

Exploration of Southern Sierra IRWMP Development

Meeting Notes

May 21, 2008, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Tulare County Farm Bureau, Visalia, CA

Attendees:

Bobby Kamansky, Kamansky's Ecological Consulting & Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Carole Clum, Tulare County Citizens for Responsible Growth
Carole Combs, Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners
Carolyn Hunsaker, Pacific Southwest Research Station, US Forest Service
Chuck Peck, Sierra Foothill Conservancy
David Cone, Kings River Conservation District
David Hoffman, Deer Creek / Tule River Authority
Elias Tijerina, WRIME, Inc.
Gary Temple, Sierra and Foothill Citizens Alliance
Jim Mathewson, Sequoia Riverlands Trust & Tanager Foundation
Jim VerSteeg, Sequoia Riverlands Trust
John Austin, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks
Julie Leimbach, Sierra Nevada Alliance
Larry Otter, Foothill Engineering
Liz Chattin, Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Marion Gee, Sierra Nevada Alliance
Mark Larsen, Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District
Mark Millard, Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Max Norton, Sierra Nevada Alliance
Patricia Stever, Tulare County Farm Bureau
Richard Hoelzel, Kings River Conservation District
Sarah Graber, Tulare County Citizens for Responsible Growth
Sarge Green, California Water Institute, CSU Fresno
Scott Spear, Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Soapy Mulholland, Sequoia Riverlands Trust

Action Items:

- Next meeting: Friday, June 20, 1-4 pm, Tulare County Farm Bureau
- Contact additional stakeholders: DACs, Fresno/Kern/Tulare Counties, Madera IRWMP, Tulare RCD, tribes – Max Norton, Sarge Green, Gary Temple
- Public agencies – consider whether you can act as a lead agency for the IRWMP. DWR guidelines require 3 public agencies, 2 of which have authority over water.
- Max & Julie:
 - Questions for DWR –
 - Can a tribe serve as one of the three public institutions in an IRWMP?
 - Find out if a public agency can 'subcontract' fiscal management to NGOs or other groups.
 - Revise map with additions from meeting.

Meeting Notes

- ❖ 9:30 – 9:45 **Introductions**

- ❖ 9:45 – 10:45 **Overview of IRWMPs**
 - Prop 50 and 84
 - Benefits
 - Other Tulare Lake Hydrologic Unit IRWMPs – see map
 1. **Tule IRWMP**
 - Newly drafted boundaries expand IRWMP into upper watershed (not shown in map), in order to include Tule River Tribe.
 2. **Westside IRWMP**
 - Received \$25 million for drainage plan in first Prop. 50 implementation round
 3. **Upper Kings Basin IRWMP**
 - IRWMP is considering expanding borders westward or initiating formation of new IRWMP on western boundary.
 - Received \$6 million in Prop. 50 implementation funds.
 4. **Kaweah Basin IRWMP**
 5. **Poso Creek IRWMP**
 6. **Kern County IRWMP**
 - Formed at end of April 2008.
 - Will cover remaining portions of Kern County, including foothills and Tehachapi, north to the ridge south of South Fork of the Kern River.
 - May or may not incorporate Poso Creek IRWMP
 - ➔ Existing IRWMPs in Tulare Hydrologic Region are forming a **region-wide JPA** for purposes of integration and coordination. (DWR asked Kings and Kaweah IRWMPs to join together but accepted this JPA as an alternative to combining IRWMPs.)
 - Road Map for IRWMPs 3 Phases – see handout
 - What does an IRWMP look like?
 - Regional Water Authority – examples water agencies, tribes, FS
 - Stakeholders
 - How does it work? Participation
 - Building off existing water resource plans
 - Goals, Strategies, Objectives, Actions
 - Examples from other IRWMPs
 - CABY TOC - handout
 - Example Projects - handout
 - Questions and Comments

- ❖ 10:45 – 11:00 **Break – handout**

- ❖ 11:00 – 12:00 **Discussion regarding the options of forming a new South Sierra IRWMP or working to expand existing Valley IRWMPs upstream into the Sierra and headwaters.**

The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options.

Option #1: Creating a new Sierra & Foothill IRWMP

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create Sierra-specific governance and keep discussion internal to Sierra community—avoid under-representation of Sierra as might happen in a wider forum. ▪ Address issues common to upper watersheds, e.g. ranching—fencing, RWQB regulations. ▪ Focus on source-water management. ▪ Incorporate existing climate change MOU between NPS, FS, UC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High overhead, big effort to write new plan. ▪ Who would lead? ▪ How to include private landowners?

Option #2: Extend existing IRWMPs into Foothill and Sierra Region

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land use decisions made on county level. ▪ Take advantage of existing JPA/IRWMP infrastructure. ▪ Address climate change through natural hydrologic units. ▪ Clear connection of upstream/downstream objectives & projects. ▪ Address water yield and reliability issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing IRWMPs have high overhead, who will pay to extend? ▪ Logistical difficulty of major updates to existing plans. ▪ JPAs restricted to public agency membership—exclusive governance structure already established.

- **South Sierra-specific issues** (an initial list):

- Fractured rock aquifer
- Grazing regulations
- Forest treatments / Fire
- Headwaters

- **Upstream-downstream issues** (to coordinate with existing Valley IRWMPs):

- Water quality
- Water reliability
- Climate change
- Land use-water nexus

- **Discussion Outcome:** General consensus that a **new South Sierra IRWMP** provides greater voice to Sierra-specific concerns; top-to-bottom watershed integration can be addressed through participation in the Tulare Basin JPA. This would represent planning based on ‘horizontal by elevation’ rather than the top-to-bottom watershed integration represented by the option of extending existing IRWMPs into the upper watersheds. This approach will help keep stakeholders in the process, avoid stakeholder fatigue, and avoid pitting the Valley interests against the foothill interests within existing IRWMPs. The South Sierra IRWMP is a connective region due to issues that are common across this elevation.

❖ Geographic Scope

- Preliminary discussion of potential boundaries from Madera County line (San Joaquin River) to southern end of Sierra Nevada watersheds including Kings, Kaweah, Tule, Kern watersheds down to the foothill elevation or down to the existing IRWMP boundaries. This will be a topic of further discussion.
- S. Sierra IRWMP has opportunity to join the Tulare Hydrologic Unit JPA to pursue upstream- downstream connectivity objectives & wider regional integration.
- Consider possibility of taking over upper watershed portion of Tule IRWMP. That IRWMP was recently extended into the Sierra to incorporate the Tule Tribe and they may be more interested in joining a Southern Sierra IRWMP instead.
- Extension to include Fresno portion of San Joaquin watershed brings the S. IRWMP into the San Joaquin Hydrologic Unit.
 - What effect does this have on funding through IRWMPs?
 - What is status of Madera IRWMP?
- Possibility of coordination across the Sierra crest with Mono-Inyo IRWMP in the Eastern Sierra.

❖ Stakeholder Identification

- Tribes: Tule River, Chukchansi, Mono, Cold Springs Rancheria
- DACs: through CRPE, Community Water Center,

❖ Governance

- Recommended governance principle: Inclusiveness, broad stakeholder involvement, transparency
- S. Sierra IRWMP can serve as a voice for smaller Sierra stakeholders—one reason for Sierra IRWMP rather than extended Valley IRWMPs.
- Regional Authority Potential Public Institutions – DWR requires 3 public agencies, 2 of which have authority over water as a minimum for the decision-making body of an IRWMP.
 - Potential Public Institutions in the S. Sierra

Sierra RCD	Forest Service:	Tule River Tribe
Tulare RCD	• Research Branch	BLM
San Joaquin RCD	• Land management	Calfire
Springville PUD	Branch	FWS Wildlife Refuge
National Park Service	Yosemite-Sequoia RC&D	Counties
California Water Institute,	Community of Three Rivers	Dept. of Fish and Game
CSU Fresno	UC Merced	Tulare-Kaweah RCD

- Fiscal Management – One of the three public institutions must serve as the fiscal agent for the IRWMP.
 - Consult with DWR about whether a public agency to ‘subcontract’ fiscal management to an NGO or other group to reduce workload.
 - Consider administrative overhead costs of candidate fiscal agents. For instance, universities have high overhead (14%?).

❖ Pre-Planning Funding

- ~\$50,000 requested by Sequoia Riverlands Trust from Sierra Nevada Conservancy for pre-planning for IRWMP. Grant proposal is going to the SNC Board on June 5th.

❖ 12:00 – 12:30 Closing Remarks

➔ Next meeting: June 20, 1-4 pm, Tulare County Farm Bureau