

## MEETING SUMMARY

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# CV-SALTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POLICY (TELECONFERENCE) SESSION NOTES – FEBRUARY 11, 2021 9AM-11:00AM

**PREPARED FOR:** Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA)

**PREPARED BY:** Stephanie Tillman/Land IQ

**DATE:** February 11, 2021

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document the presentation and discussion items from the **February 11, 2021** CV-SALTS Executive Committee Policy Session. The main purpose of this meeting was to update the committee on the CV-SALTS basin plan amendments implementation status, Management Zone developments, and public education and outreach committee activities. In addition, revisions to the Final Prioritization & Optimization Study Workplan and participation agreement were discussed.

## 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	OAL – Office of Administrative Law
BP – Basin Plan	OPP – Office of Public Participation
BPTC – Best Practicable Treatment and Control	P&O Study – Prioritization and Optimization Study
EAP – Early Action Plan	SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
GSA – Groundwater Sustainability Agency	SMCL – Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level
IAZ – Initial Analysis Zone	SNMP – Salt and Nutrient Management Plan
ICM – Initial Conceptual Model	SSALTS – Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study
ILRP – Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program	WQO – Water Quality Objective
LSJR – Lower San Joaquin River	
MUN – Municipal beneficial use	
MZ – MZ	

## SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE TO KRWCA

- **Basin Plan Amendments – Update and Implementation (Anne Walters/Patrick Palupa)** – The Regional Board has a new executive assistance and two new board members. Staff is reviewing P&O study. Request to delay EAP deadline was rejected because Board is low on staff due to contact tracing, etc.
- **Management Zone (MZ) Pilot Study Projects (Daniel Cozad) – Project Update** – A matrix of MZs and their recent activities is included in the agenda packet. MZs have been experiencing better attendance at outreach events because of novel outreach strategies.
- **Prioritization and Optimization Study (Bobbi Larsen and Daniel Cozad)** – A discussion on other policies and regulations that might impact and/or impeded the P&O study was facilitated. Obstacles to P&O implementation were identified such as funding, water availability constraints, and regulatory tools that are difficult to access because of expense, time or permitting difficulty. Daniel Cozad reviewed the online fee payment process for permittees.
- **Public Education and Outreach Committee (Nicole Bell)** – The webinar for permittees on the salt control program yesterday had over 600 participants and was well received. The communications plan and budget for 2021 was presented. It focuses on MZ implementation but will continue to include communication of general information. The PEOC hopes to cost-share with other entities, such as MZs.

# MEETING NOTES

## **BASIN PLAN AMENDMENTS – IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE - ANNE WALTERS AND PATRICK PALUPA (REGIONAL WATER BOARD)**

- The Regional Board has a new executive assistant (Mindy Maxwell) and two new regional board members – to connect with Board members, send email to Mindy with request
- Program implementation
  - MZ progress and deadlines - Request to delay March submittal of EAP was rejected because Board staff needs time to review; some are engaged in contact tracing, etc.
  - P&O study workplan status – Board is currently reviewing; familiar already because Board staff has already seen several iterations
- Update on 12-month BPA – going to State Board
- EAPs won't go to Board for approval; will only be approved by Board staff, but Board will be updated on status

## **MANAGEMENT ZONE – STATUS UPDATE – DANIEL COZAD AND MZ SUPPORT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- See chart of MZ status reports in agenda packet
- Luhdorff & Scalmanini created a story map for Chowchilla; looking at doing that for all MZs because it's a good communication tool
- Kings has EAP office hours – can virtually stop in and ask questions
- Kaweah – has last of 4-part workshop series, but Zoom crashed, so ended up doing Facebook live meeting on the fly – had over 200 attendees, which was a lot more than previous meetings, so might continue that method
- Tule – approving budget and participation agreement tomorrow
- Valley Water Collaborative – getting more public participation

## **PRIORITIZATION AND OPTIMIZATION STUDY**

- Review/Discussion of regulations and policies affecting salinity management – Bobbi Larson (Sommach, Simmons and Dunn) and Daniel Cozad
  - Rationale – desire to use downtime when Board is reviewing P&O study; can inform consultants when they start working on P&O study
  - Links to discussion document, final P&O workplan and payment portal are in agenda packet

## **Questions for discussion**

1. What do you believe are the biggest obstacles/challenges to achieving salt balance/management in the Central Valley?
  - A lot of it comes down to water availability; it influences salinity through changes in concentration.

- We are the dischargers, but a lot of people on the receiving end of regulations are not necessarily dischargers. This will limit our ability to affect change that will help manage salinity on the discharge side.
  - We have limited set of tools; water districts won't necessarily care about salt problems.
  - Single most common theme has been – where are water providers in this discussion?
  - Under Porter Cologne and regs that Board has to follow, salinity is problematic. Water Board's ability to affect changes in salinity in the Central Valley is limited by managing individual permits.
  - Sources of drinking water policy – has been applied broadly instead of being thoughtful about where drinking water actually exists, means that you have to go through dedesignation – example of regulatory obstacle.
  - Bay Delta Plan and South Delta Salinity Objectives
  - SGMA – most GSPs default on the water quality requirement to other regulations
  - Climate impacts
  - Energy-water nexus
  - Some tools are difficult to use (variances, offsets), expensive or difficult to permit, which reduces feasibility of these tools (see question 4).
  - State board's desire for uniformity has become an impediment for salinity management, because of differences throughout the Central Valley.
2. What are the existing and future conflicts between different requirements affecting salinity management? Do they exist on the face of the rules/policies or in their interpretation and implementation?
    - Two biggest obstacles are money and other environmental regulations (these were the two obstacles for the brine line proposed in the early 1970s).
  3. What are the overlapping or conflicting agency responsibilities for regulating and managing water and salinity?
    - Department of Conservation
    - CDFA – integrated with DWR
    - Strategic Growth Council
    - Delta Stewardship Council
  4. Are there any existing regulatory tools or options that can assist in salt management that are currently under-utilized?
    - Water quality objectives that aren't flexible temporally or for site-specific conditions.
  5. Are there future regulatory changes/reforms that would help to resolve conflicts and facilitate long term salt management solutions?
    - Legislation – management of salts in Central Valley is statewide problem

## **P&O STUDY PARTICIPATION – DANIEL COZAD**

- See agenda packet for presentation
- Participating communities list
- Example of salt fees website demo
- After paying fee, permittee gets certificate of participation
- CVSC updates Board with list of who has paid
- Beginning to look at consultants for first few tasks, through proposals or something similar

## **PEOC UPDATE – NICOLE BELL**

- Outreach matrix reminder
- Contacting MZ leads to summarize info to 1) make sure outreach is updated; and 2) put together summary to tell story of MZ work.
- Salinity webinar - Feb 10 10 am-12pm – results
  - 736 people registered, over 600 people attended
  - Several polling questions were asked
    - Where are you?
    - What industry do you represent?
    - What are you interested in?
    - Which pathway will you likely choose?
    - How valuable was the presentation?
    - Several questions were asked (~ 160)
    - Recording is already on website. Questions and answers will also be posted.
- 2021 Communications Plan
  - Initial general plan presented at last meeting
  - Now plan includes budget
  - Shifting focus from general education to MZ and P&O
  - Proposing to cost-share with MZs, etc.
  - Will also continue with general program information and quarterly program updates
  - Salt control program additional materials
    - Talking points, concise messages
  - Additional webinars if needed
  - Mailings – alerting regulated community of 2021 deadlines (July 15 for salt control programs)

- Comment: should we think about preparing a webinar that reaches out to water districts; have spoken to ACWA before, and should continue those communications
- Working on planning roadmap for P&O study
- Nitrate control program milestones
- New: feature stories
- \$105,000 budget; largest to date

**MEETING SCHEDULE** - Next policy meeting – March 11, 9am-3pm PST tentative