

Mojave Water Agency Update of Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

TAC Meeting #1 – Summary

March 5, 2013

MWA Headquarters

Apple Valley, CA

Meeting Purpose and Overview

The regional kickoff was the second of nine scheduled meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) or Stakeholders Group for the MWA Area IRWM Plan Update project. The primary purpose of the meeting was to invite all potentially interested stakeholders to learn about and begin participation in the IRWM Update process. Fifty-two individuals completed the meeting sign-in sheet. Major topics addressed during the meeting included:

- Purpose for Updating the IRWM Plan
- Introduction to Integrated Regional Water Management
- Overview of the Update Planning Process,
- Approach for Developing the Plan, including Schedule
- Opportunities to Participate
- Conversation about Challenges and Opportunities

Ken Kirby, of the Kirby Consulting Group and a member of the Kennedy/Jenks consultant team, served as the facilitator for the meeting.

Why Are We Doing This?

Following the welcome and introductions led by Kirby Brill, General Manager of MWA, Lance Eckhart, MWA staff, opened the meeting by describing why an update of the Mojave IRWM Plan was needed at this time. He explained that the IRWM Plan will address where we all want to go as a Region, what needs to be done to get there, and that an Update is required to qualify for funding grant opportunities from the State.

Ken Kirby followed by inviting all those present to think of the IRWM update process as a conversation in which their active participation was needed to make it productive for all involved in the Region. Mr. Kirby also expanded on the reasons for the IRWM Plan Update, including that it is required to qualify for Proposition 84 funds. He added

that it will be important to demonstrate transparency and commitment throughout the planning process and that the updated IRWM Plan will address such topics as shortages caused by the drought, will serve as the basis for understanding how future projects will impact water quality and the water supply, and that it is an opportunity to build on what has been accomplished since the last IRWM Plan and refine the long-term vision for the Region moving forward.

Introduction to Integrated Regional Water Management

Mary Lou Cotton, the IRWM Plan Update project manager from Kennedy/Jenks, provided an overview of the IRWM Plan program beginning with the history of this California statewide program, and the fact that the Mojave Region completed its first IWRM Plan in 2004, which was then adopted in early 2005. Her presentation then showed the geographic region now covered by the Mojave IRWM Plan and its relation to other neighboring IRWM regions.

Ms. Cotton also summarized IRWM Plan guidance from the Department of Water Resources. She highlighted new or updated elements such as objectives must be measurable, new governance standards, a new project review process, the relation to local water planning, and climate change (both adaptation to climate change effects, and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions). Her presentation concluded with a reminder of opportunities to receive funding, including both Prop 84 IRWM planning and implementation funds (\$1 billion statewide), and Proposition 1E stormwater flood management (\$300 million). In all cases, a funding match is required to qualify.

Mojave Region IRWM Planning Process

Both Ken Kirby and Lance Eckhart provided an introduction to the Mojave IRWM planning process, including the governance structure for the IRWM Plan, which is defined by the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG); a group of three or more local agencies, at least two of which have statutory authority over water supply or water management. The Mojave RWMG has been established through a memorandum of understanding to foster coordination, collaboration and communication between the agencies that have formed the RWMG:

- Mojave Water Agency (MWA)
- Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority (VWVRA)
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District (MDRCD)
- Morongo Basin Pipeline Commission

The development of the IRWM Plan will be carried out by the Project Team, which consists of three different groups. This includes the Coordinating Committee, formed by two representatives from each member of the RWMG, which will guide the development of the IRWM Plan. Alongside the Coordinating Committee, other members of the Project Team include the private firms that make up the Consultant Team and participants from local public agencies that volunteered to assist in the planning process.

The Mojave Water Agency is managing the consultant contract. All of these groups, together with all interested stakeholders form the IRWM Stakeholders Group. The decision-making process for the Stakeholders Group will work toward achieving broad agreement, but when that is not feasible, the Stakeholders Group members will be asked to vote. In those cases, a majority vote will provide direction, but does not supersede the decisions of elected officials. Input provided by stakeholders is essential for the IRWM planning process. Ken Kirby stressed that stakeholders will participate as equals during planning meetings, and are expected to adhere to a code of conduct which includes the following four elements:

- Be willing (participate fully)
- Be kind (treat others with dignity and respect)
- Be open (consider new ideas and perspectives)
- Be truthful (share accurate facts about your situation)

Questions raised by meeting participants at this time included:

- Did the new guidance from DWR have any impact on the IRWM planning budget?
 - The new guidelines required only minor adjustments to the budget.
- Will Coordinating Committee meetings be open to the public?
 - That is still to be determined but it is likely once the committee members have been selected and can reach a decision on that matter.

As part of the planning process, Ken Kirby presented draft goals for the IRWM planning process, i.e. specific things they would like to accomplish by the end of the planning process (*see attachment*). These are distinct from the goals that will later form

the IRWM Plan itself. In response, participants had a large number of questions, comments and suggestions:

Participation of Disadvantaged and Other Communities in the IRWM Plan Update Process

- Do we know who makes up the disadvantaged communities (DACs), and do we have maps showing their locations and geographic boundaries?
- Does the IRWM Update Process represent an opportunity to include unincorporated areas in the Region that lack commercial codes?
- Will this provide an opportunity for rural areas to improve their water conservation efforts?

Role of Smaller Agencies

- What is the relationship between the IRWM Plan update process and mentoring as described in draft planning process goal #5?
 - It is intended strengthen staff capacity for implementing the IRWM Plan, including learning more about how and where to access funding options.
- Will it be possible to use the IRWM Plan update process to help smaller agencies that do not have a lot of resources?
- Will it be possible to expand planning process goal # 9 to include providing expertise and knowledge on how to obtain needed financial resources for agencies too small and busy to seek these out on their own?

Questions About the How the IRWM Plan Update Process Will Be Conducted

- If interested in being on the project team, who do we contact?
 - Contact Lance Eckhart
- Will the decisions of the TAC require formal votes or informal agreements?
 - In most cases, the TAC will strive to reach decisions through informal, broad agreements but where that is not feasible will ask for a majority vote of meeting participants.
- There are concerns about the accuracy of water budget numbers that will be relied on for the development of the IRWM Plan.

Additional Planning Process Goals that May Be Missing and Other Suggested Changes

- The IRWM Plan needs to be founded on solid data and good science.
- It will be important to identify barriers to resource management strategies and be creative in developing approaches in response.

- The planning process goals should consider the effects of water treatment and the ramifications of storm drainage and water runoff on water quality and supply.
- The planning process should consider emergencies and other potential disruptions to the water supply
- Another goal of the IRWM planning process should be to provide enough information to support local land use planning and decision-making, as these decisions can have such a profound impact on both water quality and water supply in what is a geographically isolated, watershed. For this reason, it will be important to invite San Bernardino County and the Colorado Board to participate in the planning process.
- The planning process should consider the transportability of water.
- The IRWM Update Plan is necessarily a forward looking plan but it will also be important to make sure we continue to manage and maintain the existing water system infrastructure.

Approach for Developing the Plan

Following the plan process discussion, Ken Kirby described the development of the IRWM Plan itself as an iterative process. Each Stakeholders Group meeting will be organized around Plan topics. Discussions during Stakeholders Group meetings will help frame the topics. Following each meeting, draft Plan content will be developed by the Project Team and then presented for further review, discussion and refinement at the next Stakeholders Group meeting; or series of meetings until content for that topic is finalized to the satisfaction of the Stakeholders Group. In this way the Plan is being written topic by topic throughout the planning process, rather than all at once in the final phase of the planning process. As part of this discussion, Mr. Kirby directed attention to a series of handouts including the topics scheduled for each planned meetings of the Stakeholders Group, the IRWM Plan Schedule, and more detailed information on what is covered by each topic that will be addressed by the Stakeholders Group, which will form the content for the IRWM Plan.

Opportunities to Participate

Yvonne Hester, the Community Liaison Officer for the Mojave Water Agency, described multiple opportunities that are being developed to encourage public participation in the IRWM Plan Update planning process. Beyond participating in meetings of the Stakeholders Group or upcoming community workshops, technology will be used to extend outreach to those unable to physically travel to these meetings. Interested

members of the public will have on-line access to documents and other resource materials on a new website that has been established specifically for the Mojave IRWM Plan Update, which can be accessed at mywaterplan.org. In addition to the document library, it will serve as the platform to provide comments, for questions and answers, a survey, and webinars. Both Facebook and Twitter will be utilized to drive interested members of the public to the website. Those interested in providing input on draft materials and other aspects of the IRWM planning process can do so through the following email address: comments@mywaterplan.org.

Among questions at this time:

- How will disadvantaged communities (DACs) be integrated into the planning process?
 - We are still in the process of determining what will be the most effective way to engage the DACs. Making sure input from the DACs is available during a phase in the planning process where it will have the most useful impact is important. We are currently in the process of identifying and contacting groups and representatives in the DAC to help develop the most effective outreach approach. This may include piggy-backing the three planned DAC workshops on existing meetings or other events already scheduled in these communities.

Development of Plan Objectives (Begin the Conversation)

Ken Kirby began the Plan Objectives topic by reviewing existing objectives from the 2004 IRWM Plan and presenting the characteristics that define good (or SMART) objectives. Objectives developed for the Mojave IRWM Plan will need to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Based to

In response to a quick review of the existing 2004 IRWM Plan objectives, some participants raised the following points:

- Adjudication of water rights is a major factor that needs to be addressed.
- The IRWM Plan Update planning process will need to address the impact of the Mojave Basin Judgment.

Challenges and Opportunities

To begin the process of identifying potential objectives for the IRWM Plan Update, Ken Kirby invited all to participate in an exercise where they were asked to describe items they believed should be addressed in the IRWM Plan. Meeting participants were provided sticky notes to write down one item, either a challenge or an opportunity. Only one item per sticky note was allowed but they could submit as many as they wanted. These were posted on a wallgraphic and then organized around common themes or topics. They are presented below exactly as written by the participants.

Governance and Land Use

- Level of importance for identical competing projects for a finite amount of grant funding
- MWA and County not on the same page.
- Integrate with Capital County Vision Plan-Water Section
- Will there be any type of protection against selling of H2O as in Cadiz?
- Dealing with existing and future agency (city, county, csa's) water master plans for consistency with the plan
- Interagency involvement (involve affected government agencies)
- For financing use sphere of influence of cities to provide tax base for funding programs and projects
- Water planning = land use planning
- Input from large water producers/users (private) within your district boundaries
- Coordinated regional effort that have common goals and objectives
- Land use allegations
- Regional community participation engagement
- Increased competition for water use with land use growth e.g. housing, business
- What responsibility do Watermaster entities have for over pumping or ...does MWA cover with water?
- Engaging the public in an apathetic society
- Using new laws implemented in Cal. in 2014 all homes (residential) must have water efficient i.e. shower heads toilets hot water heaters to be able to sell or buy. Starting age of home 1980's or older.
- Viable and competitive projects could get buried in bureaucracy when multiple jurisdictions are involved in approvals i.e. County Land Use, Flood Control, DFG/BLM etc. Need to coordinate up front.
- Need for enforcement of existing rules/laws in rural county areas.

- Getting Colorado WQCB to participate. They will be focused on the lower desert - possibly putting most of its \$ allocation to those areas - paying little attention to our area.
- Use the IRWM Plan to inform/formulate good land use practices that are protective of water quality and supply

Emergency

- What steps can be taken to reduce the impact of an earthquake on the availability of water
- Management plan in the event of a disaster "emergency plan"

Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)

- DAC priorities "What's available to DAC?"
- How can Disadvantaged Communities get help on smaller projects?
- Mutual water company in Disadvantaged Community in need to new well
- Private well owners concern over well regulation. Disadvantage Community
- How to provide clean water to the Hinkley Community (new complete system)
- Disadvantaged community without pressurized water supply (rely on hauled water, dev. code prevents building)
- MWA-MABWA provide an organization citizen involvement of minimal producers in organization process 1,300 minimal producers 190-MABWA major area 10 acre-feet. Minority-majority people need a voice (? illegible?)
- Rural disadvantage areas re: MAWA-Baja Subarea increase importation of state water to reduce yearly over drafting of water table
- Education for minimum producers as in our area (Newberry Springs) how it works is almost 100% unknown
- Small systems taking advantage of unknown opportunities or not having ability to apply
- Address needs to supply water to DACs, such as water line upgrades

Cost of Water

- Rising costs for pumping and transporting water
- How can reduce the cost of water per household on both the supply and demand side so as to make the high desert more attractive to live in
- Lower water rates
- Increasing energy costs

Water Supply

- Stop loss of water out Afton Canyon to benefit loss of land and infrastructure and replenish Baja Basin
- Availability of water for future residential, commercial, or industrial growth
- Maintain water availability for minimal producers including all of those who impact water use and supply into the Region
- If and when the H₂O runs out... then what ?
- Regional water shed protection program doesn't exist (at least in Morongo Basin)
- Increased groundwater storage and recovery facility.
- Future water use by both private and business
- Limited water supply
- Water-Import Export
- Funding infrastructure needs such as pipe replacement
- Reduction in water available for irrigation

Water Conservation

- Workable and enforceable water conservation ordinance for unincorporated areas of the MWA jurisdictional boundary
- Still continue to work and update water wise landscaping-programs incentives for investors or owner occupied
- Ag conservation programs
- Water conservation incentive for rural, unincorporated areas ex. cash for grass is not applicable. Existing irrigation change over to a more efficient (water and power)
- Water conservation and the implementation of dual plumbing into land use planning
- Coordinating and managing conservation and DMM requirements. (AWAC used to play a major role in this effort)
- Gray water education
- Rain water harvesting

Water Quality

- Improper abandonment/destruction of private water wells (threat to WQ)
- Plan to improve water quality in areas where no \$ to investigate/implement cleanup
- All flood control projects are an opportunity to save water and enhance water quality
- Septic tanks

- How will septic systems be replaced by sewer systems? (less than an acre plot)
- Increased business expense to comply with water quality regulations
- Groundwater contamination from previous and current business
- Elevated uranium in pipes sub basin(Ames Valley)
- Injunction against diverting storm flows?
- New Chromium to regulations coming within a couple years. Small groundwater systems will be impacted most.
- Continued deterioration of water quality by naturally occurring constituents i.e. arsenic etc. will additional treatment be anticipated

Delta

- What effect does state on water supply to agencies?
- Increasing cost of SWP Water
- Decreasing SWP supply due to Bay-Delta issues
- Delta environmental issues (pumping and earthquake)
- Ability to take large volumes of imported water quickly
- Delta fix

Reclaimed Water

- Need for reclaimed/recycled water in Barstow area
- More focus on recycled water use for irrigation and industrial uses
- Reclamation of storm water and wastewater

Recharge

- Determine feasibility of capturing storm water for recharge
- Off river recharge
- Water bank in High Desert for downstream aqueduct users as protection against state water project hazards (delta, national disaster, infrastructure failure etc. Apply a small "tax" on the banked water to boost local supplies long term.
- ASR through existing infrastructure during off season wet periods (winter)
- Growth may lead to increase capacity of Ames/Reche Recharge Basin for participants
- Combine land use and recharge (i.e. recharge pond and rec. lake)

Stormwater

- Run-off water conservation
- Mitigating storm water runoff damage from increased "100 year storms"

- Extreme wet weather flows sends water past Agency boundaries that could otherwise be captured and recharged at a later date for beneficial use
- Is there a way flood control can be used to recharge the water supply locally
- Storm water detention (San Bernardino County Flood Control District)
- Storm water capture

Climate Change

- Extreme wet weather flows causes flooding damage
- Effects of climate change on water availability and use

Judgment Including Water Rights

- Look at the effects of upstream pumping on the lower basins- specifically Baja
- Address the economic impact of the reduction of water (rampdowns) in the Baja basin, particularly in regards to farming. Please not that this is a very rural basin - no "cities "
- Would like to see the Judgment work as was intended for Baja
- Moderation of water rights purchases by investors
- What effect has adjudication had on ability to manage groundwater basins?
- No benefit to be a stipulator in Baja
- Pumping water outside the Judgment
- Expand Judgment bio fund beyond riparian areas
- The Judgment was not supposed to put people out of business or destroy property values
- Rural areas (1). MA Watermaster-Baja Subarea reduce over drafting of groundwater from 10,000 af per year to zero (2.) Reduce allowable carryover water from 2 years to 1 year (3) No selling or transfer
- Rampdowns alone are not the way to manage the water efficiently and can be very detrimental to an already deprived area.
- Mojave River-Reduce upstream over drafting so traditional water levels in Mojave River in Baja Subarea can be restored
- Retire water rights
- How can the Adjudication be classified as Disadvantaged Area- yet there are 1,300 Disadvantaged Minimal Producers

Conclusion and Next Steps

Following the challenges and opportunities exercise, all who had attended the meeting were invited to stay involved and to let others know who may also want to participate.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on April 4 from 10 am to 1 pm and will again take place at MWA headquarters in Apple Valley.

The April 4th meeting will build on results from today's workshop, including the challenges and opportunities identified by stakeholders which will facilitate the identification of objectives for the IRWM Plan Update. The meeting will also focus on the description of the Region, current and future conditions in the Region, and serve as a kickoff for the Salt & Nutrient Management Plan, which is being developed concurrently with the IRWM Plan Update.