

Environmental Considerations Work Group Meeting Report Out

Meeting Number: 5

Date: June 2, 2020

Meeting Topics:

Agenda topics included: a review of the Demand Management workgroup process and updates, an update from SGM on the status of the literature review, an environmental considerations discussion, hypothetical projects exercise, and discussion of the workgroup deliverables and next steps.

Key Takeaways:

The group discussed the following topics:

- Demand Management Process: CWCB staff provided an overview of what the Project Management Team's plans to report to the CWCB Board. Staff also provided updates about other workgroup efforts, and notified the group about a Demand Management Workshop to be scheduled in August if schedules permit.
- SGM Update on Literature Review: Staff from SGM presented an update on their work on the literature review focusing on environmental considerations. Most of the studies they have reviewed did not directly measure environmental benefits. Key data gaps include information about the resulting changes to streamflow, which limits assessments of potential environmental benefits or impacts.
- Environmental Considerations Discussion: The subgroup reviewed changes to the document and agreed to accept the changes that were made. Revisions included adding an introduction, adding information from Poff (1997) to the section on potential resources, clarifying certain technical language, and drafting suggestions that would improve the process for applicants to any potential Demand Management program.
- Hypothetical Project Exercise: The subgroup reviewed the four hypothetical projects they developed. The full workgroup broke out into four smaller groups to discuss potential benefits, impacts, missing factors, technical or data gaps, and how burdensome assessments would be compared to potential benefits for each hypothetical project. The full workgroup then reviewed the results and discussed the outcomes.
- Deliverables Discussion: The group discussed two documents to include as deliverables to the CWCB Board: 1) Environmental Considerations, and 2) Environmental Considerations Workgroup Hypothetical Exercise Summary.

Questions/Concerns to Raise:

The group identified some questions and issues to consider going forward, including:

- The workgroup is interested in more information about the timeline for the Board to make decisions.

- The need to more fully understand a project's impact on hydrology, including return flows, is critical to understand potential environmental impacts or benefits.

Additional Technical, and Informational Needs:

The group discussed the need for efficient methods to assess return flows to determine how projects would alter hydrology.

Public Comment

- A member of the public commented that the hypothetical exercise is valuable because it provides important examples for the CWCB to seriously consider before specific Demand Management projects are initiated, and recommended it be included in the final work packet.

Other:

This meeting marks the fifth and final meeting of the Environmental Considerations Workgroup as envisioned under the CWCB's 2019 Work Plan for Intrastate Demand Management Feasibility Investigations.