

Meeting Minutes
Lower San Joaquin River Subcommittee of CV-SALTS
February 9, 2012 Meeting

Attendees

Jeanne Chilcott – Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
David Cory – San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority
John Herrick – South Delta Water Agency
Debbie Liebersbach – Turlock Irrigation District
Jim Martin – Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Ric Ortega – Grasslands Water District
Nigel Quinn – Berkeley Lab/Bureau of Reclamation
Shawn Carmo – Grasslands Water District
Andy Safford - EKI
Roberta Tassej – Bureau of Reclamation
Ernie Taylor – Department of Water Resources
Diana Waller – USDA/NRCS
Dennis Westcot – San Joaquin River Group Authority
Jeff Willett – City of Stockton

On the phone:

Mark Gowdy – State Water Resources Control Board
Jamil Ibrahim – Bureau of Reclamation

1. Review Meeting Minutes

The group reviewed and approved the minutes from the meeting on November 10, 2011.

2. Update on SWRCB Decisions on Vernalis Salinity Objectives

Mark Gowdy gave a brief update on the State Board's process for evaluating the Vernalis salinity objective and the workshop to be held on Feb 21st.

3. Coordination with the Basin Planning Specialist

The State Board has contracted with Richard Meyerhoff (with CDM-Smith's Denver office) to provide basin planning assistance to CV-SALTS. Richard Meyerhoff's basin planning expertise will be available to the Committee as it proceeds with finalizing the workplan and then analyzing the water quality objectives and developing a Basin Plan amendment for the Lower San Joaquin River. The committee discussed a variety of opportunities to utilize this resource moving forward.

4. CAA Funding Update

There is \$765,000 of Clean Up and Abatement Account funding available to the group through August 2013. Jeanne has been coordinating with the contracting office and they are willing to work

with the committee to encumber the funds. However, they want to see clear direction and timelines for the project. Jeanne will follow-up with the contracting office after the meeting regarding the needs of the committee as well as the schedule and timelines discussed.

The group has a significant amount of work to do, and a short timeline. The group has concerns that the CAA funding is not enough to complete the committee's tasks. Additional discussion on this topic, and ways to best utilize the financial and technical resources available occurred under Agenda item #5 below. The group agreed there is a need to bring consultants on board as soon as possible. The group will look for opportunities to streamline the contracting process. Ideas discussed include working with Resource Conservation Districts or Universities to administer contracts, or utilizing consultants already under contract, if they have the appropriate expertise.

5. Review and Development of Workplan

RWQCB staff and Dennis Westcot developed the draft workplan discussed at the meeting. It is intended to provide a clear process and timeline for completing the Basin Planning process by 2013. The workplan is designed to make use of resources and documentation on salinity issues in the Lower San Joaquin River that's already available. Existing data will be updated and supplemented as needed. The committee members agreed that it is not envisioned that big new studies will be needed or undertaken to complete the workplan.

The group reviewed the workplan prior to the meeting. As a result, rather than going through the workplan item by item, the group's discussion centered on whether or not the workplan accomplished the tasks assigned to the Committee and provided the time needed to accomplish each task. The group also focused on ways to expedite the process, and sources of funding options to complete the tasks. There were a few comments suggesting tasks to include (e.g. peer review, and TMDL (if needed), etc.). Dennis will update the Plan accordingly. Overall there was general agreement that the plan appeared to include the steps needed, but several were concerned that the timeline didn't allow for any portion of the project to fall behind.

Committee members do not have the time needed to develop the work products themselves. Those present agreed their time is better spent reviewing work done by others and addressing issues as they arise. The group agreed that it needs to have someone on-board to manage the project, and keep it moving forward in a timely manner. The "manager" would need to work with consultants or other experts contracted to complete the various tasks, and bring the draft work products back to the Committee for their input. Some Committee members expressed concern over relinquishing control over the process. The group discussed ways to ensure draft work products are brought back to the group in a timely manner to keep the project on track. It is also envisioned that Committee members will be asked to be the liaison between the consultants and the Committee on specific tasks. This approach will help spread out the workload, and keep the Committee involved, and the project on track.

The Committee also discussed the options for proceeding through the CEQA process. The Department of General Services provides CEQA assistance to State agencies. Jeanne will follow up with them to find out more about how that works and what opportunities there might be to work with them on the CEQA process.

There was discussion also on contract avenues that would be available to meet the tight time frame. USDA/NRCS suggested that Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) could be an avenue for getting the work done and would reflect the support of the local agencies in the workplan.

Next steps include: (1) Dennis Westcot contacting Richard Meyerhoff to get his input on the proposed workplan, timeline, budget and funding options for the process. He will also see if Meyerhoff is available to attend the next meeting, set for March 15th. (2) Dennis Westcot, David Cory, Jeanne Chilcott and others working on the Executive Committee will talk to them about options for getting a manager (or chairperson) to help direct the process, and assistance in developing a scope of work for items 12-23 defined in the present draft of the Workplan. (3) Other Committee members will inquire with RCDs on their interest in being involved in this activity.

6. Update on Westside Salinity and Water Supply Study

Roberta Tassej, USBR gave a brief update on the Westside salinity and water supply study.

7. Update on Real-Time Management Study

Roberta Tassej, USBR gave a brief update on the Real-time Management Program. She plans to begin work on the west side of the San Joaquin River first, and then expand to other areas. Look for more information to be available in the future.

8. Review Items for Executive Committee and Future Agenda Items

Action items are as follows:

- (1) Dennis Westcot and Jim Martin will update the workplan as discussed.
- (2) Jeanne Chilcott will follow-up with the Department of General Services regarding contacting and CEQA options.
- (3) Dennis Westcot will contact Richard Meyerhoff to get his input on the proposed workplan, timeline, budget and funding options for the process. He will also see if Meyerhoff is available to attend the next meeting, set for March 15th
- (4) Dennis Westcot, David Cory, Jeanne Chilcott and others working on the Executive Committee will talk to them about options for getting a manager (or chairperson) to help direct the process, and assistance in developing a scope of work for items 12-23 of the Workplan.
- (5) Dennis Westcot will contact Committee members about their willingness to oversee specific portions of the workplan.
- (6) Niguel Quinn will follow-up on opportunities to use models/resources developed by the Bureau in implementing the workplan.
- (7) Committee members will inquire with local agencies, including RCDs to determine their interest in being part of the committee's work and acting as a contracting agency for the LSJR Committee needs.

9. NEXT MEETINGS: March 15th and April 12th