

**Sierra Water Workgroup Meeting
Thursday September 17, 2009
El Dorado Irrigation District**

ACTION ITEMS:

- 1) **MARK YOUR CALENDARS** for the next 4 Sierra Water Workgroup meetings (Locations TBD):
 - **Wednesday December 9th, 2009** (Location: Calaveras or Tuolumne County)
 - **Thursday March 11, 2010**
 - **May 2010** (Exact Day TBD, will be before Sierra Day at the Capitol)
 - **Thursday September 9, 2010**
 - **Thursday December 9, 2010**
- 2) **CLIMATE CHANGE:** Each IRWM will draft ideas of addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation in IRWM plans and projects. Please email your ideas to Marion Gee marion@sierranevadaalliance.org by COB Wed. Dec. 2 and she will put it into one documents to discuss at the Dec. 9 meeting.
- 3) **AREA OF ORIGIN** issues:
 - Marion will arrange some speakers to discuss Area of Origin issues at the next meeting.
 - Put together a white paper on area of origin benefits in the Sierra. If you would like to lead this project or if you have any ideas/information for this paper please email Marion Gee marion@sierranevadaalliance.org
- 4) **RAW WATER** Optimization- If you are interested in joining a working group to develop a raw water optimization BMP and guidelines or if you have comments on the raw water paper put together by Julie Leimbach, contact John Mills sixbit@mlode.com.
- 5) **SIERRA IRWMP SUMMIT:**
 - Don't forget to register for the Oct. 16 Sierra IRWMP Summit in Kings Beach, CA. Go to: http://www.sierranevadaalliance.org/news/calendar/profile.shtml?index=1248207177_10417&cat=&loc=&listpage=1
 - Kim Carr from SNC will be introducing the Sierra Water Workgroup, its mission and vision, what we have done so far, our next steps and how to get involved.
 - Marion will be circulating a one-page summary of the Sierra Water Workgroup to you all to approve that will be included as a handout at the Sierra IRWMP Summit.
- 6) **MAPS:** If you are interested in working with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy on developing a visual map with IRWMs and how snowline and runoff will change as a result of climate change, email Marion Gee marion@sierranevadaalliance.org Those interested so far include: Holly Alpert and Elizabeth Betancourt.
- 7) **POTENTIAL ACTION ITEM:** The group thought another meeting of Sierra IRWMs (like the Sierra IRWMP Summit on Oct. 16) should happen before Sierra Day at the Capitol in 2010 in Sacramento. It would have include regional and

issue workshops and allow for further coordination and information exchange on project ideas, policy issues and other ideas.

Participants:

Julie Leimbach
Mark Drew
John Buckley
Liz Mansfield
John Mills
Kim Carr
Marie Davis
Patrick Luriziaga????
Don Wight
Joan Clayburgh
Julie Allen
Marion Gee
Elizabeth Betancourt
David Witter
Chris Brown
Brian Morris
Holly Alpert

1. Recap last meeting on March 26 and Overview of Possible Workplan Items
 - a. Could look at IRWM challenges and barriers, present to DWR
2. Sierra IRWMP Summit
 - a. Include introduction to SWW on Build Capacity and Support Panel
 - b. Maybe have informal SWW meeting at the Summit
 - c. Action items/needs that were ID at Summit should be addressed at SWW
 - d. Send out Sierra Meadow Forum/Conference announcement out to the group
3. Water and Climate Change in the Sierra

Water and Climate Change in the Sierra

- CABY- climate change in their plan, not a whole lot done yet- discussion of having a climate change model for CABY region (using WEAP), model development not done yet (EID/
- Addressing water temperatures and mercury (will rise in temperature affect mercury)
- EID as district done a lot of climate change- may be able to take those lessons/tools to CABY
 - o Working with SEI on Google platform- showing climate change impacts on google platform – could be useful for IRWMs to visualize climate change impacts, would be useful for outreach as well
 - o American Rivers and SYRCL- trying to get climate change into the FERC re-licensing process- a study plan for climate change drafted with UC Davis and many others- was not adopted- will do a symposium with FERC

in DC, may result in policy decision at the national level—will forward Am. Rivers study plan to SWW list

- SNC developed a map- showed where the water from Sierra watersheds go (to urban areas) email this to SWW list→ need a visual to show snow line and runoff and how those are changing/may be changed (like a SEKI disc? Need something like that for the Sierra, could be powerful message/visual for politicians) SNC wants to set up follow up call to develop this map. Map could show IRWMs along with snow line and runoff –
- SNC IRWM map- will also distribute this
- John Mills- DWR emphasizing coordinating between bordering IRWMs- but not any coordination with upper watersheds with downstream IRWMs→ Tuolumne-Stan to coordinate with San Fran but San Fran not required to coordinate in RAP approval process. Also encouraged to coordinate with Bureau of Rec and other big downstream water users. Some places not covered with IRWM, hard to coordinate with void. Interregional funds are being earmarked for other things, NOT interregional coordination – SWW should work to decide how future bonds fund interregional coordination
- How should Sierra address climate change in their planning efforts? (Not just showing impacts of climate change)
 - o Modeling
 - o Maybe each entity in SWW- could draft specific suggestions to adapt and reduce emissions for their district or region- compile some document
 - o Want to be proactive and not wait for DWR to tell us how IRWMs should address climate change (emission reduction and adaptation)
 - o Oct. 9 Lorraine White MCWRA meeting , she will be a speaker
 - o Would like to see input from USFS, other regional groups that are participating in the SWW
 - o Regionwide assessment for forest plans to be done this year and next year, forest plans may not start up until 2 years from now→ SWW could help with developing water section→ Julie recommends to get involved on the individual forest plans, can be instances to partner with USFS to do work that would be included in the plan – each IRWM should get involved early with their local National Forest , intro to planning staff
 - o **ACTION ITEM:** Creating a visual map with IRWMs, snowline, runoff – Interested: Holly Alpert, EID, Marion gee
 - o **ACTION ITEM:** IRWMs should draft ideas for climate change – adaptation, mitigation and how to plan- then SWW could find overlaps and commonalities. Put together all ideas into one draft – could share with DWR and across the Sierra → could raise our profile if it is something we can all agree – end of November/beginning of December deadline for getting this to Marion (include coordination element in the list of principles- how to coordinate with forest plan, general plans etc)
 - o Send Sierra Water Workgroup SNC Climate Action Plan
 - Draft out- briefing the board next week
 - Opportunity for public comment
 - Water section needs to be expanded, address water quality

- Send out the SWW to comment on the water section of SNCAP
- California Adaptation Strategy
 - Circulate any comments to the SWW
 - Give Marion any comments, will circulate out to the group
 - Brian Morris they have submitted comments– not enough plan for action- need more help from federal government since they have money and own a lot of the land

Delta policy package and water bond

- Very large bonds – keep eye on the bond and how much would be allocated to the IRWMs- most of the money would be to the Delta and downstream- not much for the upper watersheds
- Priority rights, state water board would have taken that apart in the policy package
- MCWRA put together policy recommendations
 - Area of origin water rights could have been cut in half by the state water board in the proposed package
- Utilities need the water for their customer base- area of origin not discussed by environmental groups etc. but can have big impacts on watersheds- no awareness outside the utilities/local governments – area of origin rights for beneficial use not for consumptive use
 - One of the pieces would have order the state board to develop in stream flow requirements in 9 months (DFG
- TUD does not have area of origin filing, have contract, involved in re-licensing, clean water act trumps water rights (staff decision), lake levels at reservoir to preserve recreational opportunities on stan forest , historically lake levels have gone below that level
 - State board rec is water quality issue, lake levels needed to be maintained at certain level , this would reduce consumption
 - usually area of origin right a silver bullet but Even pre-1914 right being assailed under clean water act
 - recreation being put above municipal water supply- could have significant implications for the state board, especially in the Delta
 - should this all go wrong (if rec wins) then Tuolumne Utility district would have no alternative than to make area of origin filing elsewhere
 - political pressure- decision on hold now and doing a study
- **ACTION ITEMS:**
 - Speakers for next workgroup meeting in december
 - White paper on area of origin benefits in the Sierra
 - Speakers travel to different IRWMs to present on the paper
 - Panel at ACWA conference
- water rights 101 or Area of Origin 101 (including area of origin) traveling show for each IRWM , area of origin not just for consumption – people need to know about this – area of origin applies outside the Sierra as well-

GET A SPEAKER FOR AREA OF ORIGIN (water rights attorney or other)

- Each IRWM should have area of origin as an issue in their plan
- Need to build base – MCWRA (with support from SWW and IRWMs) could approach ACWA to have a panel at their conference to discuss area of origin (not just consumptive use) and what that means for the Sierra (this could be the strategic endpoint, outcome in the future) raise this issue with a broad based coalition – next conference in dec. 2009 – don't want an attorney to present on the law but on the other benefits
- White paper on benefits of area of origin for the Sierra (never been done) --- need to include forest service (have a lot of water rights across the entire Sierra) RANDY GOULD, water rights attorney regional USFS office (maybe include Randy at next Sierra Water Workgroup)
- Maybe put together a “speakers bureau” after whiter paper to go around to different IRWMs to speak on this

Raw Water Optimization Paper

Sierra Nevada Alliance, Julie L. on Steering Committee California Urban Water Conservation Council , worked with Otis Wollan, started some meetings with some foothill water agencies and Contra Costa Water District, met in Auburn 4-5 times, information gathering initially about how irrigation districts manage their canals and ditches, what were the management and conservation issues (challenges and benefits of these canals and ditches). Water agencies handling them differently some were closing them, revitalizing them for historic/environmental benefits, each ditch in their system need to be assessed as each had different needs.

Put together white paper based on those meetings. Sent out for edits. Brought it to the CABY IRWM that represented wider group other than agencies to get their edits as well.

Goal discussed in the meeting was trying to define BMPs for managing the ditches before someone told them from outside on how to do this.

CUWCC manages BMPs since 1991 for water agencies to demonstrate success in water conservation. Also ag water conservation council. May be overlap with storm water (rain water capture, recycling etc) – raw water not foreign to the council, but CUWCC tradition to take long time discussing things and not always coming to decisions. Expertise is on the water conservation side of things. This paper might morph into multiple BMPs if going through the council.

Length and depth of the ditch, average peak, low monthly flow rates – things that gave better pic of water regime would need to be added, need the basic data so has basic picture of what is happening with water use – ultimately measure of success is before and after water use

Process

- CUWCC has two caucuses – agencies and environmental groups – they vote
- Steering committee is now the board of directors
- This group has to move forward drafting language- how do you deal with the parts that don't have to do with water conservation
 - o Opportunities for Low carbon energy production\
 - o Risk and liability issues- risk of flooding, protection of riparian zones , wetlands
 - o Mission statement council- not get involved outside water conservation—some might be ok with it as the council is getting involved with rain water, storm water
- TUD wants this as a BMP
- This BMP would be very different
 - o Would be on canal by canal basis , not like other council BMPs- would not create one number for all canals → canals could be part of flex track menu to achieve target → would be its separate box under the optional BMPs (not the foundational BMPs)
 - o Landscape BMP is – overall water savings (flex trak approach)- set overall goal and water budget but have flexible methods to achieve overall savings
- Need to discuss the process of creating this BMP (John Buckley)
 - o Looking at PCWA East Loomis project cited – has clear list/description- appendix A identifies common issues and solutions it is a good beginning (may need more detail) – appendix D EID master plan summary , has potential actions and next steps with wide range of options and ideas to manage for water loss
 - o QUESTION is THE PROCESS of getting that BMP written (using the work that has already been done and finding the universal components)
 - o Should we work on it? John Mills says urgency/priority for the Sierra
 - o Benefit of it being seprate BMP will get support from the council/state and have guidelines when trying to work in the community – would give agencies additional leverage to implement- to have set of guidelines and process agreed upon by environmental groups/agencies etc (that would include habitat assessments, community outreach) then people would be more comfortable
 - o Could move from decentralized to more focus environmental watering-
 - o Council bmp might not include critical habitat assessment because not dealing with water conservation
 - o Economic side, who will pay is all important to consider.
 - o Shouldn't forget about agricultural benefit, growing food

- Outreach first would be good idea- finding out how people value the ditches etc- coming at it with a BMP might be more difficult (Marie Davis)
- Can only get conservation credit for their ditches (potable water) after gets to wastewater treatment plant (so no raw water BMP)
- Would be water savings from this BMP but need public education and involvement—at some point will have to make the ditches more efficient, so should be proactive otherwise Sierra could be told what to do.
- Chris Brown would support this effort – John Mills and TUD can provide staff support for this effort , they would like to partner with others including SWW and start this effort
 - Reinvigorate memberships of group
 - And bring together the information
 - Start forming a BMP using the right language with the group of everyone need for going through cuwcc formal process- would also require education and outreach to the other agencies to bring them along
 - Could also go to the council and give a presentation on the issue and get them aware early on – so can present to CUWCC where the water is going, what are we conserving for – if they don't want to deal with that issue then they can black line it in the document
 - Council is open to stormwater (talking about where water is going into aquifer etc. and not into storm drains) but will only be measuring water savings
- It is essential to see where the water savings are going (to new development or back to the river)
- TUD submitted offer and accepted by CUWCC board- to start and facilitate official process of creating BMP- TUD can convene process based on their SNC grant work and build on the work and stakeholder process Julie started
- Number of small ditch companies with pre-1914 rights – need to include these groups in the process as well (Julie Allen)- talk to her about getting contacts for foothill ditch companies
- **ACTION ITEM:** John Mills will start process with Chris and the Council and arrange first meeting (but don't do it too outside the council – keep dialogue open with the council) – continue to use the white paper as resource for BMP development – send comments to John Mills (in doc. Not doc.x) with email etc. and how to contact

20x2020 Water Conservation

- This group might be able to help reaching out to other agencies in the Sierra that have not implemented any BMPs before.

- Range of issues (lower elevation focus on outdoor, upper watershed looking indoors)
- Big issue to take on
- What are the drivers for conservation in the Sierra beyond legislation? What makes sense in the Sierra? How does it affect our Sierra environment?
- 20x2020 reaches beyond UWMPs – smaller water agencies in the Sierra may have to take actions
- through the IRWMs could coordinate BMP management- those who have done it can share resources/lessons learned through the IRWMs – partnerships could help the smaller districts implement if they can't afford to do things like hire full time water use efficiency person (another way to start a committee of existing staff to address different BMP components).
 - o Finding mechanisms to help small providers come together and see economies of scale to implement these BMPs would be very helpful- most of the smaller agencies afraid of the cost and don't like to be told of another thing they need to do
 - o Maybe wait for the legislation to see what they are requiring and then talking with SWW
- POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS: Another idea to have SWW conference (2 day) regional workshops, issue workshops, good way to coordinate, get ideas, information exchange on projects, BMPs as well as the policy exchange etc. → maybe connect this with Sierra Lobby Day → make sure we take lessons learned from this IRWM Summit to any future Sierra IRWM conference

Future Meetings Schedule

December second week wed. 9th afternoon ? talk to pete kampa and john mills at TUD or Amador/Calaveras

Second week Thursday after three months (March 11, May conference, Sept., Dec.)