

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2014
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION OF YOLO COUNTY**

1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair, Cecilia Aguiar-Curry.

Board members present: Cecilia Aguiar-Curry – City of Winters, WRA Vice-Chair
Jim Mayer – Yolo County Flood Control & WCD
Sid England – University of California Davis
Beverly Sandeen – City of West Sacramento
Robb Davis – City of Davis

Alternate members present: Tim O’Halloran – Yolo County Flood Control & WCD, WRA Treasurer
Duane Chamberlain – Yolo County
Kurt Balasek – City of Winters
Lewis Bair – Reclamation District 108
Donita Hendrix – Dunnigan Water District
Jim Hilliard – City of Woodland

Associate members present: Lynnel Pollock – Cache Creek Conservancy

Member agencies absent: Reclamation District 2035

Public & Agency Staff: Elisa Sabatini, Yolo County, WRA Technical Committee Chair
Cindy Tuttle - Yolo County
Stephen McCord – McCord Environmental, Inc.
Max Stevenson – Yolo County Flood Control & WCD
David Guy - Northern California Water Association
John McKean
Betsy Marchand – Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation
Margaret Baum - The Daily Democrat

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The Board motioned, seconded and unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

3. PUBLIC FORUM: None.

4. CONSENT ITEMS: The Board motioned, seconded and unanimously approved the consent items.

- a. Approve minutes: June 16 and June 23, 2014 Board meetings
- b. Receive financial reports: Final Year End FY2013-14
- c. Approve Amendment #1 FY2014-15 WRA Budget
- d. Receive financial reports: July – August 2014
- e. Receive minutes of Executive Committee (EC): 5/19, 7/15/14
- f. Receive minutes of Technical Committee (TC): 6/5, 7/31/14

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. Report from the WRA Vice-Chair: Cecilia reported that a lengthy discussion about the Water Bond (Prop. 1) and drought conditions was held at the recent League of California Cities meeting.
- b. Correspondence Received: Letter supporting Prop.1 Yolo County Resource Conservation District

6. UPDATE ON WATER LEGISLATION & REGULATORY ISSUES

- a. Delta Update and FloodProtect: Cindy Tuttle reported that the Regional Flood Management Plan (RFMP) has been completed and is available on the FloodProtect website, www.floodprotectplan.com. Their final plenary session in July was very well attended. They are now beginning Phase 2 called “RFMP 2.0”. They are also working on the Integrated Water

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Management Plan (IWMP) which is an implementation component of the RFMP. Additional details about the IWMP are on the website. They are working to secure additional funding through DWR to continue both efforts. Cindy offered to meet with anyone who wants more information about FloodProtect planning efforts. Cindy will let Delta issues be discussed by David Guy and/or Tim O'Halloran under their agenda items.

- b. Legislation and Regulatory Update: David Guy, NCWA, asked if his report could follow the Water Bond discussion.
- Water Bond Discussion: Jim Mayer referenced the bond fact sheets on agenda pages 45-46 and resolution for adoption on page 47. He reported that the YCFC&WCD Board adopted a resolution supporting Proposition 1 at their September meeting. He highlighted the differences between the original higher price tag water bond and the trimmed down version that will be on the November ballot. The current bond measure was created based on three considerations. An examination of the guiding principles that comprise a "good" water bond creating good public policy. The second key element was a careful consideration of what the State ultimately needs. The Governor and ACWA presented water action plans that guided the debate. The hard negotiations that transpired in the final days were informed by discussions on sustainable statewide needs. Thirdly, it has been many years since such a significant piece of legislation has received this much political support receiving only two "no" votes at final count. This bond has also notably received urban, agricultural and environmental support. Jim hopes that this trend continues into the next legislative cycle with the interest groups and parties coming together for better solutions. Jim distributed a copy of a blog article on the water bond published on California Forward website. Jim and David Guy answered questions. There is no major opposition to the water bond other than a few small groups.

The Board motioned, seconded and unanimously adopted Resolution #1402. Note that Reclamation District 2035 was not in attendance at this meeting.

- David Guy also mentioned the Proposition 2, Rainy Day Budget Stabilization Fund Act, which will be rolled out as a package with Proposition 1. There was unanimous support from Republicans and Democrats on Prop. 2 throughout the state.
7. **The "YEAR of GROUNDWATER"**, Tim O'Halloran, Yolo County Flood Control & WCD, gave the "cliff notes" version of the groundwater legislation that was recently passed. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was passed by the California legislature on August 29, 2014 and will become law in January 2015. The stated intent of the SGMA includes *"to provide local groundwater agencies with the authority and technical and financial assistance necessary to sustainably manage groundwater"*. Generally, "sustainability" means bringing the basin into balance by eliminating overdraft. Tim reported that on a long-term basis Yolo County's groundwater basin is already being managed sustainably and already has an extensive groundwater monitoring program established. Surprisingly there is not too much about groundwater quality in the legislation. Tim reviewed the following groundwater legislation requirements.
- High and medium priority basins are required to comply with SGMA. There are four subbasins identified in our region: Yolo, Colusa, Capay and Putah. Yolo is high priority, Colusa and Putah are medium and Capay is low priority. Priority ranking is based on population and amount of agriculture served.
 - Groundwater basin areas and priorities are defined by Department of Water Resources (from Bulletin 118). A process to amend basin boundaries to be developed by DWR.

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- Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (*GSA*s') are to be formed by a local agency or a combination of local agencies. Tim reviewed some of the options for forming a GSA in Yolo County, which could be under the umbrella of the WRA. The WRA is already the designated CASGEM monitoring entity.
- GSA is required to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (*GSP*)

Tim gave an overview of the timelines and potential state invention deadlines for the legislation:

- June 1, 2016 - DWR to develop regulations for evaluating Groundwater Sustainability Plans.
- January 1, 2017 - DWR to prepare "best management practices" guidelines.
- July 1, 2017 - Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (*GSA*s') are to be formed by a local agency or a combination of local agencies.
- January 31, 2020 - Designated GSA required to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (*GSP*).
- If an agency doesn't comply with the legislation then the State Water Resources Control Board will take over and create an interim plan.

Tim illustrated why Yolo County demonstrates groundwater sustainability by showing a historical groundwater level graph of average annual maximum depth (ft.) to water by well from 1975 to the present. So far this year groundwater levels have not reached historic 1977 lows and is already showing some signs of recovery. The amount of rainfall and recharge in winter 2014 is still an unknown. Additionally, this scenario does not take into consideration the Sacramento River surface water input that will be available from the Woodland Davis Water Supply Project by 2016. This will have a positive impact on our groundwater basin.

Tim discussed that the "Year of Groundwater" will be the focus of this next year, which is a public outreach collaborative effort co-sponsored by the WRA and the Yolo County Farm Bureau. This collaboration is important because landowners will be most impacted by this new groundwater legislation. It will provide a forum for continued discussion and identification of pertinent issues. Tim and Max Stevenson answered questions from the Board and public. Tim's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at: www.yolowra.org/meeting_directors.html.

David Guy gave two very successful examples of groundwater management JPA agencies in Sacramento: the Sacramento Groundwater Authority and the Central Sacramento County Groundwater Forum. He emphasized a few key points regarding the groundwater legislation. He commended the platform that has been established in Yolo County through the WRA, along with other collaborative efforts between agriculture and urban stakeholders. Yolo County's commitment and technical expertise will make our efforts successful moving forward to implement this legislation. DWR has four legislation work products that will be important to Yolo County and conversations have already begun with DWR focusing attention on the Sacramento Valley region. David reported that the Governor's office has expressed general fund financial support in addition to the \$100 million in Proposition 1, if it passes, that would be devoted to this purpose. One disappointment in the legislation is that the conjunctive use language that NCWA wanted to advance was not included. Conjunctive use language would have supported identified projects and streamlined the implementation process. A conversation about adjudication is always an option, but it is a challenging issue in the Sacramento Valley area. It remains to be seen whether this would be a good idea in the end. David briefly mentioned the sustainability report prepared by local consultants for NCWA, "Sacramento Valley Groundwater Assessment" (June 2014), <http://www.norcalwater.org/groundwater-assessment/>. There was also a groundwater quality

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assessment report prepared by the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (June 2014),
http://www.norcalwater.org/res/docs/NCWA_GWQ_Assessment_7-18-2014_FinalDRAFT.pdf.

- 8. DROUGHT & WATER CONDITIONS UPDATE**, Tim O'Halloran, Yolo County Flood Control & WCD, reported on the District's current conditions: Clear Lake is below zero (~ minus .5 feet) on the Rumsey Gauge. Theoretically zero is where the water stops flowing out of Clear Lake into Cache Creek. Tim speculated that without rain over the next 2 months this could go down to minus 1.5 -2 feet, which is not the record low from 1977(minus 3 feet). Lewis Bair, RD 108 said that Sacramento River contractors are shifting gears now for fall to create some habitat for this year's water fowl migration by early flooding of some fallowed fields. Discussions have begun with the Bureau of Reclamation regarding next year's forecast which is still undetermined and anxiety for the contractors persists. Average carryover for Central Valley Projects is 6 million acre feet, but right now it is at 3 million acre feet. Donita reported that Dunnigan Water District was able to purchase water from the Settlement Contractors. However Dunnigan will be out of water by 10/31 when the Settlement Contractors contracts end. Sid reported that UC Davis had to lower the pumping level on two of their deep aquifer wells in order to maintain water supply intake. Previously it was thought that these deeper wells (1000-1500 feet) were impervious to short-term drought. Tim O'Halloran heard that the city of Woodland's wells are showing signs of recovery. Kurt reported that Winters' staff said their well levels are continuing to drop, possibly due to changing agricultural practices.
- 9. WRA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC) UPDATE**

 - a. Technical Committee (TC) Activities and Westside IRWMP Update:* Elisa Sabatini, TC Chair, reported that the Westside IRWMP should hear in the next week or so on the preliminary award results of DWR's Drought Solicitation Grant. The Westside submitted a \$7 million grant request. The October 2nd WRA TC meeting will be held in the city of Winters so the TC can take two field trips to see the Winters' water re-use project and current status of the Putah Creek Park Restoration project.
- 10. PRESENTATION: Update Mercury TMDL Impacts & Implementation Assessment**, Stephen McCord, McCord Environmental, Inc., gave an initial presentation to the WRA Board on the Mercury TMDL subcommittees activities in 2011. Today will be an update on what has been accomplished since that time. This project has been funded by the WRA, the YCFC&WCD and Yolo County. The primary tasks that Stephen provides for this project are: assessing mercury-related activities, providing as-needed consulting services and facilitating the WRA Mercury subcommittee. He maintains a "working draft" memo that tracks all the mercury-related activities relevant to Yolo County. The most current version is posted on the WRA's website: www.yolowra.org/projects.html. Stephen referred to the two documents included with the agenda packet. He superimposed mercury-related activities with numbered labels on a regional map taken from the Westside IRWMP. The 19 numbered labels correspond to the table with additional details that the subcommittee is tracking. He highlighted three of the active items in the memo.

The Statewide Mercury Control Program (Item #8) for reservoirs addresses the currently identified 74 mercury-impaired reservoirs in California. The State Program sampled sport fish in 350 reservoirs for bioaccumulated contaminants. Mercury was identified as the primary contaminant. At least 25% of reservoirs statewide had too much mercury in at least one species of fish. They are developing a TMDL to regulate action that will protect wildlife fish consumers. There are reservoirs in Yolo County that are on the State's impaired waterways listing and may be regulated by this TMDL. Additional reservoirs will be added to this list as monitoring of the waterways continues. Stephen discussed the science behind the mercury bioaccumulation and possible solutions.

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Secondly, he discussed the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area mercury studies as a component of the Yolo Bypass Fisheries Enhancement Projects (Item #13). Several projects have been proposed for the Yolo Bypass to enhance fisheries habitat. Feasibility studies are investigating the effects of water and land management changes on mercury conditions that in turn affect the fish habitat and agriculture in the Bypass. Stephen explained the mercury-related studies in brief detail.

Thirdly, the Delta Mercury TMDL Mercury Exposure Reduction Program's (Item #16) purpose is to reduce mercury exposure to humans who consume contaminated fish in the Delta and Yolo Bypass. He reviewed the Program's efforts to date which include identifying local community based organizations, conducting a needs assessment based on information from these organizations and development of a Program work plan.

Additionally, Stephen mentioned a US EPA-lead agency cooperative initiative (regional San Francisco office). An EPA staff person took the initiative to convene a meeting of Federal and state agency staff to determine what is going on in the Cache Creek watershed related to mercury. Stephen was asked to participate in this meeting as well (no other local agencies were in attendance). They expressed interest in testing sediment coagulation in the Cache Creek watershed using the same technology used by the USGS in a Delta island study. They discussed different issues, mandates and jurisdictions but nothing was resolved from the meeting.

Stephen also discussed the EPA's Brownfields Coalition Grant which could be an opportunity to secure Federal funding to clean up abandoned mine sites and address related contamination problems in the watershed. Potential Brownfield sites could be prioritized based on proximity to regional planning priorities and projects.

Stephen summarized the key messages in his presentation and answered questions. His PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at: www.yolowra.org/meeting_directors.html.

- 11. MEMBERS' REPORTS & FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**, Cecilia asked for meeting topic suggestions from the Board. Please direct information to Donna at info@yolowra.org.
- 12. NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** Monday, November 17, 2014 from 3-5 pm, Woodland Community Center.
- 13. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna L. Gentile
Board Secretary & Administrative Coordinator