Fuel Reduction Plan;
- Yuba Watershed Public Outreach and Education Project;
- Little Deer Creek Habitat Improvement Project;
- Deer Creek Filtration Model Small Town Project;
- Deer Creek Coordinated Resources Management Plan Development and Disturbance Inventory Project;
- Deer Creek Water Quality and Watershed Monitoring Project;
- Bear River Coordinated Resource Management Plan Development and Educational Outreach Project;
- Bear River Volunteer-Based Watershed Monitoring Program;
- Bear River Disturbance Inventory Project; and
- Bear River Mercury Assessment and Monitoring Demonstration Project.

The Council now encompasses 26 signatories and has developed a vision, mission, and a memo of understanding. Ms. Wasilewski explained that two lead agencies, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District and San Juan Fire District are responsible for administering the funding.

Mr. Garvey relayed some of the strengths of the Yuba Watershed Council. He stated that the Council applies an open process approach and has dedicated members who are willing collaborators. He added that the area is no longer a resource-based economy and does not have a dam on the stream reach. The Council utilizes a majority opinion versus a 100 percent consensus so that projects and plans can move forward without too much delay. Mr. Garvey also added that the Council has some weaknesses such as the lack of an administrator and uncertainty in the funding process, such as the timing of the next funding cycle.

Comprehensive Monitoring Assessment and Research Program (CMARP)

Peter Stine (US Geological Survey) gave an update on the development of CMARP. He listed scale as one of the major considerations in watershed monitoring. Some of the preliminary list of monitoring categories include flow and sediment regime, water quality, habitat and species, and economic and demographic considerations. He added that there will be some overlap between programs especially the ERP and the Water Quality Program. Mr. Stine urged the meeting participants to review the CMARP documents on the CALFED webpage - <http://calfed.ca.gov>. Comments may be forwarded to Peter Stine at 916/278-3251 or peter_stine@usgs.gov.

Next Steps

Ms. Davis reminded everyone that April 16, 1999, will be a joint meeting of the ERP and Watershed work groups. The meeting will be held in Sacramento.

Name	Affiliation
Allen, Bob	Burney Forest Products
Ames, Laurel	Sierra Nevada Alliance
Barris, Lynn	Friends of the River
Chatigny, Jim	Nevada Irrigation District
Cromwell, Dean	California Department of Forestry
Crooks, Bill	City of Sacramento
Cornelius, James	Tetra Tech
Cornwall, Caitlin	Sonoma Ecology Center
Coulter, Ken	State Water Resources Control Board
Dale, Richard	Sonoma Ecology Center
Davis, Martha	Sierra Nevada Alliance
Denzler, Sara	CA Department of Water Resources
Everts, Conner	Public Officials for Water and Environmental Reform
Fitch, Steve	CA Assembly
Giacomini, Pam	Landowner
Gottlieb, David	Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains
Harthorn, Allen	Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
Heiman, Dennis	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Holt, Buford	US Bureau of Reclamation
Garvey, Shawn	South Yuba River Citizens League
Jerauld, Frank	Amador Resource Conservation District
Justice, Val	Regional Council for Rural Counties
Klinefetter, Valerie	Amador Resource Conservation District
Knecht, Mary Lee	Jones & Stokes Associates/CALFED Consultant Team
Letl, Dennis	CA Department of Water Resources
Madison, Mary	UC Davis - Department of Environmental Science & Policy
Mar, David	Westlands Water District
Nakamura, Gary	Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council
Nelson, Earl	Western Area Power Administration
Olsen, Jenna	Environmental Water Caucus
Parkin, Ann Marie	Metropolitan Water District
Pendleton, Dennis	UC Davis
Reiner, Rich	The Nature Conservancy
Rentz, Mark	California Forestry Association
Riley, Ann	Urban Creeks Council of California
Rose, Maureen	Assembly Natural Resource Committee
Spurlock, Hank	Landowner
Tupper, Julie	US Forest Service
Wasilewski, Cara	Nevada County Resource Conservation District
Wessman, George	HydroGeologic, Inc.
Wollan, Otis	Placer County Water Agency

Meeting Handouts

Draft Watershed Program Implementation Strategy dated March 12, 1999;
Draft Proposed Success Criteria and Measurements for the Watershed Program;
Assembly Bill No. 730;
Comments to Assembly Bill No. 730;
Comments from the February 19, 1999, Work Group Meeting regarding Integration;
Draft Letter to CALFED regarding the 1999 PSP;
Letter to CALFED on Behalf of the Work Group;
Memorandum regarding the Technical Review Process for 1999 PSP; and
BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Participants (as of February 19, 1999).