MEETING SUMMARY

CV-SALTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POLICY (TELECONFERENCE) SESSION NOTES – FEBRUARY 10, 2022, 9:00AM PST

PREPARED FOR: Kern River Watershed Coalition Authority (KRWCA)

PREPARED BY: Stephanie Tillman/Land IQ

DATE: February 14, 2022

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document the presentation and discussion items from the **February 10, 2022,** CV-SALTS Executive Committee Policy Session. The main purpose of this meeting was to update the committee on the CV-SALTS basin plan amendment implementation, Management Zone implementation status, the P&O study governance and funding plan (and approval), and public education and outreach committee activities.

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

ACP – Alternative Compliance Program

BP – Basin Plan

BPTC – Best Practicable Treatment and Control

CIPA – California Independent Petroleum Association

EAP – Early Action Plan

GSA – Groundwater Sustainability Agency

IAZ – Initial Analysis Zone

ICM – Initial Conceptual Model

ILRP – Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

ISOS – Integrated Scope of Services

LSJR – Lower San Joaquin River

MUN – Municipal beneficial use

MZ – MZ

NIMS – Nitrate Implementation Measures Study

OAL – Office of Administrative Law

OPP – Office of Public Participation

POTW – Publicly Operated Treatment Works

P&O Study – Prioritization and Optimization Study

SAFER – Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience

SGMA – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

SMCL – Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level

SNMP – Salt and Nutrient Management Plan

SSALTS – Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study

WQO – Water Quality Objective

SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE TO KRWCA

- **Basin Plan Amendments Implementation (Patrick Palupa)** – Regional Board staff is preparing letters to approve preliminary management zones, which will be mailed out soon. Board staff is also working on enforcement actions and prioritizing non-filers (dischargers who did not sign up for any management zones or choose a pathway for the salt management program). The Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAMP) extension request from the CVSC will likely be approved.
- **Management Zone (MZ) Updates (Daniel Cozad and MZ leads) –** Matrix of MZ well stats posted on cvsalinity.org website was updated on February 1. SAFER funding for co-contaminant testing has been approved for Valley Water Collaborative. Kaweah's grant application will be the next to be approved for SAFER funding.
- **Prioritization and Optimization Study Kickoff (Richard Meyerhoff and Tom Grovhoug)** – The consultant teams (GEI and LWA) provided a presentation on the types, needs and requirements of models and tools for the P&O study. Some potential tools and models that are being considered, which include groundwater models, surface water models, and water balance tools, were also provided. A brief update on data acquisition was also provided.
- **Public Education and Outreach Committee (Daniel Cozad) –** Participants were reminded to update the outreach matrix. The website refresh is ongoing. A Salt and Nitrate Control Program update was presented to the Executive Committee for review and comment. The main comment was that specific programs, such as SGMA and ILRP, should not be named as coordinating with CV-SALTS because this implies that other agency programs are not coordinating, when in fact they all work together.

MEETING NOTES

BASIN PLAN AMENDMENTS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE – ANNE WALTERS & PATRICK PALUPA (REGIONAL WATER BOARD)

- Management Zone progress and deadlines – Drafts of letters approving preliminary management zones will go out soon. Hannah Daily is new engineering geologist that will be working with this program. Regional Board created a position (Anna – last name?) to work out of Fresno office to help with racial equity in region, CV-SALTS, language barriers, outreach, etc. Samantha (Sammy) Soto (Regional Board) works in non-point source but now works with CV-SALTS with P&O program.
- Enforcement activities – Non-responses are priority. Still working on a fast-track/short-cut for ACL action, which will be presented to public. There will be a new chair and vice-chair whose priority will be non-filers in nitrate program. In salinity program, there are a few who "know better" and might get an accelerated civil liability action, but some smaller dischargers need more notification and education. ACL actions won't be surprises or unannounced.
- Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAMP) letter approval process – CVSC sent letter to Regional Board requesting an extension on the SAMP so that it coordinates better with MZ activities. Palupa will likely grant extension but asked for further comments.
- First in-person Regional Board meeting is planned for April in Fresno.

MANAGEMENT ZONE UPDATE – DANIEL COZAD

- Agenda package has a matrix of Priority 1 MZs' water provision stats updated as of February 1, 2022. This matrix is now updated by the first day of each month and posted on the website (cvsalinity.org on Nitrate Program page). 60% of wells tested are over the drinking water limit. There are 404 households receiving bottled water.
- SAFER funding for co-contaminants impacts by MZs – Valley Water Collaborative has an approval letter for co-contaminant testing supported by SAFER funds. Kaweah will be the second contract.
- Update on outreach activities by MZ – Chowchilla's numbers in the outreach activity matrix look small because 1) it is a small MZ with far fewer wells than other MZs that are likely over the drinking water limit [100 out of 700]; 2) it is a largely rural MZ and outreach is more difficult in general and there is little response.
- Question about use of door-to-door outreach. Kaweah has tried (collaborating with experienced outreach contractor) but had little success because of people not going home, not letting people in gates, aggressive dogs, etc.
- What metrics determine how much outreach is enough? Regional Board will be considering new use of tools to determine what should be prioritized. Palupa acknowledged that nobody knows what the denominator is, largely because state government has not kept track of domestic wells, etc. so nobody knows how many wells there are and where they are.

PRIORITIZATION AND OPTIMIZATION STUDY INTEGRATED SCOPE OF SERVICES (ISOS) – RICHARD MEYERHOFF & TOM GROVHOUG

- Bobbi Larson provided an overview of discussion
    - Comments and responses on governance and funding report documented in table in agenda packet. Action today is to approve the plan.
    - Introduction to analytical and modeling tools – no action required today
    - Baseline data acquisition – update on data collection and small group

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING PLAN APPROVAL – DANIEL COZAD

- Comments were due at the end of January
- Review of comments and responses (p. 39 in agenda packet)
    - Dispute resolution description was left fairly general because there are number of ways to resolve disputes, and making it too specific can be inefficient
    - Many attachments (beginning packet page 22) that are included to preserve original agreements/MOUs between state board, regional board and CVSC to set rules about how executive committee would function, etc. These attachments are included for historical context.
    - Executive Committee approved governance and funding plan.

ANALYTICAL AND MODELING NEEDS – TOM GROVHOUG/LWA

- Purpose - Identify essential analytical capabilities of tools and models (presentation in agenda packet)
- Integrated scope of services approved by Executive Committee is for first 3 to 4 years of work of Phase 1 of the P&O study
- Big Picture
    - Purpose of this phase of technical work is to inform future decisions
    - Drivers, what we can and can't manage or control
    - Options for salinity management and curbing accumulation
    - Scalable – tools need to function at various scales
    - Have the right knobs to allow evaluation for different future scenarios
- Essential Outcomes
    - Impact of scenarios on water, salt, degradation, targets
- Required Technical Capabilities
    - Hydrodynamics and salinity in surface water and groundwater
    - Water supplies, return flows and associated management
    - Salinity source management
- Specific Needs – Surface Water, Groundwater

    - Surface water flows
        - Salt and water balances in surface water
        - Salinity concentrations and mass transport
    - Groundwater
        - Fluxes under range of management scenarios
        - Salt and water balances
        - Salinity concentrations and mass transport
- Types of Tool/Models Needed
    - Groundwater models
    - Watershed models
    - Water management models
    - Delta models
    - Crop Salinity Tolerance Tools
- Discussion and Next Steps
    - How will the SSALTS work be used?
        - The SSALTS work was preliminary and a broad overview, whereas this work is more specific. It is still in the "toolbox" but serves more as a background.
    - How well will models be able to apply/extrapolate to different regions/situations?
        - Depends on the what the group decides, and how well archetypes represent different areas and how well scenarios represent real situations.
    - Several models will be needed to integrate all results.

SMALL GROUP AND DATA COLLECTION UPDATE – TOM GROVHOUG/LWA

- First meeting of small group has been scheduled
- Surface water data compilation – information from past CV-SALTS work
- Approach to salt source data collection – permitted dischargers (POTW, industrial, stormwater data)

SENECA BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT – GLENN MEEKS

- Salinity Thresholds and Peer Review Requirements – used in the evaluation of MUN and AGR beneficial uses of groundwater within the southern portion of the Lost Hills Oilfield.
- Outline
    - Project description
    - Regulatory context
    - Peer review requirements and changes
    - Potential threshold values – surface water used for irrigation and stock watering (no groundwater use for these purposes); no ag wells

- Selection rationale
- Questions – How will this be precedential (or not) for the rest of the Central Valley? i.e. how will the Regional Board use this approach for other areas? Still to be determined. Counter-intuitive because the higher the number, the more protective it is for marginal water (meaning it can still be used at higher water quality objectives). This approach and its peer review process was CalEPA wide.

PEOC UPDATE – NICOLE BELL

- Continuing to update website
- Outreach matrix tracker reminder – members can also send their updates to anyone in the management team if they don't have time to do it themselves
- Salt Control Program and P&O Study Update – document for approval today. Comment that citing only ILRP, Dairy Program and SGMA implies that CV-SALTS works in conjunction with those but not other water board programs. Mention of broad coordination is important but labeling specific programs that are coordinating becomes problematic and may be misleading. Could mention agencies instead of specific programs. Need to expedite review and finalization so Daniel can use it for outreach and providing answers to questions.

MEETING SCHEDULE

- Next policy meeting – **March 17, 9 am-1 pm (tentative end time) PDT – virtual**

Adjourned at approximately 12 pm.