

Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee  
Subcommittee on Drinking Water  
Draft Minutes  
Meeting of August 23, 2002

The Drinking Water Subcommittee met on August 23, 2002 (meeting agenda attached).

*Meeting Summary*

Draft minutes July 26, 2002

The Subcommittee reviewed and approved the minutes from the July 26, 2002 meeting without further comment.

Sanitary surveys and other source water assessment processes

Elaine Archibald from the California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA) explained the key steps involved in sanitary surveys, source water assessments, and loading studies, and also briefly identified contaminants from different sources. The one misconception people have is that the large volume of discharge from big treatment plants is more important than small ones. But the fact is that some small treatment plants could have more impacts on Delta water quality because they are closer to the intake locations. Studies on TOC loadings to the Delta and Banks Pumping Plant were conducted, but there was not a lot of data to allocate loads to the watershed, and there was still a large volume unknown. The consistent finding from all studies is that Delta ag drainage consists of 11% of the total TOC load at the pumping plant; however, we still do not know about other sources and how to control them.

At this point, we do know that source control will improve water quality and help us achieve ELPH. One successful example is the ongoing rice herbicides monitoring program by the City of Sacramento. For bromide, however, even though we can probably reduce concentrations some amount with source control measures such as recirculation of the San Joaquin River, and reducing Delta ag drainage, because its primary source is sea water intrusion, the improvement would be less significant.

We also do not have enough information on other constituents such as TOC, TDS, nutrients, and pathogens to do a full loading analysis. Therefore, on source control, we need to make decisions on the following two alternatives: we can either commit funding needed to collect data and do the loading analysis, or because we can never completely quantify these loads, we may take the good house-keeping approach and just do the best we can in controlling storm water and waste water.

Issues/comments/ideas

- Source for pathogens could be from general watershed runoff besides animal grazing.

- Specific projects are not included in ROD, but they are in the Water Quality Program Plan. ROD is a start, and actions in WQPP are for implementation.
- Many disinfection-by-product precursors are from wetlands and ag drainage.

### Watershed activities to improve water quality

Bob Shanks is the district engineer for the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District. He presented the background information on the watershed program. Bob Harris, who is the newly elected chair of the Sacramento River Watershed Program, reported on the progress of the program and explained how we can work with CALFED and other stakeholders to address drinking water constituents of concern.

The District began to develop the conceptual effort in early 1990s. The District got its permit and had been working on issues related to water quality plans statewide. Through that process, the District became heavily engaged in the State's efforts. The program was geared toward dealing with point sources through the NPDES program, and it was not effective in dealing with the issues related to the Sacramento watershed. It became clear that those issues were potentially non-point source based, and the District did not have good water quality monitoring programs on the watershed which includes many tributaries and Sacramento River. The District then assembled a framework for a program titled the Sacramento River Toxic Control Program, which had support from the Regional Board, and obtained funding from Washington in 1995 to initiate and implement the program. Since then, a total of \$11 million was dedicated from the Federal government, the District and others to the program.

The key aspects of the concepts were to perform water quality monitoring throughout the watershed and setup a watershed-wide monitoring program. The District had a local in-river water quality monitoring program in conjunction with the City of Sacramento and the county storm water programs to collect samples in Sacramento and American Rivers. To get better information, the program moved the monitoring locations further upstream. The first phase of the program was to look at different programs that were currently on-going and conducted by different agencies, compile all the existing information on sampling parameters and location, perform QA/QC, and establish a Water Quality Monitoring Subcommittee to supplement the information this program collected. This first phase was the focus of the initial funding.

Another objective of the program was to develop information that could be used to establish site-specific objectives. Certain federal or state standards probably do not apply to some stretches of rivers or tributaries. Also, the program tried to identify and evaluate alternative control options for achieving water quality standards.

To have effective strategies to solve the problems, the program needed to engage stakeholders, and have potential interested parties to implement the solutions. That was an important effort, which focused on toxic pollutants, the particular issues that the District was concerned. But as a long-term program, outreach and education is also important. There were a lot of other issues besides toxic pollutants, and a sub-section of the subcommittee was facing concerns on sedimentation, water quantity, efficient use of water, and groundwater issues. Therefore, the broad effort titled Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) was established. The objective

is to sustain, restore and enhance while promoting long-term social and economic vitality. In the long-run, the SRWP will be established as a self-sustaining program. Early this year, the District established the program as a California public cooperation and elected the first 21 trustees for the organization. Bob Harris was appointed as the chair person for the first year.

Because of the diversity of the trustees, this program is in a position to support different efforts to improve water quality, work with CALFED, and work together to achieve the results we are all after.

Bob Harris talked more about the SRWP and its role with respect to local watersheds, and how we can use watershed management in the Sacramento River region.

- The Cow Creek watershed is 375 acres, 165 miles of streams, 95% private owned, 5% public owned, and there are about 300 users diverting water from the creek. It is in a rural community, so it is driven by timber products, agriculture and livestock. It is a typical northern state watershed, with the exception of some ag recreation.
- The Cow Creek Watershed Management Group is stakeholder-driven, and has agency participation. Operational people of the local agencies believe that working with the stakeholders and taking a cooperative and collaborative approach will get more done than using the 'stick' approach. The work with agencies is through a grant process.
- They have a priority list on the following issues: water quality and quantity improvement, anadromous fish, fuels management, enhancing watersheds, and outreach. Among them, outreach is the most important.
- The same approach used for local watershed management can be used for the region. Activities done at the regional level can also benefit the whole state.
- A stakeholder is anybody who has interest in the Sacramento Valley watershed. The SRWP needs to have everyone's input on what they can do.
- The strategic plan is being developed, and monitoring activities will be funded by the USEPA grant. Other grants will help expand the public outreach education program. Two new elements will be added: 1) outreach to the local watersheds, who usually would like to be independent; 2) bringing the local watershed messages into the government and policy makers.

#### Issues/comments/ideas

- Expectations:
  - The SRWP survives, grows, and is becoming a service organization. In the modeling area, the SRWP provides data to the locals, the irrigation districts, but not to compete with local watersheds. Hope to provide more and more data as required by all of you.
  - Education and outreach is a long-term goal.
  - Work to find grant money to pursue goals.
- The Monitoring Subcommittee and the Toxic Subcommittee work together. These stakeholder groups discussed what constituents to monitor and how often to monitor, and identified the funding availability to put together that program. There have been

monitoring requests which exceed the available funding, so the program always tries to balance that. The program also looked at the information on what the regulatory agencies' concerns are, and it set up the first two focus groups to deal with the two top key pollutants of concern (i.e., mercury and OP pesticides). Those groups have been working for several years now in order to develop management strategies to address those pollutants. Other subcommittees are waiting for money to get started. There are concerns about temperature within the watersheds, and concerns about drinking water constituents. The Regional Board is trying to develop a drinking water quality program to work with the SRWP.

- Land using planning – it is limited to the local level only. However, counties have started to think about water quality elements in their general plans. A recent workshop sponsored by the Regional Council of Rural Counties discussed what water elements should be included in the general plans.
- There are four things going on at the local level: monitoring, modeling, BMP testing, and investment. These four things are all related: start working with a number of independent modelers, combine monitoring and modeling together as much as we can right from the beginning, and then tie that back into BMPs to test the hypothesis. And cost-wise, is it cheaper to treat the source to effectively solve the problems for the downstream users?
- Sites-specific objective analysis has not been performed yet. It was included in the initial plan and will be pursued. The problem is funding, because this effort takes lots of resources and money.
- The key issue in the watershed program is who is going to pay for the 'getting better' part, and the key role of this Subcommittee is to understand that 'getting better' will benefit all and we should use our position to help locals find the money to make it happen.
- Drinking water issues are not a priority for the local watersheds of the Sacramento River watershed. They are concerned with water quantity, temperature, toxicity and OP pesticides issues. Mercury and OP pesticides have a higher priority when compared with drinking water, even though there is interest in drinking water issues as well. The beginning of a drinking water quality strategy is ready to go when there is enough funding.
- The monitoring program of the SRWP has included the drinking water quality monitoring since the beginning; however, it had been cut back over the years due to funding. One of the reasons why it has not been a focus of the SRWP management strategies is that there are regulatory water quality objectives set for surface water bodies that are relevant to the drinking water, but with which there is not compliance.
- Until we get a drinking water policy in place and we have the objectives for some of the drinking water constituents, the drinking water issues will always fall below pesticides and mercury issues. This group needs to do what it can to make sure the Regional Board get its funding to pursue drinking water quality policy and then we will see results and progress.
- There are source water protection elements in the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. You could add more to the California Safe Drinking Water Act, but it probably would

- not make a difference, because it will still focus on the water utility side not necessarily on the watersheds side.
- CALFED should have more integration in its programs, then it will have more efficient operation.

#### Discussion of source control strategies and recommendations

The Subcommittee had an in-depth discussion on this subject. The draft recommendation on agricultural discharge waivers was developed during the meeting, and it will be forwarded to BDPAC to be included in its packet for the September meeting.

#### Issues/comments/ideas

- The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) is developing a proposal for public comments. There might be an interim waiver while CVRWQCB complies with the CEQA and NEPA requirements. One issue is what will the conditions be on those interim waivers. The requirement is that the waiver expires on January 1, 2003. The Board may issue new waivers, which will expire in five years.
- Control of nonpoint source pollution is relatively different when compared with point source pollution. The approach could be combined with pilot testing, best management practices, and monitoring. BMP development is needed to prevent pollution and improve water quality.
- Sediment is a major issue and it should be listed as a higher priority for real nonpoint source pollution control. Silvicultural practices can increase sediments and carbon loads.
- The State Board and CVRWQCB need to include drinking water quality as a component in their actions related to SB390.

#### Treatment Technology Recommendation

The Subcommittee adopted the recommendation on water quality project priority for advanced treatment studies. The formal recommendation will be forwarded to BDPAC and presented in September.

#### Issues/comments/ideas

- Studies should be designed to ensure information available for CALFED decisions. The approach to prioritize all these studies is to focus on the things that can be done at the treatment level first to achieve the equivalent public health protection, such as use of membranes and UV light disinfection.
- Treatment studies in other areas including recycled water should also be addressed in the recommendation.

#### Water Quality Framework

The Subcommittee will forward the framework to the Steering Committee to start the discussion first and then refine it before formally sending it to BDPAC. A few changes were made based upon the input from others: 1) pages 17-18 from ROD were added to list the program actions for water quality improvement; 2) Under 'Draft Policy Framework', item 5(f) was added to relate the need of linkage to the Science Program.

#### Issues/comments/ideas

- The framework will be the integrating method with other CALFED programs to avoid or balance degradations of water quality as the result of other programs, which have emphases on different issues, especially given reduced CALFED funding for water quality.
- The framework is linked to the State's anti-degradation policy; however, some local degradation may be allowed as long as there are means to offset the impact.
- The final policy will come out of CALFED and much of it will return to this Subcommittee in terms of what strategies are needed.
- The agencies that formulate the policy and those that will implement the same policy may have competing interests that need to be balanced.
- An effort was made before which may be an example of the kind of approach to the above issues. Asking three questions to other agencies: is a similar program already funded? Would you be interested in co-funding the program? And, will this program have any adverse impact to your interests?

#### Business items

John Andrew reported on the arrangement for the joint meeting of DWS and the Southern California Water Dialogue in September. The meeting will be held at the Cucamonga County Water District (CCWD) headquarters on September 18 from 9 am to noon. A list of three hotels near the Ontario airport was sent out via email on August 22. CCWD will provide transportation from these three hotels to its headquarters.

The BDPAC meeting will be held on the next day at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). Transportation between MWD and CCWD will also be provided. The tour in the Inland Empire area will be in the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup>, and it will start from CCWD and finish at MWD.

#### Drinking Water Quality Program Workplan

John Andrew reviewed the annual CALFED simplified workplan on Year 3 of the Drinking Water Quality Program (DWQP) elements. It provides an assessment on what happened in Year 2, briefly outlines what DWQP is planning to do during Year 3 (which is to implement those things that DWQP was not able to do during Year 2 due to contracting). Most of the DWQP General Fund money is at ABAG, which is used as the program's fiscal agent for projects. But that master agreement was held up for over a year within the State contracting process, but now it is in place and DWQP is moving forward with implementing projects that DWQP awarded through its RFP at CALFED last year, along with the BAB/E project.

In addition, DWQP will be focusing on three main things during Year 3:

- ROD required monitoring and assessment program, which needs to be implemented by Spring 2003;
- Supporting the Drinking Water Subcommittee; and
- Focusing on regional issues, primarily in the San Joaquin Valley, Southern California, and the Bay Area.

John also went over the one-page spreadsheet which lists where the money is going in Year 3.

- Under the source control element, \$1 million in General Fund is allocated to the monitoring and assessment program.
- \$2 million in Prop. 13 funds is allocated to CALFED for projects related to agricultural drainage in the Delta.
- Two positions are for DWR under San Joaquin Valley Ag Drainage and Operational Improvements/Recirculation.
- Most of the DWQP money is under source control at the SWRCB, which is \$10 million.
- Prop. 50 will provide SWRCB \$20.5 million for DWQP if it passes.

#### Issues/comments/ideas

- None of the three agencies (i.e. DHS, SWRCB, DWR) have submitted their Budget Change Proposals (BCPs) for Prop. 50.
- Hoping those three agencies will go through a coordinated BCP process before Prop. 50 passes.
- Each pot of money in Prop. 50 is for a different area of the water quality improvement: DWR is for treatment technology, DHS is for treatment technology and source protection, and SWRCB is for source protection.
- Expecting three agencies to take care of DWQP for Years 4 through 7. This is the request from CALFED to these three agencies.
- If Prop. 50 passes, the money is not going to be automatically distributed to those three agencies, will instead require a BCP or legislation.
- DWS can provide recommendations to CALFED agencies on how they spend their Prop. 50 money.

#### “An Equivalent Level of Public Health Protection” and Water Quality Strategic Plan

The Subcommittee reviewed the synthesis and discussed it at length. Changes were suggested to make it final.

Members also expressed what they would like to receive from the next BDPAC meeting:

- Have support for the integration of relationships between boxes of the ELPH diagram and understand the relationship of other CALFED programs for improving drinking water quality.

- Re-draft the narrative and make it shorter, redistribute it to members, and then incorporate everyone's comments. Hope to reach some consensus on the strategic plan through this process by a certain date.
- Accomplish two things:
  - Clearly communicate to BDPAC what the Subcommittee believes are the important areas within the CALFED program, and that attention needs to be paid to water quality.
  - Establish the credibility of the effort from this Subcommittee. Drinking water quality needs to be an important element of what the program accomplishes.
- Have less narrative but more action items in a simplified general plan for the Subcommittee to support.
- Monitoring and assessment are important, and we need to have tools to correct the problems. But until we know the sources of the problems, it would be difficult to do so. Therefore, we need to coordinate our efforts and money in doing so.
- Hope the Subcommittee can have a succinct strategic plan to present to BDPAC.
- Think outside of the boxes to get solutions for the whole process.
- Have briefing from BDPAC to the subcommittees, sharing information on their involvement in water quality.

The deadline for BDPAC packet is September 4. The following items will be included in the packet:

- ELPH diagram
- Synthesis of ELPH meanings
- Treatment recommendation
- Ag discharge waivers recommendation

#### Issues/comments/ideas

- ELPH is an element of the water quality strategic plan, and the narrative is the start of the strategic plan. Another element is the assessment of water quality improvements and how they come out at the end of the ELPH diagram to protect public health.
- The strategic plan needs to have the description of the elements and description of the policy, the impacts from projects directly and indirectly on water quality, and also includes where the funding is.
- Other subcommittees should give this Subcommittee the support it needs to structure its strategic plan.

#### Action items

- On the ELPH diagram, change 'Source Control' to 'Source Improvement'.
- Extend the box of 'Education/Outreach' from top to bottom.
- Move the box of 'Vulnerable Sub-Populations' and also extend it throughout the ELPH diagram.



Public comments/issues

Vendor selling filtration plants for wetlands.

Agenda for September 18, 2002

Joint meeting with Southern California Water Dialogue  
Cucamonga County Water District Headquarters  
9 am – 12 pm

1. Southern California Water Dialogue—Fran Spivy-Weber
2. Report on water quality changes from CALFED projects— Metropolitan Water District of Southern California/Contra Costa Water District
3. Subcommittee recommendation on SB390—co-chairs
4. Workshop on ELPHP follow-up and strategic planning—co-chairs
5. Modeling—Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District
6. Report to BDPAC—co-chairs