

Public Comments on the CA Watershed Management Action Plan

Suzanne Dallman, LA San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council,

This is to followup on discussions at the last Watershed Subcommittee meeting discussion about public input into implementation of the Strategic Plan. It seems that the mechanism for input at this point is just an annual meeting, but I'm sure there are other opportunities that could be explored through list-serves or more frequent regional meetings. It would also be great if the annual meeting could be held in southern California periodically -- we have much good work to show off down here!

You also asked about groups who could serve as links between Sacramento and the local groups, and I would submit that the Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council would be an appropriate vehicle in Los Angeles County. We have an existing structure through our monthly Stakeholder meetings, newsletter and website to both disseminate information and solicit input from a variety of agencies and watershed groups. Both our Board and our Stakeholders support our role in representing watershed interests at the State level and in keeping them informed of pertinent activities and action items. You mentioned the Wetlands Recovery Project (of which we are the Los Angeles County Task Force Co-Chair) as another potential forum. This may be a good avenue as well, although their focus is more on wetlands habitat and not as much on the broader spectrum of watershed issues.

Please let me know how we can help.

Mark Norton, SAWPA

Suggested edits to Plan document:

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

6. Start with an action verb for task similar to previous tasks such as "Conduct meetings of the steering committee..."

REGULATORY COORDINATION

1(a) I would recommend that this task be expanded by dropping off the limiting phrase "with coho recovery activities". All watershed management plans should be coordinated with RWQCB TMDLs.

3(a) This task appears to be too specific in benefiting only North Coast watersheds. I would drop "North Coast".

FUNDING, COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT AND ECONOMICS 2.

I think this should read Prop 50 instead of Prop 40.

4. I would delete "that we would like to work on early with" and replace with "and coordinate with". Delete "next year" since the overall action plan covers the next 18 months.

PROJECT LEVEL COORDINATION, LOCAL INVOLVEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

1. Replace "to solve problems of invasion by exotic vegetative species" with "to address invasive exotic vegetative species"

2. Replace "to treat Arundo" with "to remove Arundo donax"

3c. Is CWAM the acronym for (CA Watershed Assessment Manual)? If so, indicate in previous lines. Remove "So Ca" since urbanized watersheds exist in both northern and southern CA.

Clive Sanders, Carmel River Watershed

I guess I have been so engrossed in completing the Watershed Assessment and Action Plan for the Carmel River Watershed that I overlooked the fact that the CWC no longer exists. I played a small part as a member of the grass-roots in working on some of the committees that were set-up. At times I felt it was a contest between the professionals at the Agencies and the grass-roots.

I found the whole process helped me through the preparation of the assessment report. However, what was lacking in our knowledge was a clear understanding of what was required in the Assessment & the Action Plan with special reference to buy-in of the public stakeholders in the watershed. As from the governmental point of view the public buy-in is so important I wonder why we missed it.

Thanks to the guidance provided by Dr. Monica Hunter of the Planning & Conservation League, Sacramento we overcame the hang-up and adopted an Action Plan based on the Morro Bay Watershed Assessment and Action Plan which I believe will be the basis for work in this watershed for some years to come. I should add one caveat. Ideally, an action plan should reflect the duration and a cost & benefit analysis of each action contemplated. Our grant did not provide the time nor funds to devote to developing such an analysis. I also wish to mention the assistance & guidance of Chris Adair and Dianne Glanville at Region III Water Quality Board in San Luis Obispo in steering me through the labyrinth of rules & requirements of the reporting process. It can't be much fun dealing with uninformed people who are trying to maintain a deadline.

Keep me on the list please. Below is the link to our website where the Final Report of the Assessment and Action Plan can be downloaded if that might be of interest to you. <http://www.carmelriverwatershed.org/WA/WAprop13.html> Thank you and your colleagues and the agency people in the field for the great effort to make the programs more useful and understandable to us.

Carl Dealy, US Bureau of Reclamation

I just wanted to let you know that, indeed I continue to be interested and I appreciate you keeping me on the list. Although CALFED is mentioned in the plan. I think you may not want to pin all your federal partnering to one entity.

C. Edward Dawkins, MD

My input as a steward of the land (owner) & the people (physician) is that at a fundamental level we have to "go straight ahead and damn the torpedoes". We can work out a water plan but must not ruin the basic source - no matter what. An example is the past half century drying up (complete ruin) of the upper San Joaquin River. The new plans should first allow restoring it then carrying on from there. We need to take first basic steps first, then do the remainder of the considering.

Another thing... Lots of problems would be automatically solved if the recipients had to pay the actual costs of water. No more S. Calif. overpopulation, for example and not because of a political decision.

The last thing.... for a correct decision of any type we need to do it without political interference. How? A non political group of citizens that understand the issues and won't personally benefit from hard decisions with recommendations not being able to be plowed under by the politician's who might have their special interests tweaked. This worked in the military base closure system.

Marcia Armstrong, Supervisor, Siskiyou County

In a cursory review of the document, I failed to find recognition and acknowledgement of the County's primary role in local land and resource planning as an expression of its constitutionally delegated police powers. ARTICLE 11 of the California constitution entitled "Local Government," SEC. 1. declares that: (a) "The State is divided into counties which are legal subdivisions of the State..." (b) "The Legislature shall provide for county powers..." SEC. 7. further declares: "A county or city may make and enforce within its limits all local, police, sanitary, and other ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws."

In 1937, the State Legislature in providing for county powers required all counties to adopt General Plans. This requirement was recodified as law in 1951 under Government Code 65000, et seq. California Planning Law requires the adoption of a comprehensive plan for the physical development of land within the county. It delegates that authority to local counties and cities:

"Each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning." -Government Code Section 65300

Section 65300.7. Recognizes the need for local control over planning: "The Legislature finds that the diversity of the state's communities and their residents requires planning agencies and legislative bodies to implement this article in ways that accommodate local conditions and circumstances, while meeting its minimum requirements."

The Conservation Element of the County General Plan addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers and minerals. Government Code 65302 states: (d) A conservation element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. The conservation element shall consider the effect of development within the jurisdiction, as described in the land use element, on natural resources located on public lands, including military installations.

That portion of the conservation element including waters shall be developed in coordination with any countywide water agency and with all district and city agencies that have developed, served, controlled or conserved water for any purpose for the county or city for which the plan is prepared. Coordination shall include the discussion and evaluation of any water supply and demand information described in Section 65352.5, if that information has been submitted by the water agency to the city or county. The conservation element may also cover the following:

- (1) The reclamation of land and waters.
- (2) Prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters.

(3) Regulation of the use of land in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan.

(4) Prevention, control, and correction of the erosion of soils, beaches, and shores.

(5) **Protection of watersheds.**

(6) The location, quantity and quality of the rock, sand and gravel resources.

(7) Flood control.

The conservation element shall be prepared and adopted no later than December 31, 1973.

State regulation of land and resource use on private lands is exercised through specific agencies that have been delegated very restricted authorities by the legislature. These authorities have been codified. These agencies do not have general land use planning authority. These agencies would include the Department of Fish and Game, the Board of Forestry, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Department of Water Resources.

Initially, watershed assessment and planning was done as a framework to support purely voluntary participation in restoration and enhancement projects. With the listing of endangered species and declarations of watercourses as "impaired," watershed planning has become an indirect way to regionally regulate land, water and other resource use.

It is my opinion that County governments should have the lead role in local land and resource management planning. Local governments should be recognized as having the authority to validate watershed planning that affects the private property of constituents. If appropriate, local governments may then chose to formally adopt policies and ordinances to implement these plans. It is most appropriate that this type of planning occur at the local level through duly elected officials who are directly accountable to the People.

Ron Unger, EDAW

The Action Plan is a nice format for simplifying key elements and needs for watershed planning and coordination. I have found and continue to conclude that watershed planning enables a planning approach that is unique and enables the potential for setting common goals and integrated resource planning among stakeholders with otherwise very disparate interests and values. Some key elements that have repeatedly come up in my experience are:

1) the need for streamlined approaches to regulatory review and permitting, to enable more money to be spent on the ground instead of on paper, and an efficient process for enabling willing landowners to get watershed enhancement accomplished on their land. We have succeeded in developing this approach for lower Putah Creek and hope to now replicate that to other and larger watersheds and frameworks.

2) the need for excellent facilitation to ascertain stakeholder interests and concerns, coupled with excellent resource assessments of key resource elements, joined with sufficient funding in a stepwise process over time. These need to be joined together to successfully formulate common visions, goals, objectives and watershed action plans. We have/are trying to achieve this in a number of settings (e.g., Putah Creek, middle reaches of Sacramento River, State, regional, and local parks). It's very clear how

important all these elements are to succeeding including the development of community and stakeholder support.

Please feel free to contact me if it may be useful for you or other's to discuss ideas or challenges that I might be able to offer a perspective or insight on.

Carolyn Remick, Sustainable Conservation

Your management plan looks great -- and very ambitious! I was pleased to see the recommendation of a statewide 401 certification come through in the plan. This idea has come up several times in our permit coordination efforts, and we feel it could be very valuable. I am volunteering to work on this and can bring plenty of sample agreements that might work as a starting point. I've never met Jim Maughan, who I understand is the contact for this task, but please feel free to let him know that I am working on a grant from Packard Foundation that would allow me dedicate time to work on this effort.

Dennis Heiman, Regional Water Quality Control Board

I believe I work as closely as anybody (with the possible exception of Fraser) with watershed management programs in N. CA. There are at least two dozen active programs that we work with virtually on a daily basis. When I read the CA Action Plan, it occurred to me that I had absolutely no idea what these tasks were about or who these leads were (except you) - even some from my own agency. I guess what this tells me is that there are actually two CA Watershed Management Programs. (1) the daily activities of the various CRMPs, Conservancies, RCD's, watershed groups and councils that are spread throughout the state, and (2) some other unrelated watershed management activity taking place at some high level in various state and federal agencies. I guess this shouldn't concern me, but for some reason it does.