



TULARE BASIN WILDLIFE PARTNERS
Creating Opportunities for Nature and People

Rapid Situation Assessment: The Potential for Regional Collaboration on Water Resource Management Issues Across the Tulare Basin

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Presentation Outline

- February Watershed Connections Workshop Outputs
- Assessment Purpose and Process
- Interviewees
- Overall Pulse – Views on Regional Collaboration
- Interest in Regional Collaboration to Address Water Management Issues
- Perceived Barriers to Regional Collaboration
- Ways to Overcome Perceived Barriers
- How to Integrate & Build on Regional Initiatives
- Priority Issues to Address on a Regional Scale

February Watershed Connections Workshop Outputs

Draft List of Watershed Level Issues

- Insufficient water supply / demand exceeds supply
- Stormwater management
- Forest/wildfire management
- Wildlife/riparian corridors
- Water quality
- Education / Information

Assessment Purpose and Process

Assessment Objectives

- Gauge interest in regional collaboration to address water resource management issues & challenges
- Identify barriers to collaboration & methods to overcome barriers
- Identify methods to build upon & not duplicate efforts of existing initiatives
- Identify priority issues that an effective regional collaboration could address

Assessment Process

- Phone interviews with Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners consultant Sarah Campe, with design support from the Center for Collaborative Policy

Interviewees

Broad range of stakeholder interests

- Federal and state agencies
- Rural communities
- NGOs
- IRWMs
- Water management agencies
- Tulare County
- Energy companies
- Local University
- Environmental consultants/business owners

Overall Pulse – Views on Regional Collaboration

- Widespread support for the concept of regional collaboration
- Recognition of challenges to putting concept into practice
- Need more information & education on water resource issues
- Support for an equitable, inclusive & multi-beneficial (to stakeholder groups) governance structure
- First step is to design clear goals, roles & responsibilities, & decision making processes

Interest in Regional Collaboration to Address Water Issues

Widespread Support for Concept / Many Needs to Make Successful

- Develop a common vision & create an equitable governance structure
- Create an open, safe place for dialogue among all players (top to bottom)
- Tackle projects that respect & benefit a wide range of stakeholder interests
- Demonstrate success & build upon that (e.g. easy to challenging projects)
- Ensure added value to other collaboratives (e.g. IRWMs)

“We must identify what the collaborative seeks to achieve, who will do what, and how decisions will be made. That’s a critical starting point for success.”

Interest in Regional Collaboration to Address Water Issues

Widespread Support for Concept / Many Needs to Make Successful

- Integrate land managers & county governments
- Forge a much needed connection between the headwaters & valley
- Link regional collaboration to support for local initiatives
- Critical issues require collaboration at a regional scale (e.g. water management, supply, climate change etc.)

“Sustainable management of our water resources requires regional management. The status quo is not working.”

Perceived Barriers to Effective Regional Collaboration

Stakeholders Identified a Range of Real and Potential Barriers

- Tulare Basin is a very large region with many, varied interests
- Perceived benefits do not outweigh the loss of “turf” held by key interests
- Lack of leadership & collaboration among key agencies
- Often takes a long time to show tangible benefits of collaboration
- The concept is good, figuring out governance will be much more challenging
- Difficult to integrate surface water rights, both legally & politically
- Lack of financial support & staffing capacity for collaboration

Ways to Overcome Perceived Barriers

Distinct yet Overlapping Ways to Achieve Success

- More education/information to improve understanding of water resources
 - Outreach to voters & decision makers
 - Increase data accessibility
 - Clarify misperceptions
- Identify common points of interest & opportunity
 - Look for “win-win” programs & projects
 - Speak to each as individuals, not as agencies
 - Integrate/show openness to objectives of other initiatives in the region
 - Demonstrate linkages between our individual actions & effective management of a common pool resource
- Identify leaders across the region, & a third party (e.g. non-profit) that can lead a collaborative process & work with all stakeholders

How to Integrate and Build Upon Other Regional Initiatives

Common Response: Most Challenging Aspect of a New Collaborative

- Ensure clear goals/purpose, partner roles & decision making processes
- Unite IRWMs to create something truly regional (i.e. IRWMs are sub-regional)
- Consider building on the Tulare Basin IRWM group
- Identify missing stakeholders & regional issues not addressed by other initiatives (e.g. Headwaters/Valley connection)
- Helpful to have an accessible & easy-to-use clearinghouse of information
- Need to look at the Tulare Basin as a whole, then focus on big issues

“Let’s not just chase after the money. For our region, we need collaboration for collaboration’s sake. It just makes sense.”

Priority Issues to Address on a Regional Scale

Initial list of priority issues

- Effective data management and access
- Groundwater management & conveyance to recharge sites
- Education on water resource issues & challenges
- Water quality & supply
- Linking ecosystems & restoring natural hydrological processes
- Fate and transport of contaminants

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- Wildlife/riparian corridors
- Water quality
- Education
- Community leadership development