

State Watershed Program Advisory Committee Meeting

December 7, 9:00am – 2:30 pm

Meeting Summary

Meeting Location

John Muir Room
801 K Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA

Action Items/Key Decisions

1. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be January 25, 2008. At the recommendation of the Co-chair, staff will recommend a local hotel so that those who are coming from out of town the night before can co-locate and have informal meetings to facilitate greater committee interaction.
2. Staff will work with a small group of committee members to develop a draft statement of principles to be circulated in advance of January meeting.
3. Staff will begin to develop an analysis of existing information relevant to the Program from other recent regional discussions carried out by DWR, the Waterboards and others.
4. Committee members should begin to formulate an outreach plan for their areas, consult with at-large representatives and staff. These will be circulated prior to 1/18 and reviewed at 1/25 mtg.

Dec 7 Meeting Objectives

- 1) A clear understanding of the near term role and duties of the Committee
- 2) A strategy for public outreach actions throughout the state
- 3) Set meeting date for next month.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Martha Davis and Robert Meacher, Co-Chairs of the Statewide Watershed Program Advisory Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked them for their participation, especially those who traveled from afar and under adverse weather conditions.

Mr. Meacher expressed his appreciation to Secretary Chrisman for his participation during an informal get-together the previous evening. Mr. Meacher believes this helped to demonstrate the state's commitment to this effort.

Bridgett Luther, Director of DOC, said Secretary Chrisman is disappointed that he could not attend the meeting. – He was on the way to Bali for the UN Conference on Climate Change. She also said she has received positive feedback from state agencies about the DOC taking on this effort. She also asked Allen Goldstein, consultant to DOC, to facilitate the meeting so that staff could more readily participate.

2. Meeting Summary

The November 7, 2007 meeting summary was finalized with an amendment. Committee member Pat Frost was not in attendance, but provided written comments about the draft summary. These written comments to the summary were distributed. It was decided that his comments were best addressed during the ensuing discussion.

3. History of Watershed Management in CA: principles and elements

John Lowrie, Watershed Program manager presented a brief history of California's recent watershed management policies. A PowerPoint presentation was given and is attached to this e-mail and (is available on the program's web site provide link). Committee members were encouraged to review the AB 2117 report (http://resources.ca.gov/watershedtaskforce/AB2117LegReport_041102.pdf). This report includes policy recommendations, some of which have been adopted and some of which have been attempted. Some he believes still need to be pursued. For example, one of the recommendations is for the state to develop a set of common principles, policies and flexible guidelines for watershed management.

Mr. Lowrie's presentation described the basic elements of watershed management as promulgated by the CALFED Watershed Program: including definitions of watershed, watershed management and the watershed approach. A preferred model for watershed management processes was discussed, as well as fundamental watershed management principles.

Several policy efforts in California over the last ten years have been driven by sets of principles. Generally these principles can be organized by categories such as: public involvement, process, governance, technical and science, and performance measurement and accountability. The principles are important because they guide actions at multiple levels.

Mr. Lowrie also recommended that this new effort for a statewide program be based on "performance," where evaluation and monitoring of efforts provides feedback for adaptive management. Though this can be considered threatening by some, it establishes the expectations for resource outcomes.

4. Building the State Watershed Program – Principles discussion

The Committee responded to the principles discussion, and the following thoughts, questions and concerns were presented and discussed.

- Agree that public involvement is important– so that people understand the rationale for making decisions. –Some noted that not all decision makers will necessarily adopt all recommendations.
- Believe that funding or a mechanism for funding should be added as a basic need, including fund administration. (Expressed by more than one member).

- Are these principles for the committee or for the legislature or to present to the public? Staff clarified that these were for the overall state program.
- A definition of principles needs context – such as why these are being undertaken – for example – to improve the existing state of watersheds
- Suggestion that the desired outcome be “sustainable resource management”.
- Suggested that “rehabilitate” may be more appropriate than “restore”.
- Need to ensure that existing efforts are not derailed.
- Support concept that watershed management includes land management,
- Concern was expressed that the above principles were not strong principled statements. The more fully developed language on slides 12 and 13 of the presentation were preferred. Lowrie clarified that at this point he was presenting the common threads of previous policies and principles and that they are not comprehensive. He believes that previous efforts were short on outcomes. He supports developing strong principled statements.
- Multi-stakeholder participation should be included in any governance principle.
- Both community and implementation principles like the Ahwahnee Principles should be developed.
- Concern about how we might influence future language regarding state bond funds.
- Co-chair Martha Davis responded that with respect to the subject of funding, the discussion about watershed management as a process vs watershed project funding is emblematic of the larger issue, and believes that we can tilt the discussion and attract funds for watershed approach – this is the area that interests her the most.
- Director Luther said that our job is to make the link on how watershed management will add value – how we link priorities with community-based solutions. If we bring solutions then we won’t have to worry about attracting funds. Watershed management strength is bringing solutions to both local and statewide significance. Her goal is to help empower the watershed community to make those solutions apparent.
- What’s missing is the larger context – what is the desired outcome? Framing our principles will help define the state’s interest when we have discussions with our local communities about a watershed program and what value it could have.
- Belief that the previously existing CA Watershed Council was not able to succeed because of turf battles between the agencies which then undermined the council and other past efforts – we’ll need to address these issues if we are to be effective.
- Belief that community-based solutions should be a principle – and balancing beneficial uses.
- Lowrie restated the purpose of the committee – from his perspective - is that we are here to define a program which includes a set of actions to support and promote a community-based watershed management approach to addressing, in an integrated way, multiple resource management objectives – and principles will guide what we define and what we hope to accomplish as a result.
- Need to consider the gap between where we are and the desired outcomes, or where we want to be.
- What feels broken in our area, is that we have a lot of local watershed groups but the feeling is that the state tells us that we didn’t do well enough. The criteria has not been well accepted by the other agencies. Some people are hearing that what they are doing is not good enough.
- The above discussion highlights the importance of the need to improve agency coordination – also need to factor in tribal and federal partners.

- Ms. Luther stated that the dynamic of placing the watershed program in an agency or department is powerful – the DOC is a bridge, a permanent home and an advocate for watershed management.
- Developing and clearly describing a “watershed approach” will assist communities to make their efforts more clearly beneficial to the State as a whole.
- We have difficulty showing results because they are not often apparent in the typical electoral cycle. Results take years – legislature does not readily react to long term change.
- Support for Lowrie’s analysis was expressed - One committee member expressed that in her area - land use, agricultural and water interests are starting to dialogue with greater effectiveness.
- Improving coordination is very important now that climate change is widely acknowledged as a significant short-term issue, as well as a long term one.
- Community block grants have been a successful funding mechanism in some cases – perhaps this should be a potential resource developed.
- Watershed influence has expanded greatly and the folks in this room represent that – it’s not just fish and clean water interests here.
- What other voices need to be part of this discussion?
- Will we adopt principles? We should be about building a system to reach a goal, rather than just fixing specific problems.
- Support for having draft framework principles and take them out for comment to local communities.
- Suggest having draft documents prior to committee discussion to facilitate discussion.

Mr. Lowrie said that staff would take the essence of today’s conversation and craft a draft principles document with bold principled statements for circulation in advance of next meeting. The committee expressed their support. Mike Rippey, Mary Lee Knecht, Andrea Mackenzie, and Belinda Faustinos volunteered to act as a small group to review early drafts. Mr. Lowrie will be point person.

5. Designing the outreach process

Committee members were briefed on the recent thinking on how an outreach process over a few months could be carried out. Different processes or avenues may be needed in different areas – depending on local needs. We can tailor meetings with different processes to different areas. However there is a need to develop common information from the effort. Input from Committee members on this idea was requested. Our goal is to provide a framework for a watershed program plan to Secretary Chrisman by June 30, 2008. We will be looking for input on principles and program functions. Staff will be present at all meetings, but it is not expected that committee members attend all meetings in regions beyond their own.

Committee Input

- May need to inventory local watershed groups to ascertain their level of present activity.
- At-large members would like to assist regional members on potential strategies and venues.
- Request staff to provide an inventory and analysis of state agencies activities relative to watershed management.

- In meetings – we'll need to clearly state to potential regional participants why we are there
- Will need to be cognizant of language and culture as we attempt to engage certain communities– and need for time may want to consider a “reach-in” process as opposed to “outreach”. Translators may be needed in certain areas.
- Committee members should read their Bulletin-160 Regional Profile information
<<http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/regional/workshops/index.cfm> >
- Consider using other methods to solicit input – such as posting documents to a web site for comment; conference calls for Sierra-based folks, and survey tools (e.g. Survey Monkey).
- Consider using a process similar to CEQA – i.e. that first outreach would be similar to a scoping process and later receive feedback on draft.
- Jordan Henk offered technical assistance on map-making, and to establish contacts and meetings in his region.
- Concern that we are moving too fast without full public interaction – and that may lose people in the process – also what would a framework look like?
- May be able to tap into existing efforts in certain areas – e.g. Klamath negotiating group and the Desert Manager's Group.
- Need for agreed upon questions for all areas – also suggest contact local Boards of Supervisors to alert them to this effort- a letter from Secretary Chrisman will lend weight.

Director Luther stated that we need to get broad statements of community interests and we should avoid getting stuck in programmatic details. We cannot expect to please everyone, however we are going to get a “place at the table”. Brian Leahy said that this effort will also be the first attempt and will serve a placeholder. We'll definitely need to keep growing with it and build off what has been done. An interagency council will not be developed until much later in the process.

Mr. Lowrie said staff would move forward on an analysis of existing information. He is not comfortable not having a wide-open process, will put surveys/questionnaires on web site. He also noted that the Regional Water Quality Control Boards have staff focused on watershed management and that they are ready to engage in this process. Dennis Bowker advised committee members that when they hear that funding is needed, try to drill down to determine what specific uses would be for the funds, in order to understand the basic needs.

A draft timeline for activities in 2008 was presented for staff to consider and is presented below.

ACTION	RESOURCE	DATE	NOTE
Compile and distribute common questions	staff	DEC	
Design	representatives	JAN	1. unique process by region

regional input method	& staff		(who, where, how, etc) 2. common info requirements 3. multi-step/phase 4. use technology to facilitate
Compile fundamental Program Development Principles	staff & subgroup	JAN	
Compile orientation presentation, and regional status report			
Define schedule for future committee meetings		JAN 25	
Outreach		FEB	
Outreach / Synthesis		MAR	
Synthesis of Concepts / Framework		APR	
Draft Framework		MAY	
FINAL Draft Framework		JUNE 30	

The Committee reiterated support for meetings on Fridays, and that a more informal gathering the night before would be beneficial. Staff will follow up on that request as well. Next committee meeting was scheduled for January 25th in Sacramento with the 18th as a due date for materials to sent to staff for circulation.

Attachment 1 – Staff presentation on history of CA Watershed management.

Appendix 1 - Committee members and staff in attendance

Andrea Mackenzie
Belinda Faustinos
Donna Meyers
Greg Kirkpatrick
Jill Geist
Joan Clayburgh
John Brodie
Jordan Henk
Julie Rynerson
Martha Davis
Mary Lee Knecht
Miguel Luna
Robert Meacher
Tim Frahm
Sarah Green
Mike Rippey
Bridgett Luther
Brian Leahy
John Lowrie
Dan Wermiel
Dennis Bowker
Casey Walsh Cady
Allen Goldstein



