

Central Yavapai Highlands
Water Resources Management Study

Technical Working Group
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 1, 2012
10:30a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Cottonwood, Az.

Attendees:

Vivian Gonzales-Reclamation, Gerry Walker-ADWR, Tom Whitmer-Cottonwood, John Rasmussen-Yavapai Co., Greg Kornrumph-SRP, Jeanmarie Haney-TNC, Deborah Tosline-Reclamation, Abe Springer-NAU, Leslie Meyers-Reclamation, Jane Moore-Jerome, Rebecca Davidson -SRP, Leslie Graser-COP, Linda Stitzer-Western Resources Advocates, Jane Moore-Jerome, Doug McMillan-Retiree CivilTech, Ron Grittmann-Chino Valley

Water Supply Alternatives

Vivian thanked everyone that worked on the alternative write-ups and for the group for reviewing them. It was definitely a team effort and very much appreciated. She reminded everyone that it is a draft that will need to be finalized but wanted everyone to look it over and to provide comments. Gerry Walker and Karen Modesto will be assisting with finalizing the document.

In the Plan of Study, it states that the intent is to identify a range of alternatives to meet future water supply needs of the communities. And in order to go through the evaluation process, the alternatives need to have a recovery component. The Weather Modification-Cloud Seeding and the Watershed Management alternatives do not include recovery. It was suggested that they not be evaluated but deemed as “indirect” alternatives that were considered but are more of a water management effort.

The Conservation alternative will also not be evaluated since it can't be developed because it was incorporated into the Phase I Demand Analysis. All of the water planning areas had the opportunity to lower their GPPD for 2050 to reflect conservation efforts. The lower GPPD rates apply not only to current population but to the total 2050 population. Lowering of the GPPD rates were not done in a consistent manner but were left to each of individual water planning areas to decide what rates to use. It was noted who decided on behalf of the water planning area what rate to use but not on the methodology or logic of how they came to the GPPD rate.

A draft volume and cost matrix of the alternatives was distributed to easily compare one alternative to another.

In the Local Groundwater Alternative 1, there is a cost for shared rural wells outside the Prescott AMA. In the alternative, the assumption was that 10% of the rural wells would be shared. However, Vivian and Gerry did not find any documentation to support that percentage. It was decided by the group to take out the 10% shared well costs since it did not significantly change the overall costs for Alternative 1.

Comments on Alternatives

Alternative #7 Flood Water-Capture and Store Unappropriated Verde River or Tributary Water
Greg commented on having Flood Water in the title since it implies that water can be captured when it floods but it may not be “spilling” on the SRP dams. And only water can be captured when the dams are “spilling.” It could be taking off the title but it relates to what water supplies were identified in Phase II which was the water supply inventory.

Greg also pointed out that the costs for the alternative options (Horseshoe Dam, Bartlett Dam, Sullivan Dam and Page Springs) are costs that would have to be additive. In order to capture water at either Sullivan Dam or Page Springs, one of the dams would have to be raised. Leslie said another scenario could be not heightening the dams and just capturing water at Sullivan Dam or Page Springs when the dams were spilling. But Tom Whitmer said there were too many problems with acquiring water rights without heightening the dams.

Alternative #13 Watershed Management

Rebecca said that from SRP’s perspective this alternative is restoring the forest to “normal” conditions and thus the additional water run-off is not “new” water but a restoration of water supply from normal forest conditions.

Greg said that although Watershed Management alternative will not be evaluated it can complement the alternatives by assisting in a more reliable water supply.

It was suggested to take out the third sentence in paragraph 2 on page 87, which states “It is assumed that the downstream water users will pay for the cost of treatments that will provide increased water yield benefits.”

Another Alternative

Greg had an idea about another alternative, but of course, we’re done with formulating alternatives. Greg suggested dredging the silt build-up behind the dams in exchange for water. Approximately 50,000 AFY of lost capacity is due to silt build-up.

Leslie said that a section on siltation build-up could be written in the report.

Alternative #8 Rainwater Harvesting-Aquifer Storage

Doug McMillan said that the volume/cost matrix doesn’t show the whole story. Alternative #1 Local Groundwater is the cheapest but isn’t a sustainable solution whereas the Rainwater Harvesting alternative is more expensive but a sustainable solution.

Doug asked if the cost of obtaining water rights for the Colorado River water was included in Alternative #10 & 11. At the appraisal level, it is not included because it’s not a field cost. However, it can be a significant expense.

Alternative #2 Regional Groundwater Development-Big Chino Pipelines (Prescott AMA & Verde Valley)

Gerry said that it's unclear why the water supply deficit amounts (volume) are different for the Prescott AMA than in the Verde Valley alternative. The Prescott AMA is not based on their 2050 water deficit but the Verde Valley is based on their 2050 water deficit amount. That needs to be explained in the write-up.

She also said there is an issue with withdrawing water associated with historically Irrigation Acreage (HIA) that is not addressed in the engineering analysis. ADWR stated that "from the land" meant that a single point of diversion could be used to withdraw water associated with HIA in different locations. SRP has disagreed with ADWR's interpretation of "from the land" and that was one of the concepts that would have been addressed in the rules package that is currently under moratorium. Therefore, if Chino Valley is included and they have to have many points of diversion at many HIA locations, the cost will be significantly greater for them. The same would hold true for the Verde Valley alternative, although it currently isn't legal to transport Big Chino Sub-basin water into the Verde Valley. While it would only be speculation regarding the manner in which it would happen, if it followed the HIA model, you still may need to contend with many, widespread points of diversion.

We will leave the alternative as formulated but will add the necessary language to address the concerns.

General Comments

Gerry suggested an introduction before each alternative. It was hard to understand the whole concept of some of the alternatives.

Rebecca suggested having all the information such as the costs, legal & institutional, public perception and environments issues when we evaluate the alternatives.

Legal & Institutional Considerations

Deborah requested volunteers for a subcommittee to finalize the Legal & Institutional Consideration and Public Perception documents.

Next Steps

For the December meeting, we will go over the evaluation process and use an alternative as an example.

We are targeting the end of January to have a draft report completed for review. A presentation to the WAC will be done in February or March.

Next Meeting

December 6, 2012

10:30am – 12:00pm

Prescott, AZ

Minutes taken by Vivian Gonzales, Bureau of Reclamation