

## Summary of 24-28 August 2009 Workshops

Four workshops were held the week of 24 August 2009 in Rancho Cordova, Redding, Delano, and Fresno to gather stakeholder information on developing a Groundwater Quality Protection Strategy for the Central Valley Region (Strategy). Over 220 stakeholders attended one of the four workshops. Stakeholders represented a variety of interests including, food processors, water purveyors, irrigation districts, conservation districts, rural communities, agricultural interests, federal and state agencies, cities, counties, elected officials, environmental groups, non-profit organizations, and more.

The workshops included a brief introduction and then small group breakout sessions to gather information from stakeholders. Working in small groups of mixed interests stakeholders responded to the following breakout session questions, then reported out to all workshop stakeholders.

### **Breakout Session Questions**

Session 1 - What can we learn? (overlaps, conflicts, and/or gaps) – The workshop handout includes two tables listing Water Board and Agency programs. You'll note the tables are incomplete.

- 1) Are you aware of other programs that are already in practice to protect groundwater quality?
  - a. What are the programs or potential staff contacts to gather more information?
  - b. Can you provide us with written materials or data that could be used in identifying the current conditions of groundwater for the strategy?
- 2) Of the various programs we discussed in the previous question can you identify areas where there is an overlap or conflict between the Water Board and other agencies programs?
- 3) Where do you see gaps in the protection of groundwater quality?

Session 2 – What are your groundwater quality concerns? Within the Strategy how would you like to see your groundwater quality concerns prioritized with the Water Board existing and emerging programs?

- 4) What are the contaminants in groundwater that you believe should be the highest priority in a strategy to protect groundwater?
- 5) What are the top five elements you think should be part of the groundwater strategy?
- 6) What criteria would you want used in identifying high priorities in a groundwater strategy?
- 7) What would your organization consider a successful groundwater strategy?

Session 3 – How should overlaps, conflicts, and/or gaps be addressed? In the previous two sessions we have identified the overlaps, conflicts, or gaps and we have talked about how we would prioritize concerns in the groundwater strategy.

- 8) How should we deal with overlaps or conflicts?
- 9) How should we handle gaps in groundwater quality protection?

### **Breakout Sessions Responses**

The following is a summary of the recurrent ideas from the breakout session discussions:

- Additional programs and sources on local, state, and federal groundwater quality protection programs and data were identified, including groundwater management plans developed under both AB3030 and SB1938, Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, and a variety of studies from agencies and academia.
- Cataloging all resource management plans county-by-county as a component of the Strategy was recommended.
- Examples of possible or perceived overlaps in protection of groundwater quality, including use of recycled water, conflicts in stormwater permitting, lack of a centralized database or clearinghouse of groundwater information and data, and duplication of groundwater monitoring by a variety of agencies were provided.
- Overlap in regulation of groundwater by various agencies was discussed more than issues relating to gaps in regulation.
- More frequent, and possibly formalized, coordination and communication within the Regional Water Board and between organizations with an interest in groundwater quality was strongly recommended. Various forms of interagency working groups to focus on resolving regulatory overlaps were suggested.
- Constituents of concern most frequently identified by workshop participants include:
  - Nitrates
  - Pathogens (E. Coli, Fecal)
  - Salts/Salinity
  - Volatile Organic Carbons (VOCs)
  - Pesticides
  - Arsenic
  - Radiological (Radon, Gross Alpha, Uranium)
  - Pharmaceuticals (Personal Care Products including prescription drugs and hormones)
- Groundwater data and information must be stored in a centralized database that is publicly accessible and user friendly.

- A “one size fits all” approach to developing a groundwater quality protection strategy should not be implemented. Local conditions and local management of groundwater must be taken into consideration.
- Public Education and Outreach must be an element of the strategy. Plain language interpretation of technical information and translation of materials in languages other than English where appropriate, should be included in the strategy.
- Sustainable funding for all groundwater quality protection and clean up programs is needed.
- Interaction between groundwater and surface water should not be overlooked and must be considered when developing the strategy.
- The draft strategy prioritization scheme should consider: a risk based approach; economics relating to cost efficiency and avoiding duplication but also the economic impacts to businesses and communities; local conditions; and balance between agricultural and urban uses.
- Components that would define a successful strategy include: not be over burdensome; use common sense; base decisions on sound science; not include unfunded mandates; be locally driven; implement an adaptive management approach; include an education component; and comply with the anti-degradation policy.
- Overlaps and conflicts could be resolved or addressed through the, 1) development of a centralized database and website for groundwater information, 2) one stop shop for permitting, and 3) stronger and more frequent communication between agencies.

The workshops closed with a discussion of our next steps. Staff will review all verbal and written comments to be utilized in developing the draft Strategy. Stakeholders will have additional opportunities to provide comments. The draft Strategy will be released for review and there will be additional workshops to receive comments. Staff will also continue to update our website with new information at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water\\_issues/groundwater\\_quality/index.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/groundwater_quality/index.shtml)