

## MEETING SUMMARY

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# CV-SALTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POLICY SESSION NOTES – AUGUST 15, 2019

**PREPARED FOR:** Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA)

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**DATE:** August 19, 2019

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document the presentation and discussion items from the August 15, 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: MZ early action plans, proposals and lessons learned from pilots; P&O Study Work Plan and cost estimate; literature review summary on nitrate and cancer, 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	
MZ – MZ	

## SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE TO KRWCA

- **MZ (MZ) Pilot Study Projects** – Richard Meyerhoff presented comments and revisions to the draft Early Action Plan with costs; the revised MZ proposal, and considerations for MZ efficiencies and lessons learned during the pilot process. Comments on the proposal template are due August 23. The next committee meetings for the pilot areas are in September. The pilot process indicated that both Priority 1 and 2 MZs should start planning as early as possible to allow for the time it takes to develop governance, develop costs, and compile and QC groundwater data.
- **P&O Study Workplan and Cost Estimate** – The revised draft P&O Study Workplan and estimated costs were presented to the committee. Comments are due August 30. The total cost for the 10-year P&O study is estimated to be \$11.7M. This includes the four tasks of stakeholder participation, programmatic activities, non-physical projects, and management strategies.
- **Literature review on drinking water nitrate and cancer** – Several reviews by impartial state, national and international government health agencies all conclude that an association between nitrate in drinking water and cancer has not been established. More research is needed.
- **Public Education and Outreach Committee** – A draft fact sheet on de-designation (of aquifers from municipal water quality standards) is ready for review. The PEOC is continuing to update the CVSC website, and continues to track outreach with an online tool.

## MEETING NOTES

The Meeting Notes from the June 20, 2019 Executive Committee Meeting were approved with no changes.

### **Basin Plan Amendments – State Board Consideration Schedule: Patrick Pulupa (Regional Water Board)**

- September 17 board hearing still on track.
- State Board is working on finalizing responses to comments. Also drafting resolution language that Regional Board hasn't seen yet.

- Had call with US EPA to edit revisions according to their comments. Main comments of theirs were two items related to variances:
  - When variance would kick in; clarified that it would apply when discharge is above 1,600 mg/l;
  - Concerned about expansion of scope of variance to include industrial because the economic analysis didn't include industrial applications. With the language the way it is, industrial should not apply, so Regional Board not sure how EPA could interpret that that could happen. Change in wording was municipal and domestic to municipal and industrial. EPA gets what regulation is trying to do and agrees with it, but they have been losing more litigation cases than they have been winning. Can't think of industrial dischargers that would need a variance, but their concern is that that could come up. According to Tim Moore, it is against federal law to apply a variance to a technology based water quality standard, which most industrial dischargers have. They wanted assurance that there wasn't a whole new variance structure for a bunch of industrial dischargers they didn't know about.
  - EPA has a line item veto (unlike State Board), so they could approve everything except that.

#### **Update on MZs – Richard Meyerhoff (GEI Consultants)**

- See power point presentation included in agenda package
- MZ Early Action Plan
  - Last round of pilot study meetings in June; comments resulted in these key revisions (see agenda package table of comments and responses)
    - Section 1 - Revised background and purpose
    - Section 2 - Identification of potentially impacted users (new section)
    - Section 3 - Existing Safe drinking water programs in area (new). Incorporated information on DAC needs assessment and implementation or orders/programs
    - Section 4 – Process to Identify potentially affected residents (minor revisions)
    - Section 5 – Temporary drinking water provisions (significant revision)
    - Section 6 – Early action plan implementation (revised)
  - Section 5 Temporary water provisions: key program components
    1. Public access drinking water facility (PAWF) program
      - Water filling stations – concept similar to June draft
      - Vendor-supplied water facilities – new option added
        - Identify business, government office, community center or other location to be supplied by a bottled water vendor.
        - Access issue – document states goal is 24/7 access for any PAWF, but has language that recognizes this may not be possible in all locations. If it is made a must, it will ultimately limit options.
    2. Alternative Water Program (AWP)
      - Bottled water delivery – concept similar to June draft
      - Point of use treatment system – new option added
        - Open to any approved participant, as long as no limitation due to high nitrate.

- Parry Klassen: Point of use systems have several issues, in addition to being expensive.
- Karl Longley: Doesn't care how much it costs; just wants people to have clean drinking water. No point in getting a cheaper system if it doesn't work.
- Tess Dunham: Keep in mind that these are interim solutions for the most part, until people are hooked up to reliable public water system.
- Jennifer Cleary: Point of use is problematic from a public health perspective. Most public health drinking water systems would rather stop using a well with nitrate than treat it, but some small water systems don't have that option. Well head treatment is more effective.
- Daniel Cozad: Self-Help organization has some innovative solutions.
- JP Catievella: Point of use should still be part of tool box, but may not want to rely on it too much.

### 3. Qualifications to participate

- Removed criterion regarding participation in another alternative water program – would take a lot of cumbersome analysis to figure this out.
- Removed residency documentation requirement
- Water testing – included annual re-testing option; question came up: what if you have nitrate that is close to 10, but not over 10? Decided that if it's 8 or over, will automatically get test one year later.
- Included baseline water delivery volume but can be revised. 50 ga/household of 4/month, which is too low. Will look into this further. But it is a baseline, not a standard for everybody.

### 4. Community outreach – greatly expanded section

- MZ website and development of information materials
- Want to have meetings for non-dischargers
- Public notice activities
- Targeted outreach – direct mailout to residents with areas identified as likely impacted by high nitrate

### 5. New monitoring section added

- PAWFs
  - Determine patterns of usage
  - Evaluate needs for additional PAWFs
  - Provide basis for property owner compensation for water usage if needed
  - Automated monitoring to extent practical
- AWP
  - Document resident participation; similar to previous draft
- Implementation of EAP
  - Schedule – similar to June draft
  - Estimated cost of implementation – updated, but work in progress
    - Additional costs for community outreach activities

- Considerable uncertainty in PAWF costs
- Considerable uncertainty in AWP costs
- Estimated cost table in Power Point presentation
- MZ Proposal
- MZ Efficiencies

#### **P&O Study Workplan – Richard Meyerhoff**

- The outline for a preliminary MZ proposal was presented. It is built around the regulation (see PPT presentation in agenda package). The main sections are:
  1. Background and Purpose
  2. Proposed MZ (boundary area)
  3. Initial Assessment
  4. Management participants – probably needs more work
  5. Current treatment and control efforts or management practices of MZ participants
  6. Early Action Plan Development
  7. Plan to finalize MZ proposal
  8. References
  9. Attachments
    - Letters of participation
    - GSA Information
    - Early Action Plan
- Outreach Documentation
- Next MZ committee meetings – 9/23 in Dinuba for Kings/AID; Turlock 9/24
- Comments on draft EAP due August 23.

#### **MZ Pilot Studies – Efficiencies/Lessons Learned**

- Organization
  - Governance needs to begin early
  - Steering committees are essential
- EAP
  - Cost development is challenging and can only be estimated
  - Filling station locations – difficult to site/identify
  - Priority 1 areas will have to take a learn by doing approach
  - Priority 2 and 3 areas can learn from them, but they shouldn't wait until the last minute thinking that Priority 1 groups figured it all out, because every area has different challenges
- Data Issues
  - Accessibility, availability and integration
  - Data refinement beyond CV-SALTS – takes time to compile all data sources
  - Data imprecision (DWR database/well logs) – takes time to figure out which data is useful
  - Need for local knowledge is needed because there is a disconnect between well meta data and population served.
- In general, be ready to start as soon as possible
- Data, imprecision also in DDW database, so local knowledge is really important
- Less data for upper part of GW systems than deeper part

- Charlotte Gallick is working with a church and the transit authority for Kings Co. but hasn't approached any retail establishments because they view filling stations as competition.
- Need to get water purveyors at the table. At first, they had a negative reaction to the pilot process because they thought they would be responsible for everything – they didn't really understand until they became part of the process.

### **MZ Templates**

- Outreach, discharger contact approach, EAP, cost for drinking water, water quality analysis to identify potentially impacted areas, data sources, drinking water systems characterization.
- Anne Littlejohn had no idea how complex it was to figure out water systems and solutions. Each MZ is different; conversations were very different between two pilots. Everybody wants to know costs.
- Tess: Because the MZ proposals are so focused on the EAP, concerned that people are forgetting the full scope of the program. It is for the long term and will incur additional costs. MZs should really be working on long term plan concurrently.

### **P&O Study Work Plan and Cost Estimation**

- Revised draft work plan
- Summary of key changes in agenda package
- Also see PPT for overview of revised draft
- Key issues:
  - Allow overall Central Valley characterization to occur before deciding whether to subdivide Central Valley into smaller areas to develop alternatives
  - Lack of clarity regarding non-physical projects
  - Salt management areas vs. salt management regions
    - SMR – planning areas (assuming maximum of 5)
    - SMA – defined by basin plan amendment language (already in BPA)
  - Questions regarding the need for a technical advisory committee – removed in revision – Richard doesn't think it's necessary. We had one in CV-SALTS, which was useful at the beginning when there was a lot of technical work being done (to scope it) but waned further into the process. Adds another layer of organization/bureaucracy.
  - Questions regarding the need for/role of a Technical Program Manager. This is not required, but Richard's experience so far with CV-SALTS compels him to highly recommend a TPM. Most large programs like this need someone to coordinate everything and it takes a lot of time.
- Costs
  - Total 10-year cost = \$11.7M
  - Annual costs of Tasks are as follows:
    - Task 1 Stakeholder Participation - \$986K
    - Task 2 Programmatic Activities \$1.9M
    - Task 3 Non-physical Projects \$2.8M
    - Task 4 Management Strategies \$5.8M
  - Cost matrix categorized by year and Task in PPT presentation

- Tess: How is the funding mechanism for projects in SMRs envisioned, as related to overall costs? – Further discussion about overall costs vs. individual area costs.
- Comments are due August 30.

#### **Literature Review: Nitrate and Cancer – Time Moore**

- Several reviews by impartial state, national and international government health agencies all conclude that an association between nitrate in drinking water and cancer has not been established. More research is needed. This is contrary to the Environmental Working Group's recommendation that because there is an association, the nitrate limit in drinking water should be lowered to below 1.

#### **PEOC Update (links provided in agenda package)**

- Outreach tracking
- De-designation fact sheet – draft for approval
- Website changes

#### **Schedule**

- September 17: State Board Hearing
- September 19: Policy Session