

MEETING SUMMARY

CV-SALTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POLICY SESSION NOTES – NOVEMBER 9, 2017

PREPARED FOR: Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA)

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DATE: November 13, 2017

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document the presentation and discussion items from the November 9, 2017 CV-SALTS Executive Committee Policy Session. The main purpose of this meeting was to review revised Basin Plan language for the nitrate and salinity control programs and clarifications regarding the secondary maximum contaminant level policy (SMCL). The revisions made at and following this meeting will form the final language for the Draft Basin Plan that will be presented to the Regional Board in January 2018, followed by a public hearing in March.

BACKGROUND

Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) is a collaborative stakeholder driven and managed program to develop sustainable salinity and nitrate management planning for the Central Valley. The goals of CV-SALTS are as follows:

- Sustain the Valley's lifestyle
- Support regional economic growth
- Retain a world-class agricultural economy
- Maintain a reliable, high-quality urban water supply
- Protect and enhance the environment

CV-SALTS includes four working groups:

1. Technical
2. Public Education and Outreach
3. Economic Social Cost
4. Other (CEQA, policy development, etc.)

ACRONYMS

AID – Alta Irrigation District Archetype	NIMS – Nitrate Implementation Measures Study
ACP – Alternative Compliance Program	P&O Study – Prioritization and Optimization Study
BP – Basin Plan	SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
BPTC – Best Practicable Treatment and Control	SMCL – Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level
GSA – Groundwater Sustainability Agency	SNMP – Salt and Nutrient Management Plan
IAZ – Initial Analysis Zone	SSALTS – Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study
ICM – Initial Conceptual Model	WQO – Water Quality Objective
ILRP – Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program	
LSJR – Lower San Joaquin River	
MUN – Municipal beneficial use	

SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE TO KRWCA

- **Nitrate Control Program Basin Plan Language** – Most of these revisions centered around finding a good technical definition for “shallow” groundwater. The term first-encountered was used in the old basin plan, but this does not serve well and shallow is meant to indicate a portion (upper 10%) of the upper zone (which encompasses a depth that represents municipal wells). Sometimes, however, this results in a very thin shallow zone. There is new data (from DWR) that was not available when the first modeling/calculation of upper and shallow zones were done, that could potentially be used for new calculations to determine the best representation of shallow groundwater. This issues has not been completely resolved.
- **SMCLs** – The main concern from urban water providers is the requirements for filtration, which are set according to lab standards. CUWA is still working with the Regional Board on this issue.
- **Administrative Updates** – Revised grant language will allow original grant funds to be used to implement various CV-SALTS efforts.

AGENDA ITEMS

NITRATE CONTROL PROGRAM

- How do you determine assimilative capacity relative to first encountered groundwater, shallow zone, upper zone, etc? Need to clarify on what this calculation would be based and how to define it.
 - Shallow – upper 10% of upper zone determined from high resolution mapping; but need to clarify what upper zone is and if 10% would be representative
 - Only applies to Pathway A
 - Consideration of dual approach, in which there would be a default method, but if permittee wanted to do additional analysis to prove that it is something different, what would that analysis be?

- Vicki Kretsinger presented some technical information to demonstrate what some different examples would be for Kings subbasin. Purpose of her exercise was to look at what data exists, and how might it be useful in determining question above
 - Domestic well density by section – all wells in database, not necessarily active wells
 - Domestic well depths – doesn't account for water depths, variability, etc. Average depth is 171 feet.
 - Average domestic well depth by section
 - Spring 2017 depth to groundwater
 - Assumption of unconfined to semi-confined
 - Very high level analysis – local info would help refine it
 - Depth to bottom of domestic wells (depth average by section)
 - Upper zone calculation datasets, using nomenclature used for high resolution work; at that time the DWR database was not available so it wasn't used for this calculation; used USGS and other info. Weighted data layers (domestic wells bottom perforations, ag, urban, rural well perforations, etc.)
 - Upper zone delineation – interpreted from all that weighted data
 - Depth to bottom of upper zone
 - Depth of domestic wells and bottom of upper zone
 - Definition of aquifer (DWR)
 - Estimation of 10% of saturated portion of the upper zone – for most of Central Valley, sat thickness of upper zone is 100-200 feet thick, so 10% would be 5-20 feet of thickness; this thickness would likely not be considered an aquifer
 - We could change the definition of upper and re-calculate it with the DWR info that they didn't have at the time it was originally calculated.
 - First encountered groundwater doesn't work for rice, and rice has to use Path A.
 - How do you make Path A work where there is good groundwater quality?
 - Rice is extreme boundary for this idea, so need to figure out how it will work. Rice does not want to perpetuate terminology or idea of first-encountered in the basin plan.
 - Two different metrics for "10%" have been used. One meant the top 10% of the depth of the aquifer (in feet). Another one meant the top 10% of the wells.
 - Darrin P. mentioned that 10% seems pretty small. It was picked arbitrarily during policy discussions. Does it have any technical basis?
- Assimilative capacity – determine over a 20-year period?
 - Tim advised that this has been used in many other jurisdictions successfully, and only rarely has it needed to be refined or modified. A simple spreadsheet calculation is used in conjunction with increased monitoring. Modeling the answer was considered but was deemed to be overwhelming, so others have just used the most

recent years and updated it with monitoring data. But this is for an area with mostly POTWs.

- How do you estimate load for a large ag area? You can assume that load that is monitored hits the groundwater, because it is too difficult to model otherwise. But for areas like Kern where the groundwater is very deep, is that a good assumption? But the idea was to take the time element out and assume that the load eventually gets to groundwater.
- Tess made the point that the more specificity you want for your region, the more burden you will have to do detailed analysis.
- A default acts as a screening tool, and focuses where more work potentially needs to be done.
- Recycled water – since we don't want to disincentivize recycled water projects, can we do a blanket exception for them. Patrick advises no, because the Recycled Water Policy requires that recycled water must be considered. How would these projects fit into the General Order?
 - Mainly this is a concern for POTWs
- Special permitting procedures for those outside the valley floor
 - No language addressing this issue so far
 - Board will consider each area separately, and each will be considered low priority
- Timing of requirements
 - Received a number of comments on time allowances for management zones to form and perform required functions – seen as too short
 - Executive Officer has discretion to extend timelines, so one option is to leave the language the way it is and rely on this; otherwise, need to change timelines
 - Committee decided to leave language as is
- Triggers – will still be referred to as “triggers” and not action levels. Concern was that “trigger” implies move to new water quality limit.
- Non-prioritized basins – will be listed in an Appendix in the Basin Plan

SMCLs

- Tim Moore – reviewed issues with secondary maximum contaminant levels, as listed on agenda package pages 22 to 24, and recommendations to resolve the issues (on same pages)

SALINITY CONTROL PROGRAM

- Richard Meyerhoff reviewed revisions to salinity control program language for Basin Plan
 - Figure (package page 39) showing Conservative (changed from Standard) Salinity permitting approach compared to alternative salinity permitting approach was modified to show that re-evaluation of permitting approaches occurs between every phase.

- Other changes are documented in the agenda package on pages 40 to 45. The intent of most of these changes was to clarify language and meaning. No substantive changes to the policy were made.
- For ag beneficial use, Regional Board will use 700 dS/m, as a monthly average for a water quality goal. For MUN beneficial use it will be 900 dS/m.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

- Daniel Cozad provided and reviewed the revised grant scope of work for CV-SALTS early implementation, management zone pilot study technical assistance, the prioritization and optimization plan, and implementation outreach (included in agenda package on pages 55 to 64). These revised scopes of work were approved by the Executive Committee.

The next time the Executive Committee will meet will be by conference call on December 14th at 1 pm.