

Meeting Minutes
Lower San Joaquin River Subcommittee of CV-SALTS
January 11, 2011 Meeting

Attendees (in no particular order)

In person:

David Cory – San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority
Karna Harrigfeld – Stockton East Water District
Jeff Willett – City of Stockton
Parry Klassen – East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition
Jeanne Chilcott – Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
John Herrick – South Delta Water Agency
Debbie Liebersbach – Turlock Irrigation District
John Beam – Grasslands Water District (consultant)
Patrick Rahilly – Grasslands Water District
Joel Miller - San Joaquin Valley National Wildlife Refuges
Mark Gowdy – State Water Resources Control Board
Dennis Westcot – San Joaquin River Group Authority

On phone:

Nigel Quinn – US Bureau of Reclamation
Ernie Taylor – Department of Water Resources
Jose Faria – Department of Water Resources

Insert items discussed prior to my arrival here....

Geographic scope of TMDL

Discussion center on balancing the extra work of rescoping the TMDL against the benefits gained from including area further upstream than the confluence with the Merced River. Considerations included extra funding/effort associated with another scoping meeting; benefit of a more comprehensive basin-wide analysis and final product; lack of flow and salinity data for this river reach; and additional time needed could conflict with current timeline expectations.

Action: Dennis Westcot to discuss/consider further with Regional Board staff and report back at the next meeting.

Memorandum regarding MUN beneficial use

There was general discussion of the draft memorandum prepared under the direction of Bobby Larson and Tess Dunham regarding removing or modifying the MUN beneficial use that currently applies to the San Joaquin River. There was a general consensus that, based on the memo, the effort and cost required – without a guarantee of success – was not commensurate with the potential benefit. Instead there was consensus that the Basin Plan amendment should simply describe the current reality of MUN beneficial uses on the river, and attempt to establish objectives accordingly. It is hope the Tess or Bobbi will be available for further discussion of the matter at the next meeting.

Meeting Minutes
Lower San Joaquin River Subcommittee of CV-SALTS
January 11, 2011 Meeting

Action: The co-chairs will set up a discussion with Bobby Larson and Tess Dunham to review the draft memorandum with the subcommittee at a future next meeting and coordinate the committee's decision/recommendation with the executive committee.

Steady-State Modeling Approach

There was a general consensus that Dr. Hoffman's steady-state modeling approach was appropriate for objective setting *provided that* it properly accounts for conditions existing in the area where beneficial uses are being protected. Other important considerations include the yield threshold data available for the most salt sensitive crops being protected, and estimation of the actual leaching fractions in the area using properly understood drainage data. Some write-up of this conclusion is needed as the basis for further discussion.

Action: Dennis, Perry, and Mark to prepare a discussion draft for an agenda item at a future meeting.

Problem Statement

A problem statement is needed describing the impetus for the efforts of this subcommittee. This includes some background description of the changes in the watershed that have led to current conditions (i.e. what is the salinity problem, and how did we get here). Language and information for this problem statement could possibly come from the Vernalis salinity TMDL and D1641. There was also a brief discussion about the need for a consumptive use estimate in this write-up, and how it might be obtained.

Action: Dennis will re-draft / shorten the existing problem statement and circulate to the committee for review.

Characterizing Existing Water Quality

There was discussion on how and over what time period to characterize current salinity conditions in the San Joaquin River, and tools available (e.g. WARMF) to assist with the presentation. There was also discussion of the capability of the subcommittee to present this information, or whether a contractor would need to be used.

Action: Ernie and Nigel will draft a 1-page description of considerations and next steps, such as what information is available, how to assemble/present the information, and outline a scope of work for a contractor to do the work.

Miscellaneous

- Memo regarding reconsideration of beneficial use designations was sent to Executive Committee last month, and the letter regarding need for water quality criteria information is pending.

Meeting Minutes
Lower San Joaquin River Subcommittee of CV-SALTS
January 11, 2011 Meeting

- The remaining agenda items for this meeting were skipped in the interest of time.

Next Meeting(s)

- An agenda item will be added for the next meeting to start development of a workplan / scope of work for a contractor to support / perform the substitute environmental document for the TMDL Basin Plan amendment.
- At the next meeting Perry Klassen will provide an overview of his recent contract with USEPA to develop a regional monitoring plan for the San Joaquin River (south of the Delta).
- Next meeting dates are February 17th, March 24th, and April 28th at the same time and location.