



# IMPERIAL IRWMP

## Water Forum Meeting Notes

**Date:** Thursday, December 9, 2010

**Time:** 9:00–11:30 AM

**Location:** IID Headquarters, Water Control Center Conference Room

**Participants:** See the attached sign in sheet

## Follow-up Actions

- Dale Schafer will identify a point of contact from the Naval Air Facility and invite a representative to attend Water Forum meetings.
- Dale Schafer will set up a conference call with agricultural representatives to discuss conservation related findings prior to next DWG meeting.
- Dale Schafer will coordinate a conference call or meeting with energy representatives to review the studies from the *Draft IID Plan*; Matt Zidar will send the studies to the energy industry representatives seeking review and comment.

Route the Draft Disadvantaged Communities Needs Technical Memorandum to the communities requesting written review and comment, then finalize and bring back to the Water Forum for discussion.

## Summary of Decisions

Numerous representatives were unable to attend the Water Forum meeting due to scheduling conflicts, so decisions on agenda items were postponed until the next meeting.

## Meeting Notes

### Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review, November Meeting Notes

Dale Schafer called the meeting to order at 9:13 AM. Agenda review. She requested that stakeholders and interested parties review the meeting notes, which provide a record of the meeting activities and, as such, should be as accurate and complete as possible. Questions and/or comments can be emailed to Dale Schafer at [daleschafer@msn.com](mailto:daleschafer@msn.com).

### Current Events – Stakeholder News, CDWR Report and Project Status Report

Anna Aljabiry (CDWR) congratulated the Imperial Region on its receipt of \$1,000,000 Prop 84 planning grant. CVWD, Imperial, and Borrego from the Colorado River Hydrologic funding region also applied. Only CVWD & Imperial received funding, each received the maximum grant award of \$1,000,000. A two-week period for comments begins December 8, 2010.

Closing date for the application for the first round of Prop 84 implementation grant funding is January 7, 2011. The second round concludes at the end of June/early July 2011.

Dale Schafer noted that the Imperial Region will be aiming for the third round of implementation grant funds which will probably close in January 2012.

Edith Harmon asked if the Naval Air Facility should have representation on the Water Forum. She noted that it is growing and probably should be represented. Rodney Williams attended a meeting with Imperial County about a month ago where the Navy said the base is under strategic development, talking about a water study, and going through a process working with the County and IID to do an extensive study to address future problems with both water and zoning. This is a long-term and big scope project.

**Action:** Dale to follow up and identify a point of contact and invite a representative on behalf of the Forum.

CDWR Webinars on Urban Water Management Plan were announced for December 16, 2010 & January 5, 2011. Information is available at: [www.water.ca.gov/urbanwatermanagement/](http://www.water.ca.gov/urbanwatermanagement/)

### Lake Mead Briefing

Tina Shields gave a Lake Mead update noting that last month the water levels hit an all-time low. Arizona has agreed to reduce the amount of water they take should shortage conditions arise, in which case Arizona would be greatly affected. Southern Nevada's intake facility is on the verge of being higher than the lake's elevation. If there is a shortage, there will be significant pressure on IID. "Equalization", or the minimum level of water at Lake Powel needed to make deliveries to Lake Mead, might be reached next year.

### Status Report

Matt Zidar noted that the Water Forum has been dealing with broad concepts and strategies, but will now be moving into development of specific projects, programs and policies to be included in the IRWMP. The Water Forum has been formed and established its governance approach (Charter), set goals and objectives, and is in the midst of defining how CDWR's resources management strategies (RMS) could be used to meet the Region's goals and objectives.

Phase one of the IRWMP was to develop the scope for the IRWMP and determine management priorities. The next phase is to conduct technical studies, define projects and alternatives, and develop program and policy elements. GEI will prepare the IRWMP under advisement of Water Forum stakeholders. The IRWMP has to be adopted by January 2012. GEI has reached out to the DACs to begin identifying their needs. This will help in determining the priority of projects.

Matt prepared the work plan, and the Imperial Region was successful [\$1,000,000 Prop 84 IRWMP Planning Grant] (see PowerPoint for timeline). Matt commented that though it may not always seem like it, relative to other areas, this group is making amazing progress.

Edith Harmon asked if the Bard/Winterhaven area is included in this IRWMP. Anisa Divine responded no.

## Demand Management Work Group Report

Matt provided the report from the Demand Management WG. The Demand Management WG is reviewing the demand management objective for agricultural, and urban (which includes the energy industry) water use efficiency and conservation. Industry and power are included in the Urban Water Use Efficiency RMS by CDWR, but energy water requirements represent the largest future demand in the Region and will be addressed separately.

At yesterday's Demand Management WG meeting, members discussed the Agricultural Water Use Efficiency RMs and the energy component of the Urban Water Use Efficiency RMS. This included discussion of IID's Definite Plan and Systems Conservation Plan (for meeting QSA requirements). The IID programs include both major delivery systems improvements to increase the efficiency of water delivery and to reduce operational seepage and spill, and for on-farm conservation. The system improvements need to be made to be able to ensure on-farm improvements are effective and do not result in additional operational spill or tailwater runoff.

The Water Forum also discussed the existing IID Agricultural Water Management Plan prepared to meet state and federal requirements. Rodney Williams asked if this is in effect until 2037 and noted that the implementation in QSA says it starts in 2017.

Tina Shields provided an overview of the QSA ramp-up schedule which is well defined and provides the basis for other planning like the IRWMP which should follow the timeline.

Matt noted that agriculture stakeholders were not in attendance today due to schedule conflicts with an important conference and that the Demand Management WG would need their input in this dialogue to make sure their view is fully represented when making findings. Matt and Dale will conduct conference calls to get the opinion of agriculture stakeholders (Alex Jack, Mark McBroom, Al Kalin).

**Action:** Dale to set up conference call with agricultural representatives to discuss conservation related findings prior to next Demand Management WG meeting.

Matt explained that the most cost-effective conservation measures were being implemented through the IID Definite Plan and Systems Conservation Plan. The water yield of these measures won't be known until after they've been implemented. There will be a lot of investment in delivery system improvements.

There may be smaller capital projects that weren't included in the IID Definite Plan that can be developed for the IRWMP, especially for near- and mid-term projects. Lateral canal lining and seepage recovery are possibilities being reviewed by the Demand Management WG. Most of the relatively inexpensive approaches have already been planned for implementation as part of the current program.

Anisa Divine explained how the IID Water Control Center was the first step to conservation and improving IID's ability to meet grower orders without spilling water to the drains. The WCC uses Supervisory Control and Automated Data Acquisition (SCADA) technology to remotely operate major gates in the valley. Automate flow measurements is also available through the SCADA system. Matt

mentioned that he has worked around the state and that the IID system is truly state-of-the-art and a system that is reviewed by others around the state, country and world.

Rodney Williams noted that Andy Horne stated previously at a County Board of Supervisors meeting that there are 10,000 acres of farmland that may be used to build solar power projects. He asked how the water on that land will be categorized if they're allowed to be built.

Tina responded that it would be included in the water subject to assignment by the IID Board under the Interim Water Supply Policy. She stated that has been working on ways to account for that water and water from other projects that would reduce the overall demand and to decide who gets the water.

She noted that IID is defining and developing concepts; and that, with this grant, the Water Forum may be able to help develop the policies and have workshops with the community to determine if they have an interest. The *Draft IID Plan* examined apportionment and alternative ways to account for water. These policies need to be developed for long term use. IID and the County will need to take specific actions to coordinate land use and water supply plans during development review.

Rodney Williams stated that it may end up that farmers are penalized for being proactive and investing in conservation now rather than waiting for the QSA, referencing Alex Jack's personal conservation example from the previous meeting.

Tina Shields stated that the policies will overlap; and that the Water Forum will have a say and input to the process and water users will have the opportunity to weigh- in.

Rodney Williams asked if a solar developer comes in and converts farm land to solar use, do they continue to pay the water availability or do they lose that water.

Tina said that water availability is a land use right. Currently, the new water user, such as geothermal, enters a long-term contract for water with IID. Farmers don't have to enter those contracts. That's how it's dealt with currently when land and/or water use changes.

Matt noted that both the Demand Management WG and Projects WG discussed land-use and water use issues and that the Program Management Team (PMT) was aware of the need to bring such issues and opportunities to the Water Forum. There is discussion of forming a Policy WG to define the issues and develop alternative solutions. One of the IRWMP goals was to streamline the development review and permitting process to expedite permitting.

Dale Schafer requested that Water Forum members consider joining the Policy Work Group once formed.

Charlene Wardlow stated that solar projects proposed for placement on agricultural lands should not be delayed since this could free up water for other new projects. This decision should not need a change in policy.

Matt noted that water use for energy generation and best practices for cooling are being discussed at the Demand Management WG. State of California requirements are subject to interpretation regarding what is economical and technically feasible. Technical/engineering feasibility and cost effectiveness are related both to how sources of water can be developed (e.g., recycling/desalination) and to technology to reduce cooling water requirements. The Demand Management WG needs to define the number to use for conservation assumptions for energy projects when forecasting future demand.

Matt noted that the cost and performance for plants with dry cooling should be reviewed with energy stakeholders, noting that dry cooling doesn't really work for a desert area. It's not economically practical, so it was taken off the table in the *Draft IID Plan*. Other technologies such as hybrid cooling and binary may be relatively cost-effective and are under review.

Tom Sephton asked how much of the valley is recycling its cooling water by desalinating and if anyone is looking at that alternative. Tina answered that she thought zero and that the water was put directly back into the ground.

Matt noted that the question is, do you desalinate the cooling water to reuse it? This is one of those best practices that could conserve water since cleaner water can be used for more cooling cycles, reducing the demand for Colorado River. This could be used as a Best Management Practice (BMP).

Charlene mentioned that Ormat was looking at cycling water through the cooling tower more times and at treating cooling water to improve quality. Cost wise it's not very different than desalinating source water. The water is not discharged into the drains, since cooling tower water is injected back into the formation with the geothermal water.

Tom Sephton had heard that desalinating is slightly cheaper.

Carl Stills stated that IID's El Centro Steam Plant is cycling the water three times and injecting it into deep wells.

Tom Sephton stated that this should be looked at by the Demand Management WG and Water Forum, noting that when water is cheap, it's easier to use the water once. But as water prices goes up, maybe the Water Forum can encourage more recycling and treatment.

Carl Stills noted that when you look at the water use on the type of plant, it's resource deterministic.

Charlene Wardlow clarified that flash plants need water, too, but that the water is from geothermal fluids when they turn to steam and not from IID water. The thermodynamics is a little different, but they still need water. There are still environmental and economic standards.

Matt noted for the Water Forum that there are two types of geothermal plants: flash and binary. There are different technologies for converting heat to electricity, for developing new water supplies, conserving water and reducing cooling water requirements. All may have 'best practices' and varying price points for all the technology. These need to be studied further from an economics and engineering standpoint.

Dale said that this subject would be appropriate for a sidebar discussion and that additional discussion with industry technical persons should be coordinated.

**Action:** Dale to coordinate a conference call or meeting with energy representatives to review studies from the *Draft IID Plan*; Matt to send the studies to the energy industry representatives seeking review and comment.

Edith Harmon noted the need for independent engineering analysis and that the Forum should not rely simply on industry study or numbers.

Carl Stills noted that what you'll find is that most developers in the Imperial Region, including IID, have looked at different technologies from an economic stand point, and that there is a need to factor in both economics and technology.

Ruben Mireles noted that the industry using that technology will be the ones to research what's economical and efficient.

Rodney Williams stated that when policy makers get involved in making decisions for businesses, then it can get too elaborate.

### **Projects Work Group Report (Projects WG)**

Matt presented the work group report stating that there was progress on recycled water. The Projects WG is seeking to eliminate unpractical ideas, such as precipitation enhancement, from further consideration so the focus is on what is doable. The Projects WG will develop a matrix with findings to bring to the Forum. It was noted again that there wasn't full representation because agriculture stakeholders were attending a conference.

Tom Sephton noted that the Projects WG discussed recycled water, concern over costs of that water and need for high-level regional participation and support. There was a shorter discussion of desalination, but there was progress in developing findings. He noted that in a discussion of selling and transferring water outside of the Region, the Projects WG believes that this doesn't meet IRWMP goals and objectives. He noted that there was recognition that internal transfers could work as part of a mechanism for a water accounting plan (exchange/water credits within the valley) and that this could be very beneficial.

Rodney Williams asked why water cannot be exported.

Tom Sephton said that there's no law that says you can't do that, but, in the context of regional planning to provide for needs for the Region, that export and transfer of water wouldn't help. This planning process should be for providing water for the Imperial Region first and the Projects WG felt that export or transfer of water was not something to include in the IRWMP. It was outside the scope.

Tina Shields noted that the regional planning process is focusing on staying within our defined boundaries and solving our Region's problems as a first priority. IID would not be supportive of any further transfers or export plans. It just doesn't fit within the Region's goals and objectives.

Eric Reyes also expressed support for focusing on the region, keeping water in the region and building projects within the regional boundaries for local benefit.

Edith Harmon noted that the County has an ordinance that prohibits the export of groundwater. If someone feels they have a right to groundwater for export, it would be in conflict with County policy.

She noted that East Mesa recharge and West Mesa sole source aquifer water would be subjected to California groundwater laws, and that rights to that groundwater accrue to owners overlying the basin for their beneficial use on their property.

Kevin Kelly noted that this Forum's purpose should be to extend the local supply of water.

Matt noted that the need to define the assumptions to be included in the planning framework and that it was currently assumed that there would be no export or transfer of water.

### **Draft TM – DACs Water Supply and Quality Needs**

Matt explained that there has been outreach to the disadvantaged communities (DACs) during the scoping process to identify water supply and quality needs. The Water Forum will now move from addressing *'What are the needs?'* to *'What are the solutions?'* GEI is preparing a short TM to bring to the group to see that the information was captured correctly, and to help define how to blend individual community needs into a regional approach. It is important to document DAC needs in the IRWMP to help local state house and federal legislators support the Region in seeking funding.

**Action:** Route the Draft Disadvantaged Communities Needs Technical Memorandum to the communities requesting written review and comment; then finalize and bring back to Water Forum for discussion.

### **Projects Submittal Process and Preliminary Call for Projects**

Matt explained that there will be a process to define what projects will go into the IRWMP and which will go into a Prop 84 implementation grant application. The State standard required that the Water Forum define a procedure for submitting, reviewing, and communicating with the community. Beyond that there is local flexibility. The Projects WG and Water Forum will need to develop a fair, equitable and transparent process. CDWR has criteria for evaluating whether an IRWMP meets State standards. There are a separate process and criteria for determining if a project can be funded with the grant monies. He noted that there will be internal competition for choosing which projects will have priority. It's going to be a community decision. The Projects WG will be developing the criteria for reviewing projects and schedule a preliminary call for projects. These will be evaluated for how they fit into the IRWMP, and those that are grant-ready.

The IRWMP will need to include an approach to amending the IRWMP (living document) and a separate grant funding project list. The Water Forum has to decide how to amend and update the IRWMP so that it is flexible and remains responsive to changing circumstances. This will happen in the first quarter of next year. A two step process for project identification is proposed: preliminary call for projects, final

call for Proposition 84 projects (include in grant application). The preliminary call will identify and list stakeholder sponsored projects, evaluate IRWMP goals and objectives, evaluate readiness to proceed, and put project in context of Imperial IRWMP planning framework (near/ mid/long-term; regional vs. agency projects)

Yazmin Arellano asked whether the implementation grant money is sent to the regional group and how they determine how it's used.

Matt stated that there will need to be an appointed fiscal agent to manage the funds distribution and to account for the use of the money. This will need to be part of the longer-term governance plan in the IRWMP. Some areas form a Joint Powers Authority; others contract through one agency to act as fiscal agent.

Edith Harmon asked if some projects are so necessary that they need to move forward right away. It appears that some IID projects are so critical that they have to proceed.

Matt noted that the Water Forum will decide on the criteria and apply it to the project's review.

Edith Harmon asked if grant money be used meet CEQA requirements. Matt explained that planning grant money could be used for environmental compliance, but that ideally the implementation grant money would be used to build capital projects. He noted that Prop 84 implementation grant funding could be used by DACs to do additional planning such as completing final designs or environmental compliance.

Anna Aljabiry noted that CDWR requires all projects seeking implementation grant monies to have CEQA documents submitted by the start of the project. CDWR gives more credit to the projects that have CEQA completed. Referencing the question on how funding gets to different projects, she said that CDWR will contract with one entity. In 2009, IID volunteered to be the lead for the planning process. Down the road, CDWR will have one agreement with IID to continue the program and disperse the funding to the individual projects. The projects may have sponsors within the IRWMP. The sponsor will spend X amount of money, and then send an invoice to IID. IID will send the invoice to CDWR, and CDWR will send the funds to IID which will send them to the sponsor.

Yazmin asked who audits. Anna Aljabiry said CDWR gets audited by legislature. IID submits invoices to CDWR which will be checked throughout the project. There is a need to keep very good records of all expenses because CDWR could audit the project.

Matt discussed a schedule for a preliminary call for projects, suggesting it be initiated February 15, 2011, with a due date March 15, 2011. Submitted projects would be reviewed for completeness (readiness to proceed) and for how they meet both the IRWMP goals and objectives and the CDWR grant criteria. Stakeholders must be prepared to provide detailed design and documentation for projects in a final call for projects to be reviewed and ranked for submittal for the implementation grant in January 2012. CDWR requires consideration of specific factors and there will be workshops and further discussion at the Projects WG.



Carl Stills asked if the Water Forum submits projects, how actual quantification and savings of the water will be measured. He also asked if a baseline would be established.

Matt stated that each project would be required to define technical methods for measuring the benefits provided and for monitoring and reporting back to the Water Forum and CDWR. The IRWMP must establish how existing conditions will be identified so they can be used to compare alternatives and track progress after a project has been implemented.

He further explained some of the CDWR factors in the State guidelines that will be used to develop specific Imperial IRWMP project evaluation criteria. The Water Forum will be asking: Does it meet the IRWMP goals and objectives? Does it integrate the RMS? What is the project status (readiness)? Etc. The criteria that the IID board used for ranking in their *Draft IID Plan* projects can be found on the IRWMP website. These can serve as sample criteria, and there will be further discussion in the Projects WG. The Water Forum will have to decide who's going to be involved during review of individual projects. Imperial Region will be competing with the Coachella Region and possibly Mojave and Borrego.

Dale Schafer: Next meeting January 20, 2011, 9 a.m. – 11:30 AM at SCG&E.

Adjourn: 11:14 AM