

MEETING NOTES

Basin Monitoring Program Task Force

February 20, 2020

STAKEHOLDERS PRESENT:

City of Beaumont, Thaxton VanBelle
City of Beaumont, Kevin Lee
City of Corona, Melissa Estrada
City of Rialto, Tom Crowley
City of Riverside, Robert Eland*
City of Riverside, Edward Filadelfia
Eastern Municipal Water District, Doug Edwards
Elsinore Valley Municipal WD, Lenai Hunter

Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Joshua Aguilar
Orange County Water District, Greg Woodside
Orange County Water District, Kevin O'Toole
SBMWD/RIX JPA, Jennifer Shepardson*
Western Municipal Water District, Ryan Shaw
Yucaipa Valley Water District, Lina
Yucaipa Valley Water District, Madeline Blua

OTHERS PRESENT:

GEI Consultants, Richard Meyerhoff*
LeClaire & Associates, Joe LeClaire
Risk Sciences, Tim Moore
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Mark Norton
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, Haley Mullay
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Eric Lindberg

Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, Pamela Ybarra
Somach, Simmons, & Dunn, Theresa (Tess) Dunham
WEI, Samantha Adams*
WSC, Erik Cadaret
WSC, Michael Cruikshank

* Participated via conference call

STAKEHOLDERS ABSENT:

Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District
Chino Basin Watermater
City of Banning
City of Redlands

Irvine Ranch Water District
Jurupa Community Services District
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

Call to Order/Introductions

The Basin Monitoring Program Task Force (Task Force) meeting commenced at 1:06 p.m. at the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) located at 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, California. Brief introductions were made.

Approval of January 14, 2020 Meeting Notes

The January 14, 2020 meeting notes were approved with one change on page 3 of the notes. The 4th bullet includes the phrase “DWR-use” and is being corrected to “GWR-use”.

Triennial Ambient Water Quality Update – WSC, Inc.

Michael Cruikshank of WSC presented a PowerPoint presentation location of wells mapped out for watershed. The Draft 2018 Ambient Water Quality (AWQ) determinations were organized into a handout as a table summarizing the data results for the watershed.

Water maps, and contours, have been put together to display the changes seen between 2015 and 2018 in each groundwater management zone. Each zone is superimposed with a raster grid (each grid cell is equal to 400 m x 400 m area) to facilitate visual data representation. Every groundwater management zone’s data was evaluated individually, through specific calculations, to have AWQ determined (slides 7-13 of WSC’s PowerPoint). All maps/contours have color legends, will all be added to the FTP sites for the groundwater management zones. Suggestions were made for the different maps along the lines of color and gradient shading to allow better visual processing of the changes that have occurred.

Based on viewing the maps, the changes in concentration for the GMZs can be generally summarized as:

TDS Concentration Changes:

- 4 – Increased
- 12 – No Change
- 14 – Decreased

Nitrate Concentrations Changes:

- 9 – Increased
- 8 – No Change
- 12 – Decreased

For both Nitrate and TDS levels, 8 groundwater management zones did not have enough data to provide AWQ levels.

It was pointed out that some of the data calculations can seem misleading. The calculation results are rounded to the tens place, as opposed to using the raw data result. This contributes to changes indicating a larger fluctuation than truly occurred. An example discussed, referenced the changes seen in the Chino Basin. The 2015 AWQ data result for TDS was 357 mg/L, but in the end, the values were all rounded up, making it 360 mg/L. For the 2018 AWQ data, the result was 353 mg/L, after rounding, is 350. The maps depict the rounded number, making it seem like the change from 2015 to 2018 was a decrease in TDS concentration of 10 mg/L, when the actual decrease was 4mg/L. While the main objective – showing an increase or decrease in water quality – was still achieved, it was acknowledged that this should be a consideration when utilizing this data. This is also helpful to remember when looking at the rate of change in concentration for the groundwater management zones. To have the most accurate take on it, it's best to look at the raw data and have the reassurance that the concentrations are leveling off and not continuously increasing exponentially.

The March Task Force meeting presentation by WSC will be covering the interpretative tools in depth as well as presentation of the draft technical memorandum for the 2018 Ambient Water Quality Update. WSC was commended for the previous set of appendices put together for the past reports completed. It was suggested that each groundwater management zone, or even groundwater basin, was given its own individual appendices, aiding in the ease of locating specific information quickly.

Draft FY 20-21 Task Force Budget - SAWPA

Mark Norton reviewed the proposed draft budget for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 at the last Basin Monitoring Program Task Force meeting, which with revisions was approved by the Task Force. Jurupa Community Services District (JCSD) has since contacted Mark Norton and requested that their cost to prepare Santa Ana River Annual WQ Report, \$1764.71, be removed and redistributed amongst the remaining stakeholders. This would cause an increase to the other members' contributions of a little over \$100. Requests like this have been approved for other stakeholders in the past, but the Task Force will have to approve the change since JCSD is listed as a responsible party in the Basin Plan. The request was approved by the Task Force on the basis that they no longer operate any wastewater treatment plans and no longer discharging into the Santa Ana River.

MOVED, to approve the draft budget revised to remove Jurupa Community Services District's contribution to the Santa Ana River Report as they no longer discharge to the Santa Ana River. The amount of \$1764.71 will be redistributed to the other participating Task Force members, for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, resulting in a little over \$100 for each remaining agency.

Results: **Adopted (Unanimously)**

Motion/Second: G. Woodside/J. Shepardson

Scoping of Future Triennial Ambient WQ Update Reflecting New Recycled Water Policy Requirements – Risk Sciences/SAWPA

Tess Dunham, of Somach, Simmons & Dunn, with handout *Agenda Item #5 Scoping of Future Triennial Ambient Water Quality Update to Reflect Revised Recycled Water Policy*, to evaluate positive or negative impacts of changing the routine reporting done by the Task Force for the Triennial Ambient Water Quality Update. The handout addresses various requirements enforced by the new Recycled Water Policy and the possible changes the Task Force will deal with to maintain compliance as it relates to the Triennial Ambient Water Quality Update and how the Task Force. Each of the proposed language changes are listed in the handout with the explanation of why and how it effects the current Task Force processes.

This watershed will be evaluated differently because a Salt Nutrient Management Plan (SNMP) was adopted into the Basin Plan prior to the Recycled Water Policy effective date, April 18, 2019. Our current Basin Plan dictates an alternate timeline of 3-year cycles that the Task Force follows to self-monitor. The Regional Board will need to evaluate the first set of required data prior to April 8, 2024; the most recent Triennial Ambient Water Quality Update & Wasteload Allocation Model will satisfy the requirement for that deadline.

The new requirements for the Recycled Water Policy are to complete collection and assessment of monitoring data on a 5-year recurrence. This grants the Task Force the opportunity to assess the impacts of adjusting the time frame from 3-year recurrences to 5-year recurrences. If the Task Force decided to follow the 5-year cycles, the next Ambient Water Quality Update would take place in 2023, for a 2025 deadline to submit a second round of data to the Regional Board. Potential downsides would be less frequent well sampling and monitoring, well attrition issues, and issues with current permit requirements, have been discussed at previous meetings.

The Regional Board staff present in the meeting indicated that they would discuss whether this revised recurrence for the ambient water quality update can be included in the Basin Plan Amendment under development now or should wait for a future one.

Supplemental Discussion Analysis for Basin Plan Amendment – Risk Sciences/SAWPA

Tim Moore, of Risk Sciences, gave a verbal presentation reviewing some of the final topics to be addressed in the Basin Plan Amendment. The main item for discussion was locating documents that support some of the items in the current Basin Plan and they will support the changes being made in the Basin Plan Amendment; they were meant to be temporary fixes when they were added originally. Sources of support for many of the proposed changes will be references to previous Task Force work as well as work completed by the Salinity Coalition.

Tim Moore focused on making sure that the historical stances on certain topics were considered because the argument will need to be made as to why it's being altered or removed from the Basin Plan in the Amendment. One topic is the salt/ion objectives - specifically sulfate, sodium, chloride and hardness – the documentation specifically states that the ion objectives are anti-degradation levels, not use impairment levels. This will be helpful in moving away from using the ion related objective since it does not correlate with TDS exceeding the objective. One of the major goals for the Basin Plan Amendment is to clarify that effluent limits and use-impaired objectives are not the same, and this supportive documentation will make that process much easier. The main obstacles for this rationale will be acknowledging the 1975 EPA policy regarding independent applicability, especially in conjunction with the 1987 Clean Act, which both emphasize that each objective stands on its own and cannot be either/or when looking at exceedances of the objectives.

Tim Moore gave a brief synopsis on the meeting between the a few members of the Regional Board Staff, Tess Dunham, and Mark Norton. Major topics of discussion during the meeting were:

- Allocation of assimilative capacity for Riverside A

- Orange County
- Prado Dam
- Required Contribution to Task Force
- Objective Period being set at 10 year

Only one proposed change was considered potentially controversial. Since the item would possibly hold back the rest of the process, the suggestion to implement a required contribution fee from additional permit holders was taken off the list of changes to incorporate into the Basin Plan Amendment. Given that no agency's effluent limits are increasing, the outlook for the approval process is that it will be very straightforward.

Basin Plan amendment is currently being drafted with a strike-and-edit copy available for the Task Force at the March Task Force meeting. A staff report is estimated to be available in about 4-5 weeks. The intention is to have the Basin Plan Amendment fully reviewed by the Task Force, and in process with the Regional Board by the end of June.

Schedule Future Meetings

The next two Basin Monitoring Program Task Force meetings have been scheduled:

- March 24th 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
- April 22nd 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.