

# California Water Plan Update 2009

## Advisory Committee Mini Assessment



**Sacramento, May 14 & 15, 2008**

# FOCUS GROUPS

## 6 Sessions - 29 Participants\*

(several attended more than one session)

- Agriculture
- Flood
- Public Health/  
Water Quality
- Environmental
- Regions/  
Governments
- Urban/Planner

Conducted April 11 to April 23, 2008

\*There are 45 AC Members

# FOCUS GROUP TOPICS

- **Burning Issues:** What are the critical topics and issues that **MUST** be considered in Water Plan 2009 for this plan to be successful?
- **Relevance:** With the broadened scope of Water Plan, we hear various concerns that flood, water quality, and even water supply are "afterthoughts." What is the best way to make your subject are more relevant?
- **Regional Outreach:** How can we adapt our regional outreach to make it more effective/accessible/relevant for your constituency? (Have you attended any regional workshops?)

# More topics ...

- **State Agency Steering Committee (SC):** To what extent does the Advisory Committee (AC) want to interact with the SC? For example, the SC members have been providing presentations to the AC on what they are working on and the SC members participate in AC meetings.
- The Administration views the AC as an important venue to review emerging Water topics such as Delta Vision, Flood Safe, Climate Change, and the Water Energy Connection. Are there other similar topics you believe the AC should be providing input on?
- **Workshop Topics**– In addition to the above what topic-specific workshop would be most important to you / would you or your staff be mostly likely to attend? / are there additional workshops topics that you would like to see?

# More topics ...

- **Communication:** What forms of communications and outreach have worked best for you? What has not worked for you? [Mass communications (e.g. Water Plan E-News and website) vs. targeted e-mails]
- **Frequency:** How often should the Advisory Committee meet?
- **Caucuses** – What are your preferences for organizing group work and collaboration?
- **Tribal** – [How] is Tribal participation making a difference?

# OVERALL THEMES

# BURNING ISSUES

- **NEED** Near-Term (18 month to 5-year) Plan of Action consistent with initiatives by the Governor. Many believed this should be the top priority for Update 2009. Long term important – short term essential.
- **MUST** explain the need for actions to survive climate change, species collapse, the Delta, etc. “Use the word “must”..
- Everything should be on the table – conveyance, storage, conservation {Note – this does not mean endorsement}

**Most of the groups projected a sense of urgency and WANT, BUT DO NOT SEE this reflected in the Water Plan Work.**

# Burning Issues cont. ...

- **WATER QUALITY** – Most saw a direct relevance to supply – for *all beneficial uses*
- **RECYCLED WATER** (two parts, as relating to *waste v. supply* AND as relating to how this is considered in the conservation equation)
- **LAND USE** – all aspects, including implications for flood, supply, quality, etc. This is a rural and urban issue.
- **20% USE REDUCTION** – AC should Spell it out (many different perspectives)

# RELEVANCE

## Water Plan as State's Investment Strategy:

- Emphasize the purpose of the Water Plan is to identify where the State should invest – not just money but also policy attention

## Content Relevance:

- Tighter review of articles published in Volume 4 Reference Guide

# COMMUNICATIONS

- **ENEWS** – mixed reviews but overall people generally like it for high level info and sharing with their own constituents. All groups said ENEWS is not adequate for AC communications. The AC needs targeted communications. They like the direct contact from DWR key project personnel and the facilitators and to be flagged to specific issues.

# WORKSHOPS

- Many suggestions for topics
- For the most part people thought this was a very good way to go in looking at specific information and giving better feedback
- Generally looking forward to starting Workshops in July



# STEERING COMMITTEE

- Group wants and likes SC Participation in the Advisory Committee meetings, but group presentations should be topical
- Some Caucuses would like SC participation in Caucus meetings as well – aligned with topics
- All groups encouraged by State Agency collaboration

# TRIBES

- Generally felt the participation was a good thing
- Mixed Reactions
- Sometimes found the participation out of alignment with the rest of the process or off point
- Several comments about a need for the AC to be accommodating until things normalize

# PROCESS

- Many suggestions ranging from handouts and pre-work to frequency of meetings, interactions
- Still some fundamental lack of understanding about the staged work plan
- Need for more continuity
- Most saw a use in continuing to meet as caucus – although they had different concepts about what made sense for their particular groups


# REGIONS

Many comments on this including:

- Lack of coordination within and among agencies causing confusion (particularly DWR and Dept. of Conservation)
- Confusion about the Regional Reports and what they are
- Confusion as to how to be productive in the Regional Process
- Regional Outreach – clarify who is the target audience so right people come to the room (i.e. elected officials, staff, or general public) and be mindful of local government council meetings

# CAUCUS SPECIFIC COMMENTS

In addition to overarching themes, each caucus provided comments related to their area of interest. Highlights follow.



# AGRICULTURE

- Agricultural Water Use Efficiency – perception and portrayal
- Need Independent, Scholarly analysis or technical paper on Ag WUE, including building of dataset



# Water Quality/Public Health

- Source water quality, salinity benefits as related to an isolated facility for Delta export
- Public health issues, conflicting policies & regulations as related to recycled municipal water
- Emerging Contaminants
- Pelagic Organism Decline (POD) – Water Quality Component

# URBAN / PLANNER



- Quantification of Resource Management Strategies
- Water Element in General Plan Guidelines

# FLOOD

- Need strong vision of integrated flood management for the whole State (don't focus only in the Central Valley)
- Do not keep floodplain functions and flood protection in separate silos
- Identify issue-area intersections – the Water Plan will not resolve all flood, water quality, ecosystem, and supply problems, but it can make sense to how they overlap. Intersecting issues should be highlighted
- Call out Geographic Scale: Organize strategy narratives to discuss different scales of implementation (watershed, regional, statewide)
- It is necessary that the Flood be a major part of the overall Water Plan rather than a minor component or addition.

# REGIONAL/ GOVERNMENT

- Land use and the Relationship between the Housing Element and water
  - Example: a city entirely in a floodplain may be required to build new affordable housing units at the same time facing liability for additional housing.
  - Social justice issue: disadvantaged peoples placed in most dangerous, marginal areas (like New Orleans)
- Impact of water on growth and agriculture
- Governance – integration and coordination of water agencies with cities and counties. Most cities and counties are not water purveyors.



# ENVIRONMENTAL

- Ecosystem restoration goals based on the latest expert biological opinions
- Groundwater monitoring
- Food supply and agricultural sustainability in California.
- Action Plan for recovery of anadromous fish (not just explanation and harvest moratorium)

# OTHER

- While the AC does not necessarily agree on solutions, they do agree on priorities
- The group is aware of the importance of the work and ready to focus and move forward
- Tighter review of articles published in Volume 4 Reference Guide
- Focus on priorities to manage the timeframes
- HIGH potential for process fatigue

# NEXT STEPS

- CCP will complete the Mini-Assessment RECAP based on comments from the preview. This will be posted on line and be an audio visual briefing rather than a written report.
- Topic specific information has been extracted from the notes and will be forwarded to the right subject matter experts and work teams
- DWR and the State Agency Steering Committee will consider larger policy issues and ways to address priorities

# NEXT CAUCUS MEETING

- CCP will assist the groups in organizing caucus type gatherings based on the preferences they indicated
- Most Caucus meetings will be called for in June and focus on review of relevant Resource Management Strategies



**QUESTIONS??**