

MEETING SUMMARY

CV-SALTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POLICY SESSION NOTES – FEBRUARY 21, 2019

PREPARED FOR: Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA)

PREPARED BY: Stephanie Tillman/Land IQ

DATE: February 26, 2019

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document the presentation and discussion items from the February 25, 2019 CV-SALTS Executive Committee Policy Session. The main purpose of this meeting was to update the Committee on the status of the following ongoing items: State Board approval process of BPA; P&O study workplan; program implementation planning; management zone pilots and public education and outreach committee activities.

BACKGROUND

Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) is a collaborative stakeholder driven and managed program to develop sustainable salinity and nitrate management planning for the Central Valley. The goals of CV-SALTS are as follows:

- Sustain the Valley's lifestyle
- Support regional economic growth
- Retain a world-class agricultural economy
- Maintain a reliable, high-quality urban water supply
- Protect and enhance the environment

CV-SALTS includes four working groups:

1. Technical
2. Public Education and Outreach
3. Economic Social Cost
4. Other (CEQA, policy development, etc.)

ACRONYMS

AID – Alta Irrigation District Archetype	NIMS – Nitrate Implementation Measures Study
ACP – Alternative Compliance Program	P&O Study – Prioritization and Optimization Study
BP – Basin Plan	SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
BPTC – Best Practicable Treatment and Control	SMCL – Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level
GSA – Groundwater Sustainability Agency	SNMP – Salt and Nutrient Management Plan
IAZ – Initial Analysis Zone	SSALTS – Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study
ICM – Initial Conceptual Model	WQO – Water Quality Objective
ILRP – Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program	
LSJR – Lower San Joaquin River	
MUN – Municipal beneficial use	

SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE TO KRWCA

- **State Board Schedule for Basin Plan Amendments** – Delayed because of new administration, new appointments, and EJ lobbying the state board not to adopt them because the EJ community believes there are too many critical errors in the BPA.
- **Management Zone Pilot Study Projects** – See PowerPoint summary in meeting packet. There are two pilot areas: Turlock Groundwater Subbasin and Kings River East GSA/Alta Irrigation District. Steering committees were developed for each to determine MZ boundaries. Early Action Plans are also being developed as they are prioritized and required first.
- **Program Implementation Planning** – Update from Regional Board including implementation plan for dairies, CAFOS, notices to comply, and how these figure in to ILRP, CV-SALTS and SGMA planning. Regional Board is noticing CAFOS and dairies first because there are over 700 of them, compared to a few water quality coalitions (7) that represent growers.
- **P&O Study Workplan** – See PowerPoint summary in meeting packet. Summary laid out non-physical projects, physical projects, and tools/special studies. Consultants are asking for early input to guide direction of workplan, because there were several issues that were shelved during BPA process, such as the AGR policy.
- **Public Education and Outreach Committee** – Showed new CV-SALTS promotional video and presented outreach and education plan for 2019. The plan includes workshops, website refresh, direct outreach, additional video products using existing footage from Tulare meeting and/or video focusing on management zones, PowerPoint presentation for use in outreach meetings, and an increase social media presence.

MEETING NOTES

Patrick updated group on State Board approval process

- No state board rep here at meeting or on call; everything at State Board has been pushed back because of 1) new member (Laurel Firestone) who doesn't start until March; 2) upheaval because of new ideas about role and relationship with CalEPA;

- Jared Bloomenthal (formerly of US EPA Region 9, now of CalEPA) doesn't think regional boards are a good model; he wants a new top-down structure, something similar to what he had at US EPA.
- New governor has focus on drinking water, so there may be funds dedicated to this issue.
- Approval of BPA won't happen in March, likely not April, it may go before State Board in May.
- Change of administration in general brings new challenges.
- All regions in state are getting frustrated with State Board; problem is not unique to getting BPA approved.
- Tim Johnson posed question: what happens if it takes a year?
 - Patrick's response: it's a drinking water program, and that's a high priority for governor. Governor's office knows that its State Board is delaying this process.
- Other programs in process:
 - Dairy program
 - SGMA
 - Irrigated lands
 - NPDS
- Timelines for GSPs are slipping away, so deadlines are now not syncing with CV-SALTS. So that opportunity is gone because of State Board delay.
 - Guidance on water quality being prepared by DWR and State Board for GSAs – not sure what coordination is between this and another document out in draft from Water in the West (Stanford) program – comments due in early March. Not a public draft. Hoping to get it out to GSAs that are first in line to complete GSPs.
 - Already in process with two pilots for two management zones – if approval keeps getting delayed, nobody will come to the table to participate. Need to make sure pilots are successful. Anybody can put pressure on Board.
- EJ's position: Tess asked Debi Ores what EJ position is. Debi answered that EJ groups are lobbying State Board to NOT adopt the BPA, because there are too many critical errors.
 - Bruce H. asked if EJ approves of trust fund, Debi answered that EJ doesn't approve of the legislative approval of the trust fund because it distracts from drinking water. Trust fund bill is being used as something to distract from drinking water fund, but would be good if they were complementary.
- Debbie Webster asked - Some terms that are in current BP regarding variances and exceptions etc. are sunsetting this year, so what will happen if there is no new BP approved? Patrick answered that State Board will have to wrestle with that policy.

Richard Meyerhoff presented an update on MZ pilot study projects – see PowerPoint presentation in agenda package

- GEI and L&S working with steering committees

- Trying to complete draft deliverables, preliminary MZ proposal with early action plan for each pilot study area and templates for use by future management zones.
- Two projects
 - Turlock Groundwater Subbasin
 - Kings River East GSA/Alta Irrigation District
- Early Action Plan (requirement of Preliminary Management Zone Plan [PMZP])
 - Reviewed requirements
 - Non-discharger participants – include counties, etc.
 - Discussed need for steering committee, which took some time to pull together
 - Further discussion about making sure everyone is invited to and has access to the table
 - Selection of Turlock Management Zone boundaries – “goldilocks problem” too big, to small, or just right
 - Some areas don’t split up conveniently – could just make one zone and select priority areas
 - Daniel Cozad’s experience with other management zones is that if they start out small, they end up being aggregated because they realize it’s more efficient to have large zones
 - Need to let steering committee have discussion and get their minds around the idea
 - Doesn’t necessarily make sense to base them on GSA boundaries, so shouldn’t necessarily choose that
 - Replacement water settlement agreement – potential EAP template; Regional Board members don’t want kiosks; but they don’t know that communities don’t support them. Debi Ores advises that kiosks are successful in communities. Patrick advises that if Board thought there would be community buy in, they would agree to it.

Doug Patteson (Supervising Engineer in Fresno Office for CAFOs) gave update on Program Implementation Planning

- Dairy, bovine feedlot, poultry, dairy manure digester, centralized dairy manure digester, general NPDES permit for dairies
- 70% of dairies are in priority 1 areas for nitrate
- Dairies will receive notices to comply with salt and nitrate programs when BPA are improved
- Notices will be accompanied by fact sheet about CV-SALTS program
- Will do other outreach to CAFOs – newsletters, presentations, email subscription lists, etc.
- Members wonder when notices to comply will be sent out – Doug plans to send them out before BPA are approved, but the concern by members is that people will say “why do I have to comply with this” if the new regulations haven’t been passed?
- A notice to comply triggers the conditional prohibition
- Everyone should get salt notice at same time, but timeline is different for nitrate depending on where you are; Board hasn’t figured out yet how to do it.

- Starting with dairies, because there are 100s of dairies all over the valley, where ILRP notices to comply only go to coalitions.
- JP doesn't think it makes sense to send notices to comply for salt because coalition has already agreed to

Richard Meyerhoff and Tom Grovhoug gave update on P&O study plan – see PowerPoint presentation in agenda package

- Joe LeClaire of LeClaire and Associates also working on this
- Non-physical projects, physical projects, and tools/special studies
- AGR protection policy
 - At first, started with classification of groundwater basins in to default AGR classes based on water quality
 - Four classes
 - Water quality ranges for each class, along with narrative objective
 - Shifted to salt management strategy, but that AGR classes could be looked at again during/after P&O study
 - So, concept of classes wasn't completely abandoned, but shelved via the P&O study
 - Concurrently, LSJR developed and passed their policy, which is a different approach
 - Watershed-based approach
 - Includes salinity water quality objectives for the LSJR
 - Used modeling to predict outcomes
 - Stakeholder input; engagement with ag community
 - Balance and compromise – key ingredient – managing high salinity water instead of having no water
 - Options are: go ahead with classes, use LSJR approach, or a hybrid approach where classes would be default but site-specific objectives would be used if proved appropriate, but then who is the burden placed on for developing site-specific criteria?
 - What is the management goal we are managing to?
 - How would LSJR approach be applied to groundwater?
 - Inclusion of boron projects in the workplan
 - Inclusion of other constituents in the workplan
 - Inclusion of tool development (to assess various strategies)
 - Mainly asking for early input to guide direction of workplan

Nicole Bell gave PEOC update

- Four minute video using footage from Tulare workshop in December – was sent out for review; made one round of edits because that is what budget allowed
- Showed final video

- Reviewed communication plan in agenda package
- Will include
 - Workshops in priority areas
 - Website refresh
 - Direct outreach
 - Finalize and distribute video
 - Additional video from Tulare meetings that could be used for more videos, meeting recap, etc.
 - Produce video focusing on management zones
 - Develop PowerPoint that can be used for outreach and education
 - Develop social media presence – will interview Exec. Committee to find out what platforms are predominantly used by each industry

Meeting Schedule

- March 28
- April 25