

Leadership Group Annual Workshop

September 24, 2009

Sacramento City Hall

Council Chambers 1:30-3:30 pm

Summary

Successful Salinity Leadership Group Annual Meeting Held

The Salinity Leadership Group formerly called the Salinity Policy Group held its annual workshop meeting on **September 24, 2009 from 1:30 to 3:45 PM**. This executive level [Annual Leadership Meeting](#) was attended by around 65 Leadership Group Members and CV-SALTS participants. Presentations to the Group reviewed the progress made in the past year and provided formal review of the activities planned for the coming 12 months and work plan proposed for the rest of the program. Four 4 action items were reviewed and approved. Here are links to the [Workshop Program](#) and the [Presentation Sides](#).

The meeting was web-cast so those who cannot travel can hear the presentations and discussion. [The Video Archive is Hosted Here](#) by Granicus and the City of Sacramento for those who missed the meeting.



General Meeting Notes

1. Opening comments: Charlie Hoppin, Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board
2. CV-SALTS and Meeting Introduction - Daniel Cozad, Executive Director Central Valley Salinity Coalition
 - High level overview of the program
 - Successes and accomplishments
 - Inspire participation interest and stakeholder leadership commitments

Meeting Goals

- Ensure common vision is understood with goals, benefits and outcomes
- Coalition Building – Expand commitment to fund and be actively engaged
- Describe current actions and future needs, actions that impact short and long-term
- Each organization sees their role and the necessity of participation
- Agreement and participation in the strategic next steps

3. Purpose, Committee Reports and Accomplishments – *Pamela Creedon, Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board*

Salinity Issues

- Mandated by state-wide policy that all the regional water boards develop salt and nitrate management plans...we had projected an 8-10 years and we were in the third year of that plan and it will take another five years
- We import more salt than we export – 2 million tons of salt a year are brought into the San Joaquin Valley
- Salt concentration in our soil is creating an inventory of salt in our soils
- Nearly 4000 acres of saline soil exist in the western portion of Fresno County alone, that number has increased by 120,000 acres in less than 20 years
- Increased water salinity has caused over 100,000 acres on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley to be taken permanently out of production; with today's environment and concerns with the drought we could see that number increase
- The main EC level in the San Joaquin River at Versailles is nearly doubled since the 1940s; over 400,000 tons of salt are migrating into the aquifers in the Valley and will continue if we don't deal with this issue

Nitrate Issues

- Some communities in the Tulare Country area no longer have a viable drinking water source because the nitrates exceed drinking water standards

The state and the Central Valley Water Board produced the Central Valley Salinity Policy Group which is now renamed the Central Valley Leadership Group. All members that we could think of that would be stakeholders in this process. A stakeholder is anyone who uses Central Valley waters.

CV Salinity Coalition and CV SALTS Initiative

- Members of the stakeholder groups including the regulatory agencies and the federal agencies, environmental organization and others
- Leadership steering committee: coalition and representatives of the coalition
- The water board can't join the coalition but can be part of the executive committee, federal agencies and public agencies at the federal and state level can't join the coalition

- Environmental groups can't afford to join the coalition, but still need to provide input
- The Executive Committee is an integration of the business and finance side with the federal and public agencies and others is a way of having that decision-making body joins together
- The executive committee is where the decisions are made about what actions are ultimately taken after the approval of the board

Accomplishments

Since forming of the salinity coalition

- committees meet on a regular basis, monthly; technical advisory committee will have to meet more regularly
- governance and other management documents created and in place
- website has been developed
- draft work plan, a preliminary budget, and a schedule
- state board with the adopted recycle policy that now makes this a mandated function
- the state board approved a three-year, \$5 million budget out of the Clean up and Abatement Account for this project; before we get the next year's allocation we need to demonstrate that we've made adequate progress or we won't get the next year's allotment – it is contingent upon taking appropriate action.
- coalition continues to seek funding and membership into the coalition
- issued our first contract for a pilot study and the first allotment of the Clean up and Abatement Account will be issuing contracts for additional studies to be done in accordance with the work plan
- we also have a memorandum of agreement that has been developed between the coalition, the state, and the regional board – will go to the state board and regional board as a resolution for approval so we will move into a formal MOA with the group

Work plan for the next 5 years

New executive committee chair elected: Mona Shulman, Pacific Coast Producers, representative of the food industry and a member of the California League of Food Processors

4. Accomplishments of the Executive Committee (Presenter: Mona Shulman)

- standing rules have been developed for the committees – the executive committee is the primary policy and governance committee for the CV SALT effort and work directly with the coalition board
- approved a memorandum of agreement with the state and regional boards which now will go to those boards for approval, which will coordinate the salinity and nutrient management efforts through the executive committee

- technical committee has engaged a consultant to begin the salt and nitrate work plan and study
- governing documents are in place

Goals of the Executive Committee

- to ensure that sound science and policy are behind the efforts that we undertake and that they inform the decisions that we make
- a thorough review of policy-related issues about future management of water, salt, and nitrates is what the committee will be doing 2010 and late 2009
- To encourage participation and commitment in the coalition effort, we must focus on outcomes to create a framework for decisions; what information do we require? How do we plan integrated efforts that lead to the same goal?
 - When projects are proposed they're backed up by market research, feasibility studies, budgets and projections, but also in the learning from the efforts of others (eg: Australia)
 - We have begun evaluating the sources and scope of the salinity and nitrate impacts in the Valley, to identify where the problems and impacts are and move forward with our studies
 - We have catalogued the current efforts by the various state, federal and other agencies so we can coordinate ongoing efforts to manage salinity and permitting and other programs ; the executive committee is the primary facilitator of the specific areas of these programs
- To bring public, local, state, federal agencies, as well as industry, environmental and agricultural interests

5. Educational and Outreach Committee (Presenter: Daniel Cozad for Rosa Lao-Staggs)

- started with a strategic plan – 2-year plan
- outreach for other committees as well as broad-based education
- developing an on-line article that will be posted soon. AquaFornia – background on salinity for a public audience
- article in the Aqua newsletter that went to all the Aqua members
- SOTE – Salt of the Earth; won a regional Emmy – it aired on PBS
- list of things you can do for the general public for households that they can do to solve SALT; also translated into Spanish; available on the web.

Technical Committee (David Cory, Chair of the Economic and Social Costs Committee)

- Both technical and economic and social impact committees are meeting as one.
- Salt and nitrate source study plan – looking at what's going on with the salts; how do they interact in both surface and ground waters in the different regions in the state
 - Lots of time and work taken to select the different areas for the pilot

- Decided to look at the basins; the whole report looks at the Central Valley (Sacramento Basin, the San Joaquin Basin, and the Tulare Lake Basin)
- We took an area in each basin to look at where does the salt come from; where does it go and how does it interact in surface and ground water
- January 2010
- Attended a day-long Workshop from the state board put on by Rick Rasmussen: looking at what a basin plan is, how it's developed, how you set beneficial uses and objectives flow out of those uses, and what can and can't be done with the basin plan.
- Beneficial Use and Objectives Study – scoping and laying out the central aspects of this study; it will become a central element of the entire process: What are the beneficial uses already in the basin plan? What are the objectives that are in there to protect those uses, and do they really fit with reality. Are they the right objectives? Do any of them need to be changed? How does that fit together?
 - We're looking at every body of water in the state.
- Work plan outline – lays out all the tasks and efforts that go into; costs, schedule estimates, 13 phases and 71 tasks/subtasks; \$22M - \$42M with local costs; completed by 2013
- Coordinate the different programs of the state board and regional board that relate to salts; permits, TMDLs, irrigation. Can we all work together to be more efficient with a common goal?

3. Success Stories on Salinity Management (Presenters: Dr. Karl Longley and Daniel Cozad)

Israel

- approximately 13.3% the size of the Central Valley; from the coast, the farthest inland is 75 miles
- successful water reuse practice
- innovative technologies – to focus on seawater de-sal; also working on brackish water de-sal
- over 75% of the effluent is reused; California goal for reuse 20% in 2020 relative to 2007 (water reclamation); The U.S. is around the area of Europe and Australia

Australia

- Basin Salinity Management Strategy (Murray-Darling Basin Authority) – water quality objectives on salinity are on surface water; what do they do with ground water?
- parts of 4 states with Australian capital territory around Canberra.
- 40% the size of California
- they cover 410,000 sq miles – the Central Valley is 60,000 sq miles
- they are inland
- very significant problems with river salinity; a large portion of the land is dry land farming – increases in salt and water issues is impacting that

- the impact costs of salinity to consumptive users of River Murray water total AU\$47M per year (US\$40 M)
- rain fall is 4 inches to greater than 40 inches per year; Central Valley gets in excess of 50 inches to less than 8 inches in the southwestern part of the Valley
- basin salinity audit – salt mobilization a concern
- they have achieved salt reductions in the Murray River but if they don't manage the mobilization issue they are going to cancel out the advances they have made; this affects about 8.4 million acres; this affects floodplain wetlands

Murray-Darling Basin issues

- the Murray-Darling Basin is the nation's food-bowl and a major part of their gross product; in the last 10 years, their economic output from their agricultural production has decreased by over 50%
- unique and environmentally significant features
- over 2 million people directly depend on the natural resources of the Basin for their livelihood and their future prosperity; \$100 billion per year out of the Central Valley
- if these things are not looked after the costs to rehabilitate the system will be prohibitive
- careful choices will need to be made between three approaches to salinity management:
 - to attempt to reverse it
 - to limit its rate of spread and impacts; or
 - to let it take its course
 - 'business as usual' approach is not acceptable

Strategy- Basin-wide focus

- control land degradation and maintain water quality of the Murray and Darling Rivers for all beneficial uses – agricultural, environmental, urban, industrial and recreational
- control the rise in salt loads in all tributary rivers of the Basin thereby protecting water resources and aquatic ecosystems at agreed levels.
- Maximize net benefits from salinity control across the Basin
- Setting targets for salinity objectives

Enhancing the capacity to implement the strategy – protect assets: identifying values and protecting those values and assets; working towards targets; activities on the valley scale – managing trade-offs with available in-valley options; integrating planning – implementing salinity and catchment management plans; improving or redesigning farming practices so that you can reduce salt at its source so you can reduce salt outputs or you can implement things on the farm such as the farm management processes that have been pioneered at Red Rock ranch; improving vegetation management; investing

in salt interception work; ensuring accountability – ensuring that we have basin-wide monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

The program in the Murray Darling Basin

Has garnered significant funding, AU\$10B (US\$8.75B) total work in Australia

- some farmers are unable to use their soil for farming so they evaporate the water, catch the salt and they have become the third largest seller of salt in Australia
- the others capture saline waters before it gets to the river; allows them to gauge how much gets into the river, keeping the river water quality high enough that it serves the urban areas, as well as maintain the irrigation quality and habitat values
- they don't manage their basin by actual monitoring; their 800 EC projections is actually modeled – they pull out the salt that they remove and put it back into the model to determine compliance
- they have a governance system how three states
- they have recording process (modeling)
- registers
- documentation
- irrigation practices & dryland farming practices
- accountability through modeling, zoning and predictions
- salt debts/salt credits
- managing in real time

Currently

- all the states gave over their water rights to the Federal Government
- developing the next version of their salinity management plan

4. CV-SALTS Work Plan and Funding Needs and Coordinated Programs

Plan for 2010 and Beyond – (speaker: Linda Dorn)

Overall work plan outline

- it's an evolving document; it needs to be able to change
- the work plan is broken down into three areas: management, technical, and document preparation

Current tasks

- working on Beneficial Use and Objective Study
- working on Collaborative Surface and Groundwater Data Collection/Analysis with funding from the Clean up and Abatement Account; time frame variable between 1 to 2 years; budget is also variable up to \$3M; hope to raise enough through the coalition to carry out the tasks in the work plan

Coalition (Presented: Bobby Larsen, California Association of Sanitation Agencies)

- Non-profit organization formed under the laws of California is the administrative fund-raising arm of the CV-SALTs, made up by the users of Central Valley Water
- We have a game plan to getting additional members and getting additional funding
- The board is comprised of nominees from significant contributors
- New members so far in 2009 – 8
- Completed founding funding of \$185K
- Contribution target \$450K for 2009

Status and Efforts

- Next round of funding progress \$450K - \$1.5M
- Funding salt sources study and looking to match State Board CAA funding (\$1.2M)
- Tiered contribution based on entity size
- All Leadership Group members who can should participate in the coalition
- Long-range budget is large; more members critical for both financial viability and diversity of perspectives

Coordination Programs (Speaker: Jeff Willitt)

- a large number of regulatory and legal actions that impacted salinity in the Central Valley – CV SALTS has worked to identify these activities, these efforts with a goal of reducing duplication, increasing efficiency, and avoiding conflicts that may result from the various activities that are underway
- Presentation of the coordination matrix to track the various efforts being undertake to address salinity issues
- it is clear that there is a lot being done, but may not necessarily all be going in the same direction; coordination of these efforts must be broadened – improve communication, avoid duplication, and build on the synergies that improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of what we're all doing.

5. Leadership Group Feedback Discussion and Actions

Q. What should be the criteria for progress assessment for 2010?

Showed a slide of the list of things that staff said the coalition should live up to this year.
- suggestion: exec committee should sit down and prepare a document and see if it's something the executive officer can agree with

Q. Max Stevenson, Yolo County Flood Control Local Irrigation District - Salt loading and movement has been steady. Need more information on nitrates

A. Linda Dorn - Nitrates is a much more solvable problem than salt; we will be looking through this program ways in which we can manage and address whatever the process

would be on how do we address the fact that we have groundwater that are impacted by nitrates. It's really a groundwater issue. Our surface waters are in a better shape. How do we deal with it? Are there management schemes we need to work on? Are there areas where possibly clean-up is an option? That we can look at, what's the other management structure? Is there a basin-wide management of nitrates? How do we make sure that the communities do not have a water source that is above MCLs. That's what this group will do—help us devise, and create the solutions and strategies in how we approach it in the valley. What will work in one area may not work in another so we have to go with this in a broader-based approach.

Q. Dennis Westcott organizational structure – what's missing, what's needed? –

Participation from outside the basin; they also contribute to what happens in the basin; executive committee would have to discuss who that is – the long-term decisions may involve them.

Q. David Cory - For those who don't see a water salinity/nitrate issue, Why should I invest my limited financial resources and time and energy in this when I don't see the problem in front of me?

A. Bobbi Larson - The Basin Plan Amendment will also look at the current water bodies that are listed to see if there are other water bodies that need to be listed. We will be reviewing uses of these water bodies and making what's necessary if there are changes to be made. It will also impact the objectives, if the appropriate level or threshold needs to be to ensure that use. All users have a vested interest.

Q. Jose Faria - What is missing/what it needed – What to do with the salt? The San Joaquin Valley doesn't have the option of putting the water in the ocean. The options to put the salt somewhere on the ground...what to do with the salts and recycle wastewater. There is a lot of salt that can be used and recycled and the same thing with wastewater that can be separated. I think we need to get the mining industry to look at this problem. Especially if we have a large regional management plan where huge volumes of salt are in some areas.

A. Bobbi Larson - That is exactly what we're trying to accomplish through this effort-finding what are our solutions: structural, regulatory, marketing...that's what needs to be addressed; We're also going to be going to the Central Valley basin stakeholders. Are you saying other industries? We were thinking about the need for a Salinity summit where we can draw in people like that to bring in solutions. Bring in the Murray-Darling group.

Daniel Cozad - One of the goals of CV-SALTS is not that all the money and all the work come to the CV SALTS committee, but to lay down pilots and put together processes that allow people to do what needs to be done for their region. An example of this is the Bureau of Reclamation

Lee Mao - We just awarded a contract to have a consultants do a detailed evaluation of the salt nitrate movement on the west side to fully understand where it came from and where it is going. To process a contract through a federal agency or state agency takes a process, but that's done. The contract is worth about \$300,000.

We're also looking at working with the state board staff on some of the modeling activities to understand the flows going on in the San Joaquin basin. It is going through some internal management approval, as long as we can meet the needs of the board staff.

We are also continuing to engage stakeholders in the MAA and real-time monitoring activities we're doing. If you're going to reach folks, they need to know when the meetings are being held. We need get this message out to everyone.

Q. Dennis Westcot, San Joaquin River Group - We need to talk about some regionalization. One of the tasks the exec committee needs to consider is setting a prioritization of things that need to be done and do it regionally that's where you need everyone in the room from the valley to settle the priorities where you're going to put the money.

Q. Jose Faria – Funding opportunities – Some of the money has been trickling down into some of the proposals that have been announced. One is the Pop 84 has \$400 million for reduction of salinity in the San Joaquin, that fund is probably going to be released in the next couple of years. Those of you who have specific plans to reduce salinity discharge in the San Joaquin River can take advantage of that.

Integrated Water Management Plans – If you have plans where you can recycle your water and make it a part of your provisional water portfolio and participate with those visional water management groups, there will be funds available for that.

Q. #1 Max Stevenson Doesn't the financing have to be somewhat figured out before we know how much of his can be embarked upon?

A. Bobbi Larson – I don't necessarily think it's all or nothing. The hope is that we start to make progress; we start to have work products. We start to show that what we've been doing is actually going to affect the regional board's basin studies in the work that we do and the data we gather and the models we develop. It's ideal that we take the whole thing from start to finish as stakeholders. But even if we can't do that, the foundational work we're doing through the studies through the Clean Up and Abatement money that we've gotten from the state board can help us to do some of the foundational work that will be important to the basin planning process regardless of whether we take it all the way through. Obviously I hope we do.

Q. #2. Looking at it from the agriculture perspective – have you (David Cory) given any thoughts on how that's going to be approached especially in light of some of the

alternatives that are being considered in the irrigation lands about doing away with the coalitions?

A. David Cory – Whatever happens with the Irrigated Lands Program and the structure of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program...by addressing salinity and looking at this basin plan amendment, looking at the appropriate beneficial uses that are in it, there are some major benefits to agriculture and all agricultural interests in making sure that the beneficial uses that are in the basin plan amendment are the beneficial uses. At this point in the Irrigation Lands we're really dealing with other issues. We're dealing with pesticides. We're dealing with other higher-tier problems, but at some point we're going to get to those salinity problems...Now is the time to try and address that and make sure that you don't have problems down the road. In any structure, what really sets the framework and the basis for all the regulations is what are the beneficial uses to protect those. This process is relevant regardless of how things go with the regional board of the Irrigation Lands Project.

You look at what ag produces in the Central Valley every year and compare that to the cost of this program. \$40M seems like a lot of money...but it's not that much money.

Bobbi Larson - The amount of money that's been poured into the Santa Ana area and their salt management plan, the amount of money that's been poured into the Colorado basin all started with groups deciding it was a problem and needed to be addressed. It comes from our stakeholders who have the clout to go out there.

Dr. Karl Longley - The implementation plan for this Basin Plan Amendment will be written so that people can comply and so that it becomes a funding mechanism for those projects that need to be built. They're very similar to the projects you already need to build. You can add on the salt management issue into those and get the double benefits over time, not just in the agricultural areas. You don't want to come back years later where they are in the Murray-Darling basin where their agricultural production has dropped by 50%. I see this as an insurance policy, an investment of having good agricultural production in the future.

Q. Luana Krieger - Natural Resources Conservation Service On Farm Solutions: Comment on the Colorado River Salinity. That coalition was a multiple state on the Colorado, but it was really the bureau of reclamation carrying the heavy pipelines and the USDA through our agency so that we can get funding to see how we manage salinity on the farm.

Q. Paula Hansen – I think a critical thing is more participation. I agree that we are vastly better off than we were two years ago. It's still not enough. What is the strategy of the coalition to increase the number of people coming and knowing about this? Are you working through the trade associations? Are you making individual calls?

A. Bobbi Larson - As soon as people realize that this is going to impact them, they'll start flowing in. We're going to continue to do the outreach but at some point they're going to want to get involved.

6. Salinity Leadership Group Action Items

- a) Approve name change from policy to Leadership Group
- b) Workplan Outline would like agreement with that
- c) One-stop venue and coordination point
- d) Everyone commits to expand membership and complete a Salinity Management Plan and Basin Plan Amendment by winter 2013

We can approve those by acclamation if there are no objections. No objections were recognized and the actions were approved.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:45 pm