

**REPORT FOR THE MEETING OF
THE ADVISORY WATER COMMISSION OF THE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL
AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
FOR JANUARY 21, 2004**

The regular meeting of the Advisory Water Commission of the San Joaquin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District was held on Wednesday, January 21, 2004, beginning at 1:05 p.m., at Public Health Services, 1601 E. Hazelton Avenue, Stockton, California.

Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners Beckman, Gilmore, Giovanetti, Kamper, Nomellini, Pinhey, Taro, Alternate Williams, Chairman McGurk, and Secretary Lytle. Others present are listed on the Attendance Sheet.

Approval of Minutes for the Meeting of December 17, 2003.

Motion carried to approve the minutes (Pinhey/Gilmore).

SCHEDULED ITEMS

I. **Discussion Items:**

A. *Presentation on MORE WATER Project Phase I Executive Summary*

As a brief introduction, Mel Lytle, Water Resources Coordinator, explained that Phase I of the MORE WATER Project has been an ongoing Reconnaissance Study for the last 8 to 9 months. He informed the Commission that he received a copy of the first draft of HDR's Executive Summary Report and that it would be circulated after the County reviewed the findings. Dave Peterson, HDR's Project Manager, was in attendance to present the executive summary of that study.

Mr. Peterson explained that the purpose of the Reconnaissance Study was to examine a number of key issues and draw some conclusions on those issues before launching into more detailed analysis and work. The key issues were defined as:

- Establish Purpose and Need
- Establish an Environmental Strategy
- Determine Federal Lead Agency
- Identify Agency Concerns and Alternatives
- Refine Scope for Future Phases

Mr. Peterson identified the Bureau of Reclamation, Army Corps of Engineers, and FERC as the three possible federal lead agencies, and Reclamation being the preferred due to Federal Funding. With the Corps being responsible for the 404 Permit, it could be a federal nexus as well, and was identified as the second choice. He next referred to a list of agencies (downstream stakeholders and regulatory agencies) that were canvassed for their concerns because of the possibility that they could have veto power during various stages of the project. He believes that some of these concerns will be major issues for the project. The Alternatives Analysis was a three-stage screening process which helped eliminate, or retain, the alternatives for further consideration. If the alternative met the project purpose and need, and was not being pursued by another entity, it passed the initial screening process. Those alternatives rendered infeasible because of engineering, environmental, regulatory or political obstacles were eliminated in the secondary screening. The final screening retained the top five projects for consideration. It was a qualitative, not a quantitative analysis, and each alternative was rated high, medium, or low in the following areas: Cost per acre-foot, regulatory feasibility, political feasibility, financial feasibility, environmental feasibility, water quality, and the benefits to be achieved. Through the screening process the Duck Creek site scored highest, with the Pardee Diversion ranking #1 and the Camanche Diversion ranking #2. The Mokelumne River alternatives closely followed in the rankings.

Mr. Peterson commented on two Environmental Strategies that were analyzed, comparing their benefits and risks. HDR's recommended Environmental Strategy was presented as follows:

- Prepare MORE WATER Engineering Feasibility Study in parallel with Refined WMP
- Prepare Program EIR on WMP
- Prepare Project-Specific EIR/EIS using a purpose and need specific to water rights application

Refining the WMP (Water Management Plan) is based on required revisions. The requirements are: 1. Group options/alternatives into sets of alternatives; 2. Consider the common elements more completely (conservation, recycling); and, 3. Develop a general implementation schedule for the program, tied to the forecasted needs of the County. Mr. Peterson outlined the time frame for the project, briefly commenting on the tasks which need to be completed in the future.

B. Update on the USGS Joint Salinity Project

Mel Lytle presented a brief update on the Joint Salinity Project between the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Northeastern San Joaquin County Groundwater Banking Authority. He directed the Commissioners' attention to the Agenda Attachment I-B. The Attachment included a letter from USGS referring to the agreement, a copy of the USGS/GBA Joint Funding Agreement (signed November 2003), and a copy of the Proposal "Ground-Water Recharge and Distribution of High-Chloride Water From Wells, San Joaquin County, California" by John A. Izbicki. Mr. Izbicki's proposal is the core of the Project. He is out of the USGS San Diego office, has had a lot of experience in developing projects of this nature, and is the project lead. The Joint Agreement commences an extensive investigation into the saline intrusion/high-chloride groundwater problem in San Joaquin County. There's a lot of interest within the county around this problem -- how it might impact the groundwater in the eastern basin, how fast the front is moving and from where -- various questions that many in the county would like answered. The GBA is taking the local agency lead role because it is a groundwater issue that is being undertaken in this area.

The current, signed agreement is for one year, with both parties contributing \$94,000 to cover the cost of the necessary field and analytical work directly related to this program. It begins with a review of existing hydrologic-type data (well logs, etc.), followed by "down-hole" sampling (sampling wells that already exist) in various areas of the county to pull data that they're interested in studying, such as flow. Following these studies will be the installation of a new series of monitoring wells, an extension of the wells the County put in about a year and a half ago. This will give the county a much more effective monitoring network to help identify where the high-chloride water is coming from and how to combat it. The Project, through completion, is a five-year program with a potential cost of \$2.5 Million. The proposed USGS contribution will be \$625,000 over 5 years, depending on the availability of matching funds. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is slated to provide an additional \$625,000 over the first 3 years of the study; however, at this time, DWR's portion looks to be somewhat uncertain. The GBA and its member agencies will contribute \$1,322,350 over 5 years. The County is in the process of applying for additional grant funding through AB303 to help lighten the local agencies' costs. The County is also interested in obtaining more local participation, believing that the eastern basin is not the only area in the county that can benefit from this study. The GBA, together with, Stockton Area Water Suppliers (SAWS), and City of Lodi are the current aligned agencies.

C. Update on Agricultural Waiver Coalition Activities

Commissioner Nomellini advised the Commission that the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) was to meet the next day (Thursday, January 22, 2004) to issue their final ruling on the appeals for the Regional Board's regulation process. He believes that they will uphold the Regional Board's requirements, but will extend the time frame for the Coalitions to have their specific

information available to six months. Each coalition's member information list will be required to have, at a minimum, identification of the property and a reasonable means of contacting the landowner. In the tentative Order, there is also a provision for "such other information as the Regional Board might desire." The possibility that the Regional Board might clarify this provision to require an "affirmative" sign-up list with telephone numbers and specifics on drainage of fields, etc, would put a tremendous burden on the coalitions and probably make the data management infeasible. He explained that San Joaquin County has 14,000 parcels of irrigated agricultural land; tracking the information they want on that many parcels would cost a lot of money and create its own bureaucracy.

After a request by the Coalition, Commissioner Nomellini volunteered to prepare draft legislation which would set up a "standard" program. A fee of \$1.00 per acre would be charged, with the money going to the State to conduct the monitoring program as long as the Ag Waiver is in effect. During that period, the coalitions would simply be in place to confer with the State, and better able to deal with the Best Management Practices when problems are discovered. He identified some of the issues he addressed as: written for a 5-yr. period; fee to be collected thru the tax bill; landowners could opt out; State to receive 20% for administration and fees; and the County would be reimbursed for costs. It's currently written for San Joaquin and Contra Costa; but, as the legislation progresses, other counties could be added. It would need a 2/3's vote and strong local support. The Coalition and other local agencies are now in the process of reviewing it. As yet, they haven't asked anyone to sponsor it, but Senator Machado has agreed to give it to Legislative Counsel.

Cost estimates for the monitoring program are high and, with overhead, could reach as much as \$20,000 per monitoring event. There is a minimum of 8 events that have to be monitored in a year (once each month during irrigation season and twice after a storm event). With a \$1.00/acre budget for 500,000 acres, they would be limited to 3 locations. However, because of the diverse area of the county and its complicated water system, this would probably fall short of the number of locations needed. In turn, if more locations are needed it would mean a higher cost per acre; and, with a higher cost, the possibility that landowners would drop out. Commissioner Nomellini doesn't think that the program will work for San Joaquin County unless the legislation is passed.

D. Summary of USBR Integrated Resource Plan Kick-Off Meeting

Kevin Kauffman, General Manager of Stockton East Water District (SEWD), gave a brief history to the Commission regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) for the east side of the San Joaquin Valley and his involvement in helping get it started. Mr. Kauffman pointed out that the Central Valley Project contractors in San Joaquin County, SEWD and Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District (CSJWCD), have been left out of any water from New Melones Dam, and are looking to the IRP to help rectify this. He went on to explain that the IRP is to identify and describe the current and future CVP water supply gap in the Eastside region, and to identify opportunities, strategies, and partnerships to close that gap. He identified the IRP as a three-year project with an \$800,000 budget. There was a kick-off meeting the previous week with the "core group," this included representatives from SEWD, CSJWCD, County Water Resources, and the Bureau.

Mr. Kauffman believes that the Bureau learned a great deal from the Stanislaus River Stakeholder process, and this, too, will be a public process that will include participation through a stakeholder outreach program. The process will consider a wide range of impacts on CVP users, adjacent water providers, and the environment. There is a potential for the area of concern to be expanded to include those wishing to participate and partner in future studies of specific actions. Mr. Kauffman suggests that the various county water projects (Alliance Master Plan, Freeport Project, MORE WATER Project, etc) come together and organize for the benefit of all. He sees a possibility of a shared facility, with one facility being more feasible and attainable than two or three. The Bureau would like local leadership to drive this process, and he feels that they are looking to him and Reid Roberts of CSJWCD to be leaders in this effort.

E. Update on RWQCB Salt/Boron TMDL Comments

Mel Lytle directed the Commissioners' attention to the Agenda Attachment I-E, which included "Notice of Public Workshop on the Development of a Basin Plan Amendment for the Control of Salt and Boron Discharges into the San Joaquin River," and San Joaquin County's Draft Comments to those Amendments. He informed the Commissioners that he was just giving an update, because the workshop had been held in December and the comments had been finalized and mailed.

Mr. Lytle briefly explained that salt discharges into the San Joaquin River is an historic argument. The County has pressed the Regional Board for some meaningful improvement in the water quality for years. The County objects to the Amendments because they fail to establish any salinity objectives upstream of Vernalis. It's believed that the Amendments only provide the Bureau more years of delay. Commissioner Nomellini added that there are 60 miles between Vernalis and Merced where there is no water quality standard protection. He believes the Regional Board is dragging its feet because of possible political consequences from the Bureau; explaining that the Bureau wants to use the New Melones to solve the drainage problems of the Valley. Both Nomellini and Lytle are hopeful that a recent proposal for a monitoring point at the Newman Wasteway of the Delta Mendota Canal will be an acceptable solution.

II. Action Items:

A. Approve Letter of Support for GBA AB 303 Grant Application

A motion was moved and seconded to approve the Letter of Support for the GBA AB 303 Grant Application for the support of the USGS Joint Salinity Project.
(Kamper/Nomellini) Unanimous.

III. Communications:

- A. State Water Resources Control Board Correspondence*
- B. California Drought Preparedness Flyer*
- C. Article from VIA -- "DAMNation – Dams....Who Needs Them"*

Public Comment:

None.

Possible Future Agenda Items:

- Update on the San Joaquin Valley Water Coalition

Next Regular Meeting: February 18, 2004, 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

JS