

San Luis Obispo
Master Water Plan
Executive Summary

CONTEXT

The County of San Luis Obispo is updating the County Master Water Plan (MWP). This document will serve to help policy makers, planners and the public understand the long-range availability of water resources throughout the County. This work was planned as a comprehensive, three-phase process:

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| Phase I | Data Compilation |
| Phase II | Conclusions and Policy Recommendations |
| Phase III | Supplemental Studies and Ongoing Review |

This Phase I document is an inventory of existing information, reasonable conclusions and missing data. Included herein are current and future water needs, and current and possible water supplies. Some of these needs and supplies were computed using reasonable deductions and some are severely limited by a lack of adequate data. Significant effort has been spent to make this document as comprehensive as possible.

In Phase II the major challenge facing the County will be to review the inventory and accept the information (with its limitations) so that conclusions and policy recommendations can be made. It will become the responsibility of everyone who is involved in a long range water use and planning decisions to participate in the Phase II process. Only with a high level of participation will all local, specialized concerns and needs be addressed and incorporated into long-range decisions that affect the availability of water in this County.

Much information about our water resources is unavailable or out dated. As specific data needs are confirmed and prioritized additional, Phase III studies will be conducted.

PHASE I BACKGROUND

Phase I, the data compilation task of the MWP Update, was initiated in January 1998. The scope of work for this eight-month effort was based on an outline of water planning needs and concerns compiled by the County's Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC). The WRAC is composed of 30 members representing political jurisdictions, water purveyors, agriculture and environmental interests. The work effort was organized around the preparation of Task Memoranda (TM). The TMs were reviewed at regularly scheduled WRAC meetings (the first Wednesday of each month) as shown on the "Workplan and Schedule". Materials were provided to the WRAC in advance of each meeting, and a presentation on the materials was provided at the meetings. Comments on all submittals were encouraged, received and incorporated as appropriate. In all, five (5) sessions were conducted with the WRAC (January, February, March, April, and August).

LIMITATIONS

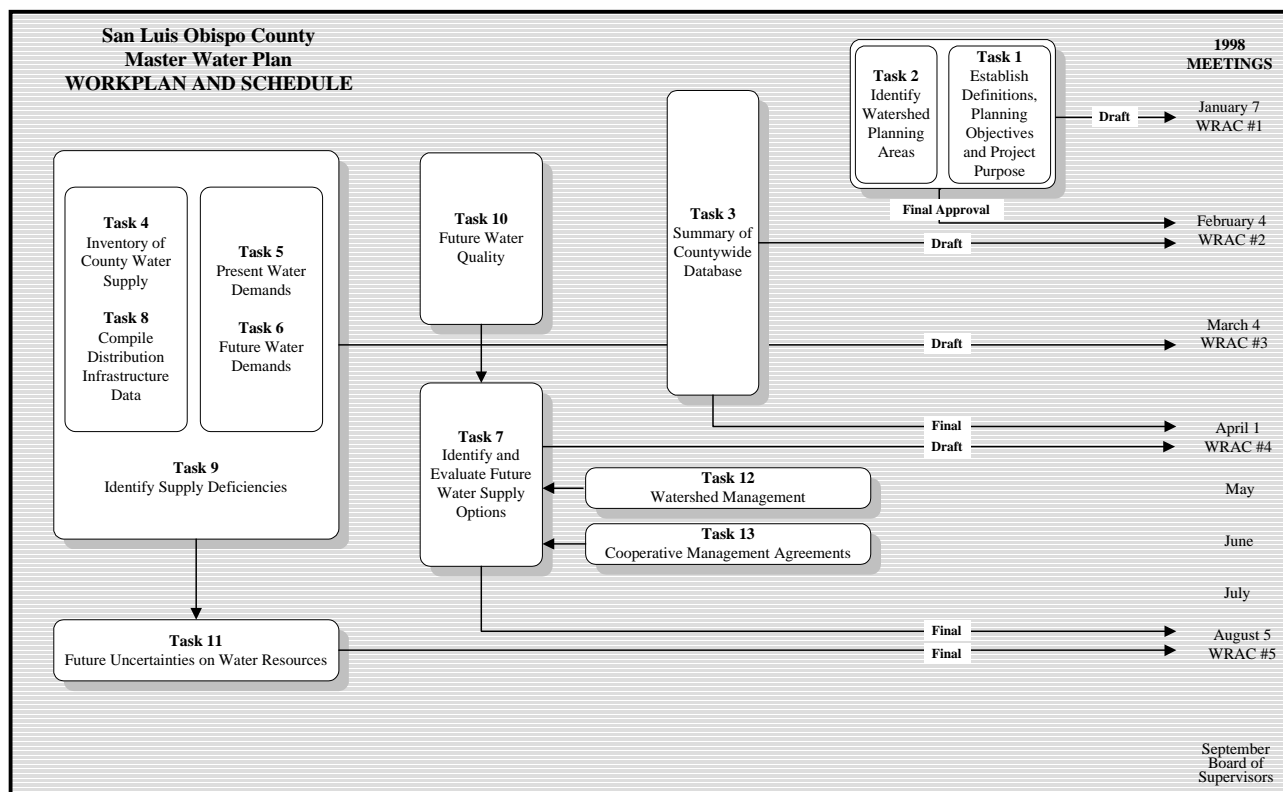
The goal of the MWP Phase I was to:

Clarify our water situation by collecting existing sources of data and assessing their validity. Identify water management strategies and issues to provide the tools and options to project and protect our water use into the future.

This document is thus primarily a compilation of available sources and information about water resources in the County. Some of the information is based on approximate calculations, as documented, whereas other information is based on studies that are up to forty years old. For these reasons, the information in the document should be used with caution; it is presented here for review, comment and as a foundation for the continuing planning process.

SUMMARY BY WATER PLANNING AREA

Data on demands, existing supplies, and alternatives have been developed for each Water Planning Area (WPA). A map of the WPAs is included as Exhibit 1, and the data by WPA are summarized in Exhibit 2. WPAs are logical units of the County, based in large part on surface water hydrology and ground water basins. Please note that the supply and demand information presented in Exhibit 2 should be used with caution: simple math may not adequately represent the water balance/deficiency condition.



ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Following this Executive Summary, the TMs prepared through the WRAC participation are included in their entirety. These are organized topically, and include:

- Water Planning Area Definitions
- Water Management Data Collection
- Total Water Needs – Current and Projected (Summary)
- Inventory of Existing Water Supplies
- Future Supply Options
- Distribution Infrastructure and Emergency Preparedness
- Future Water Quality
- Watershed Management
- Cooperative Management Agreements

Following the TMs, are summaries organized by WPA. These 12 sections present the relevant data geographically, and focus on demand, supply, deficiencies and future supply options.

A Glossary of Terms is also provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The WRAC requested recommendations for some of the topical discussions. Specifically, recommendations were asked for as part of the Water Management Data Collection task. Some of the other topics suffer from a lack of data and recommendations for further studies are offered where the resulting increased knowledge will be useful to the long term planning needs of the County. Finally, recommendations are made on the implementation of the MWP Phase 2.

Existing Water Supplies

1. The description of the hydrologic condition of many of the ground water basins has relied on numerous sources of information, some of which are over 40 years old. Therefore, new hydrologic data should be developed for the:
 - Paso Robles Basin – This is the single largest source of water in the County. The communities of Paso Robles, Atascadero, Templeton, Creston and Shandon rely upon this basin for water supply, as do many large agricultural enterprises. No comprehensive evaluation has been conducted to establish a) whether the basin is approaching safe yield; b) whether areas of the basin are being over-pumped; or c) what actions could be taken to preserve the yield from this important water source. Communities are being asked to make far-reaching decisions regarding water management without the benefit of adequate information.

Watershed Management

2. In addition to identified instream ground water recharge areas, there are relatively small, localized, offstream areas where ground water recharge may be significant. These areas should be formally investigated.
3. The County should develop policies for the areas where specific watershed management practices should be encouraged. Each WPA should develop watershed management plans and implementation procedures.

Future Water Supply Options

4. The County should evaluate the costs and benefits to County users of utilizing excess State Water entitlements and benefits associated with spillway improvements at Nacimiento Dam.

Water Needs

5. Water use for golf courses in the County should be added to each WPA total, as appropriate.
6. Rural demands were based on population and a more accurate accounting could be developed by assigning assessor parcel information to each of the WPAs.

7. The range of future environmental water demands will likely require knowledge on average annual unimpaired runoff. Lacking the availability of consistent stream flow data in a readily usable format, unimpaired runoff estimates should be generated by WPA from rainfall data.

Water Management Data Collection

8. Continue collecting Spring and Fall static water level readings in wells throughout the County.
9. The County should construct peizometers, within public rights-of-way where practical, to avoid the need to take measurements at private wells.
10. The County should provide a policy statement on how water level information is made available to the public.
11. To keep the MWP current, the WRAC should consider sponsoring a program of voluntary reporting and tabulating of actual water use, by type of use, by source, by water planning area.
12. To assist in keeping the MWP current, and to assist in the confirmation or development of estimates of agricultural water use, the WRAC should consider sponsoring a voluntary “pilot program” to track actual applied water per acre for various crop-types by water planning area.
13. The County should provide a policy statement on the circumstances under which well logs will be made available to the public.
14. At least one (1) stream gauge per major stream should be placed in WPA 1. (The definition of the actual location was beyond the scope of this Phase 1 effort.)
15. At least two (2) additional stream gauges should be placed in WPA 4: one on the San Luis Obispo Creek and one on the Davenport Creek, at a point upstream of the City of San Luis Obispo. (The definition of the actual locations was beyond the scope of this Phase 1 effort.)
16. Mercury manometer stream gauges should be replaced.
17. Continuous-read rain gauges should be established in WPA 1, along Upper Santa Rosa Creek, in particular.
18. The County should sponsor additional CIMIS stations in WPAs 6 and 9a.
19. The WRAC should continue to promote the use of the Mobile Lab.
20. Data currently maintained by the County should be converted and maintained in a digital format. The data should be made available through the Internet, such that others may retrieve the data and have the capability to run “intelligent queries” and to perform trend analyses.

21. The County should provide additional staffing to ensure the data are current, consistent in format, to provide assistance in the collection of data, and to document data collection and maintenance procedures.

MWP Phase 2 Implementation

22. Develop and implement a Public Participation Plan to inform and educate the public about the MWP Phase 1 product, and to solicit comments.
23. Prioritize the WPAs and identify and activate stakeholder groups.
24. Develop and implement an approach to Phase 2 of the MWP.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Phase 1 effort was conducted by a Consultant Team, coordinated by the County's Engineering and Planning Departments' staff, under the auspices of the County's WRAC. A five-member subcommittee of the WRAC was appointed to provide guidance to the consultant Team. The Team members include:

Prime Consultant

EDAW, Inc.

- Eric Zigas, Project Manager
- Joan Ryan, Principal Planner/Urban Demands
- Megan Moriarty, GIS Mapping
- Pamela Horowitz, Administrative Support

Subconsultants

Boyle Engineering Corporation

- Christine Ferrara, Task Leader, Data Collection, Distribution Infrastructure and Supply
- Aaron Henkel, Engineer, Data Collection
- Kris O'Connor, Agricultural Water Use
- Beth Compton, Administrative Support

Fugro West

- Paul Sorenson, Hydrogeologist, Task Leader, Future Water Quality

Cleath and Associates

- Tim Cleath, Hydrogeologist, Task Leader, Watershed Management

Crawford, Multari and Clark

- Chris Clark, Task Leader, Rural Demands and Cooperative Management Agreements

Hagar Environmental

- Jeffery Hagar, Aquatics Biologist, Environmental Water Needs

County Staff

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WRAC

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- Bill Cook
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