

# Mojave Region Update of Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

## Stakeholder Group Meeting #6 – Summary

December 16, 2013

Mojave Water Agency Headquarters  
Apple Valley, CA

### **Meeting Purpose and Overview**

This was the sixth of nine scheduled meetings of the Stakeholder Group for the Update of the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan for the Mojave Region. Objectives for the meeting were to:

- Review project lists and revised projects
- Provide status update of draft IRWM Plan document
- Discuss proposed Governance structure for implementation
- Discuss Plan Performance Monitoring and Data Management
- Introduce Finance Requirements
- Review next steps

The meeting discussions revolved around specific projects revised in the project lists, the governance structure for implementation of the Plan, and defining criteria for monitoring performance of the Plan upon its implementation.

Twenty-nine individuals completed the meeting sign-in sheet, however over forty people attended the meeting as indicated by the introductions held at the start of the meeting. Ken Kirby, of EVOTO Company and a member of the Consultant Team, served as the facilitator for the meeting.

### **Introductions**

Scott Weldy, Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the Mojave Water Agency (MWA), opened the meeting with introductions by all those in attendance followed by approval of the November 5, 2013 Stakeholder Meeting Summary. Lance Eckhart, from MWA staff, thanked representatives from the newly expanded boundary areas of the IRWM Plan for attending the meeting and then turned the meeting over to Ken Kirby. Mr. Kirby provided a brief overview of the agenda indicating that a large portion of the discussions would be about Plan Performance Monitoring and Data Management as specified by State guidelines.

Mr. Kirby also provided a recap of Stakeholder Group Meeting #5 and gave a status update on the project schedule, stating that the public review draft of the IRWM Plan will be completed in May 2014 and the final draft should be ready for adoption in June 2014.

Mr. Kirby followed by opening the floor for questions and comments from the group. Mr. Floyd Wicks of Cadiz, Inc. representing the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project had a comment regarding the mention of his project on page 9 of the Stakeholder November 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 Meeting Summary. Mr. Wicks expressed concern over the removal of the project from the IRWM Plan due to lack of response from the project proponent and assured that Cadiz, Inc. was very interested in being involved in the IRWM Plan. Mr. Kirby clarified that individual project proponents were not contacted directly, but rather the second round of the project submittal phase for the IRWM Plan served as a collective notice to the group requesting additional information on projects (the first round was the initial call for projects). Mr. Kirby further explained there would be an opportunity for further discussion about specific projects during a later part of the meeting.

Mr. Kirby continued the meeting by providing an overview of the Code of Conduct for the meeting before providing a brief update on the status of projects included in the IRWM Plan:

- 128 total submittals received
  - 63 combined, resulting in 15 integrated projects
- 72 total projects proposed for the Plan
  - 8 projects screened out

### **Revised Project Lists (see Handouts 1a-1e)**

Mr. Kirby reviewed the project lists and their revisions during this session of the meeting. As shown in each project list handout, those projects highlighted in pink had been changed in some respect (e.g. priority ranking) or added to the list, while projects highlighted in yellow had been integrated with others into a single, larger project. The following is an overview of revisions to each project handout list, identifying the affected projects, and related comments and questions from the group:

#### ***Mojave Region IRWM Plan Potential Projects (Project Summary)-Handout #1a***

Revision(s): Includes projects previously missed

Projects discussed:

#### 62R – Water Conservation Ordinance

- Previously screened out (lacked project proponent to carry out project)

- Currently recommended for inclusion in the IRWM Plan
    - County of San Bernardino to sponsor project
- 126 – Community Park and Demo Garden
- Previously missed
  - Currently recommended for inclusion in the IRWM Plan
- 127 – Water Well No. 10
- Previously missed
  - Currently recommended for inclusion in the IRWM Plan
- 128 – Transition Zone Water Quality Study
- Previously missed
  - Currently recommended for inclusion in the IRWM Plan
- 129 – Well Abandonment
- Previously missed
  - Currently recommended for inclusion in the IRWM Plan

***Mojave Region IRWM Plan Potential Projects (Project Submittals Screened Out) – Handout 1b***

Revision(s): Project 62R, Water Conservation Ordinance, was transferred from the screened out project list to the list of recommended projects)

Projects discussed:

12 – Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage

- Lacking project details (Description is too broad. How will the project fit into the IRWM Plan?)
- Further review recommended
  - Work with project proponent to revise project description
  - Project Team to review revised project and formulate recommendation
  - Include revised project as discussion item in upcoming meeting with TAC and Stakeholders

Comments/Questions:

- Per Floyd Wicks of Cadiz Inc.
  - o Project involves connection of 30-inch pipeline from Cadiz to MWA’s 42-inch water line in Barstow
  - o One benefit of connection would be provision of water supply for fire protection services in Yermo (eliminating the need for a new reservoir)
  - o Water quality of project is comparable to that of the State Water Project
  - o Project would help the County retain 20 percent of water currently lost via evaporation

- Will there be a State Agency involved to control inter-basin transfer of water?
- What criteria must projects meet to be included in IRWM Plan?
  - o Previously published, will provide review of criteria at later time

***Mojave Region IRWM Plan Potential Projects (Preliminary Ranking by Priority Objectives) – Handout 1c***

Revision(s): Ranking of several projects revised

- All revised projects moved up in rank
- Some projects were placed in different categories as a result of integration with other projects
- Some upward shifts in project rankings are a result of priority shifts of related Objectives

Projects discussed:

62R – Water Conservation Ordinance

- Previously a missed project, now included with associated priority ranking

13R – Camp Cady: Tamarisk Removal

- Objective 8: Improve Environmental Stewardship
  - Changed to Get Real Index (GRI) 1
    - Associated with an Objective that moved up a priority level from Tier 3 to Tier 2.

Comments/Questions:

- What is the relation of priority 2 on project 13R? How was priority ranking decided for?
  - o Project submittals are reviewed for consistency of primary and secondary contributions
  - o Inconsistent projects were changed
    - Project rankings were revised if it was determined to be a direct/primary contributor to a priority objective.
    - Projects changed depending on level of contribution (primary or secondary)
    - Projects were removed
  - o Project rankings were adjusted during previous stakeholder and TAC meeting based on additional information provided

128 – Transition Zone Water Quality Study

- Previously a missed project, now included with associated priority ranking
- Objective 12: Improve Public Awareness
  - Changed to GRI 2

- Study without additional effort will not change public awareness
- Scientific study not typically read by public

#### 129 – Well Abandonments

- Previously a missed project, now included with associated priority ranking
- Objective 13: Establish Reliable Maintenance Funding
  - Removed
    - Need something specific within the project to address objective
    - New project doesn't count for improving maintenance funding

#### 115 – Land and Water Rights Acquisition

- Objective 8: Improve Environmental Stewardship
  - Changed as primary contributor (level 1) to this objective
    - Associated with Objective that moved up in priority level

#### 126 – Community Park and Demo Garden

- Previously a missed project, now included with associated priority ranking
- Integrated into Project 1005 Regional Demonstrations Gardens
  - Related Objectives changed due to integration

#### 127 – Water Well No. 10

- Previously a missed project, now included with associated priority ranking
- Integrated into Project 1003 Assistance Program for Small Water Systems
  - Related Objectives changed due to integration

#### Comments/Questions:

- Is Helendale considered a small water system?
  - o Yes. 2,800 accounts is defined as small

### ***Projects Arranged by Proposed Priority – Handout #1d***

Revision(s): Ranking of several projects revised:

Projects discussed:

#### 62R – Water Conservation Ordinance

- Now Tier 1, GRI = 3

#### 126 – Community Park and Demo Garden

- Recommended to integrate with Project 1005 “Regional Demonstration Garden Program.” After integration, project will be Tier 2, GRI=2

#### 127 – Water Well No. 10

- Recommended to integrate with Project 1003 “Assistance Program for Small System Improvements.” After integration, project will be Tier 1, GRI=2

### ***Mojave Region IRWM Plan Project Number and Title – Handout #1e***

This is a new list that includes final project numbers, original project numbers, integrated projects, and shows screen-out and changed projects.

#### Comments/Questions:

- Running Springs Water District: Is it too late to add projects? (Regarding project to replace two sewer lift station near the headwaters of Deep Creek. Application submitted with Clean Water State Fund Program. In design stage now. Construction projected for late summer 2014)
  - Initial response was that project should not be added at this point to avoid schedule delays with IRWM Plan, but the Plan can later be amended upon adoption.
  
- Were agencies in the newly expanded IRWM Plan boundary notified and given time to participate in IRWM Plan process?
  - Yes, larger agencies in these areas were notified and encouraged to participate
  - When would amendment process start?
    - As soon as Plan is adopted - recommended that Plan be updated at least once a year
  - Since Running Springs Water District project is set for construction in near future and addressed water quality can this project be included in IRWM Plan now?
    - Recommendation: Because of nature of boundary expansion and lack of information flow, the IRWM Plan should include this project even though it is after the deadline for project submittals
    - Recommendation: This project should be included in one of the integrated projects for small water systems
    - Project team will work with project proponent on submittal and formulate recommendation for stakeholders and TAC
  - Does this invitation to participate in IRWM Plan beyond the project submittal deadline extend to Crestline Sanitation District (also in expanded boundary area)?
    - Crestline Sanitation District has been present in past IRWM Plan meetings - may be apt to participate upon completion of boundary expansion
  - Recommendation: Open project submittal to all entities in newly expanded boundary areas
    - Applications can be submitted by early January for review by group in February
    - How will IRWM Plan schedule be affected by these new submittals

- It will depend of the number of submittals
- Joshua Basin is opposed to Cadiz project because it originates outside the IRWM Region.
  - At the next meeting, there will be an opportunity for the group to discuss and review Cadiz project
- If Project 48R, Mojave River Dam-Deep Creek Spillway Wetlands Restoration (currently screened out), ever got endorsed by Army Corps of Engineers, it would be good mitigation for other projects - best dealt with as amendment to IRWM Plan after adoption or include it now?
  - Since Army has not taken on the project yet, best to deal with it as amendment

### **Mojave Integrated Regional Water Management Plan – Status Update**

Sandra Carlson, a member of the consultant team, provided a brief status of the Plan document:

- Section 4 Objectives presented for review and comment
- Section 2 (Region Description) and Section 3 (Water Supply and Demand) will need to be updated to reflect expansion areas. Each expansion area to get its own section which will be added to the end of the current Section 2 and Section 3 as appropriate:
  - Afton- to be completed for review by end of December 2013
  - 29 Palms – under review
  - Upper Mojave - to be completed for review by end of December 2013
  - Wrightwood - to be completed for review by end of December 2013

### **Governance after Plan Adoption (see Handout #2)**

This portion of the meeting focused on establishing a governance structure for the implementation of the Mojave IRWM Plan. The proposed governance structure is essentially the same as the one that has been in place during the development of the IRWM Plan, but with less involvement from consultants

The recommended changes for adapting the current Governance Structure for implementation include:

- Continue with Regional Water Management Group as is
- Replace Project Team with Implementation Support Team.
  - The Implementation Support Team will:
    - Focus on fostering implementation of projects
    - Track progress

- Perform Plan updates

NOTE: Does NOT mean Implementation Support Team is responsible for carrying out projects listed in IRWM Plan but rather will help project proponents move projects forward through coordination and collaboration to support development of the projects.

- Use same decision making approach as in Plan development (i.e. facilitated broad agreement)

Comments/Questions:

- What role would a participating agency from newly expanded boundary area have? Particularly if it does not have a project listed in the Plan?
  - Agencies with projects in the Plan may be more participatory. Those without can still participate to help move other projects forward to uphold regional objectives
  - Plan meetings provide many opportunities for participation
    - Move projects forward
    - Develop new projects to help meet regional objectives
    - Explore funding mechanisms to implement projects
- If Broad Agreement not reached by the Implementation Support Team, what is the format for vote by the Coordinating Committee (CC)?
  - If full representation of the CC is present at the meeting they can be asked to vote right then or a meeting can be scheduled for further discussion and vote by CC
  - If no sufficient CC representation at the meeting than another meeting will need to be scheduled
- Clarification of difference between implementation of IRWM Plan versus implementation of individual projects within the plan:
  - IRWM Plan is not set up to give any of the proponents? veto authority or operational control for projects
  - IRWM Plan does not interfere with the authority of agencies or organizations in the Region (i.e. MWA boundary not affected by IRWM Plan boundary expansion)
- Are there budgeting guidelines for implementation of the Plan?
  - No, the Project Team included this as part of the planned decision-making structure for budgeting implementation activities



NOTE: IRWM Plan does not preclude projects from all applicable permitting processes and CEQA and NEPA processes. It defines projects that meet regional objectives and as a collective group will work together to help the projects move forward.

- Do other agencies need to adopt the Plan?
  - Yes, agencies and entities within the Region need to adopt the Plan to qualify for Prop. 84 funds
    - Projects on the list for IRWM Plan still need to go out and get funding
- How are changes to members of the Regional Water Management Group made?
  - No formal procedures for replacing members of the RWMG. The State requires 3 representatives from legal entities responsible for water management - if one needs replacing, than a new memorandum of understanding is needed

NOTE: IRWM Plan projects are not guaranteed grant priority and funding but rather are given community support.

- IRWM Plan is:
  - Regional agreement on what is important (i.e. objectives)
  - Does not in any way interfere with the authority of agencies and entities responsible for permitting projects
  - Identifies all possible funding resources for implementation of projects

### **Plan Performance Monitoring Objectives for the Mojave IRWM Plan (see Handout #3)**

The State guidelines include performance monitoring to ensure progress toward implementation of the IRWM Plan. Discussion about criteria for evaluating projects revolved around:

- Setting targets
- Data sources
- Process for gathering data
- Frequency for reporting

The following is a list of recommended criteria for evaluating the progress of projects as reviewed by the group and described in the Plan Performance Monitoring Objectives handout.

**Objective 1- "Balance average annual future water demands with available future water supplies ..."**

Recommendation: Leave as is

Comments/Questions:

- Will use Urban Water Management Plans to assess supply and demand balance, supplemented with data from small water systems and outlying areas.
- Can smaller providers use existing reporting mechanisms for State reporting processes?
  - The data is already available from the Watermaster
  - MWA keeps track annually of water needs and supply.
- Should there be a shorter review period than 5 years?
  - More rigid stipulation is not needed since MWA already monitors water conditions on a more frequent basis.
- Is MWA extrapolating the impact of potential state wide water shortages on future water supplies in our region? - Yes

**Objective 2- “Continue improving regional water use efficiency by implementing a portfolio of conservation actions....”**

Recommendation: AWAC to formulate draft targets/criteria for 2a – 2c by mid-January 2014

Comments/Questions:

- Efficiency can be overridden by growth. Shouldn't land use be considered in setting targets?
  - Land use is addressed in Objective 1
- Should DWR target be used? At what point do we reach diminishing returns on conservation efforts?
  - We have already met DWR target for 2020 (20%) - at some point we do reach the floor, where that is we do not know yet
- Do cities and counties include vacant lots in projections for future water needs?
  - No, use population growth by percentage rate. Counting lots is not an effective method for projecting per capita use
- Need to not penalize urban areas that have already achieved conservation goals
  - These are regional goals and not city/county/town specific

**Objective 3- “Maintain stability in previously overdrafted groundwater basins...”**

Recommendation: Project team will devise criteria

Comments/Questions:

- Is this addressed by the adjudication?
  - MWA handles monitoring and tracking for basins within its boundaries
- It is difficult to track overdraft on annual basis, although annual changes need to be done. Should be long term targets
- Need to figure out how do address those smaller entities outside MWA service area

**Objective 4 – “Address the State policy goal of reducing reliance on the Delta....”**

Recommendation: MWA will take lead on devising criteria

Comments/Questions:

- MWA has data on banked reserves, the issue is additional data needed from the newly expanded areas
  - Need to determine where we have data and where we do not
  - Need to identify alternative sources for data

**Objective 5 – “Optimize the use of the Region’s water related assets to maximize available supplies to meet projected demands ...”**

Recommendation: Project team will devise exact description and process

Comments/Questions:

- How to track these items across the region?
  - Projects with cost savings should share their data with the IRWM Plan groups
    - Forms for reporting

**Objective 6 – “Prevent land subsidence throughout the Region”**

Recommendation: Zero subsidence is the target; 5-yr interval for reporting

Comments/Questions:

- USGS already measures subsidence every 5 years through existing program

**Objective 7 – “Provide support and assistance to disadvantaged communities.”**

Recommendation: Measure and track the number of programs implemented in Disadvantaged Communities on an ongoing basis. Target is 10 projects (~ 2 projects per year), programs or investments to be made in the first five years that benefit Disadvantaged Communities

Comments/Questions:

- How will we track projects implemented and programs in Disadvantaged Communities (DAC)?
- Many DACs lack the capacity to collect and track data. There is a lot of uncertainty in quantifying their needs
  - Perhaps measuring grants or debt forgiveness in those areas is a way to track
  - A specific focus instead of a target might be a better way to go
  - Can partner with utility providers
  - Can set a number of projects per year or amount of funding as target in those areas to show progress in Disadvantaged Communities

**Objective 8 – “Improve environmental stewardship related to waterways and water management in the Region.”**

### Quantitative Measurement 8a

Recommendation: MWA to work with Resource Conservation District (RCD) to develop target

Comments/Questions:

- MWA already works with RCD and U.S. Fish and Wildlife
  - Measurement is covered
  - Data available just need to set a target

### Quantitative Measurement 8b

Recommendation: MWA to work with cities and counties develop target

Comments/Questions:

- Different from 8A - many cities and counties have their own programs in environmental stewardship
  - Will need to communicate with communities that border sensitive habitat areas to obtain information on specific programs related to this topic

### Quantitative Measurement 8c

Recommendation: MWA to work with RCD to set target

Comments/Questions:

- Same as 8A

## **Objective 9 – “Improve floodplain management throughout the Plan area.”**

### Quantitative Measurement 9a

Recommendation: MWA to develop target

Comments/Questions:

- Look at the IRWM Plan and high priority level projects and then develop a goal to match the implementation of those projects

### Quantitative Measurement 9b

Recommendation: MWA to contact flood control coordinators to obtain data and develop a target

Comments/Questions:

- Need to talk to floodplain manager about expected damages and then show reductions with implemented projects

## **Objective 10 – “Preserve water quality as it relates to local beneficial use of water supplied by each source...”**

### Quantitative Measurement 10a

Recommendation: MWA to work with local Regional Water Quality Board to develop target

### Quantitative Measurement 10b

Recommendation: MWA to develop target

Comments/Questions:

- Data is already collected from various sources by MWA, just need to report it

**Objective 11 – “Obtain financial assistance from outside sources to help implement the Plan...”**

Recommendation: Kathy Cortner, MWA chief financial officer, to develop a target for both categories of projects

Comments/Questions:

- Of the projects implemented over the next five years, 25% of total project costs should be through special assistance and cost savings interest loans
- Recommendation for both small and other projects?
  - Should have a different target of each category of projects
- This is easy to track
  - Many state agencies issue statements showing grants and other funds that they have given
  - Project can also provide this information as they progress and report back to IRWM Plan group
- Include low interest and special loans?
  - Yes
- Will there be repercussions if target is not met?
  - No
- Is 25% reasonable?
  - Depends on the scale of the project

**Objective 12 – “Improve public awareness of water supply, conservation...”**

Recommendation: AWAC to develop a target

**Objective 13 – “Identify and establish reliable funding sources to maintain, modernize and improve water infrastructure...”**

Recommendation: Set up a subcommittee to establish criteria and targets after adoption of IRWM Plan

Comments/Questions:

- Deferred maintenance is an issue and methods to ensure projects are maintained is important

**Objective 14 – “Increase the use of recycled water in the Region...”**

Recommendation: Project Team to develop target

## Finance Requirements

State guidelines require that the IRWM Plan discuss financing:

- Program level description of the sources of funding which could or will be used for the development and ongoing maintenance
- Potential sources of funding for implementing projects that go beyond what the Plan already has listed
- Potential sources of funding for projects coming into the Plan that go beyond what is already listed

IRWM Plan must address and identify funding sources of all the projects on the list. Currently there is uncertainty about the source funding for many projects on the list.

Comments/Questions:

- What level of detail is required?
  - Not defined yet, will need to establish this soon
- Will need a list of projects sorted by aide entities from MWA
- Need a methodology for generating funding information from project proponents to include in the IRWM Plan document

## Wrap Up/Next Steps

Ken Kirby brought the meeting to a close by giving a brief overview of activities and meetings coming up.

- Next meeting is February 6, 2014
  - Revisit Finance
  - Introduce Technical Analysis and Plan Recommendation
  - Confirm Groundwater Management Plan Objectives
  - Address comments from the group on draft sections of the Plan
  - Follow up on project discussions
- Meeting #8 is May 19, 2014
  - Present and discuss public review draft of IRWM Plan
- Meeting #9
  - Prepare for IRWM Plan adoption

At the end of the meeting, stakeholders were asked to review all the discussion handouts and answer the questions on Handout 4 regarding Handouts 1a-1e and Handout 2. Mr. Kirby also encouraged the group to provide comments on Section 4 of the draft IRWM Plan which is available on the project website. As additional sections of the document are posted, the group will be invited to comment. Meeting summaries

are always posted on the project website as well for comment and review. Mr. Kirby then turned the meeting over to Scott Weldy to adjourn the meeting.