



Director's Decision Memo (DDM)

TO: Mark Cowin, Director
FROM: Gail Newton, Chief, FESSRO *GN*
DATE: September 2, 2010
SUBJECT: Director Approval of the DWR Environmental Stewardship Policy

Request for Approval Request for Action
 Request for Discussion

TIME FACTOR: Important, but no mandatory due date.

SUMMARY: The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has recently made significant environmental policy changes as it conducts its responsibilities for managing water delivery and flood management systems in California, specifically the Sustainability Policy and the Environment Stewardship Policy. This commitment to the environment is reflected in our mission statement: *To manage the water resources of California in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the State's people, and to protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments.* Both the Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship policies were approved by the Governance Board in 2009; however, only the Sustainability Policy was also approved by the Director. While Director Snow supported the policy, an attempt to seek his signature was never initiated. As we move forward with updating of WREM58a, it is important to have both policies approved at the Director level. At this time we recommend that the Director approve the Governance Board adopted version of the Environmental Stewardship Policy to support the concepts already being referred to in the California Water Plan Update 2009, in the FloodSAFE documents, and to follow on with and support the adopted Sustainability Policy and the re-draft of WREM58a.

DISCUSSION:

DWR has been engaged in developing and adopting environmental stewardship as a business strategy since 2006/7. One of the results has been a reorganization of Divisions in DWR to create the FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office as an example of the commitment to an environmental stewardship approach to water and flood management in the State. This business concept has also been developed and referred to in the California Water Plan Update 2009 and the FloodSAFE and Central Valley Flood Management Program documents. A foundational action identified in the California Water Plan Update 2009 is to expand environmental stewardship as a basis for all water planning. Under the current and past management approaches,

DWR has faced numerous hurdles to water/flood management and systems operations due to environmental issues and concerns or regulations. This situation has impacted water supply delivery reliability, delayed project implementation, confronted ESA compliance, and resulted in additional litigation burdens for DWR. DWR has already adopted a Sustainability Policy that includes supporting environmental stewardship as a guiding principle value. This commitment to addressing environmental issues is a guiding principle in WREM 58a, and the Environmental Stewardship Policy will help inform the process to revise WREM58a. Under an Environmental Stewardship paradigm, the concept is to "integrate" the environmental needs and not just "mitigate" environmental impacts, by including environmental benefits (not just mitigation) into the planning and development of operations or projects. In this approach, building in environmental benefits at a meaningful scale can address long-term sustainability from economic, social and environmental perspectives. Supporting environmental enhancement as a primary planning objective has the added benefit of reducing environmental regulatory compliance issues for projects or operations, which then benefits DWR through increased regulatory agency support, reduces costs in project development, and reduces timeframes for implementing actions. Including environmental stewardship as part of project conception and design creates the opportunity to move into the future with more sustainable and cost-effective long-term approaches to protecting water supply and public safety. This environmental stewardship vision to long-term environmental protection will be critical to water/flood planning strategies to accommodate systems adaptation and resiliency and address impacts of Climate Change throughout the State. Through an environmental stewardship ethic, DWR builds on its credibility of proactive planning and facilitates meeting future water supply, flood risk reduction, and environmental protection needs of the population of California. Additionally, this Environmental Stewardship policy was developed to support a "Total Resource Management" approach to planning activities and projects Department-wide.

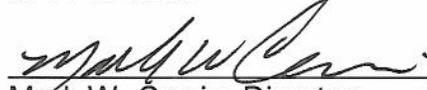
PRO-CON ARGUMENTS:

Pros: The Environmental Stewardship Policy was adopted by the Governance Board in 2009, and has been integrated into the California Water Plan and FloodSAFE documents. The Director's signature on this policy will further establish the concept that DWR puts a priority on projects and operations that will ultimately provide the long-term economic, social and environmental benefits expected through integrated planning approaches.

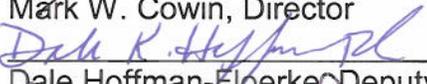
Cons: Since the policy is already being implemented within DWR, there will likely be little external evidence in the short-term if this DDM is not signed. If not signed, the longevity of the policy may be at risk, as will the improvements that have already been made in DWR's business practices. There may be future delays in planning and operations or water supply delivery actions that do not proactively address improving environmental conditions, as well as potential legislative repercussions of not adequately addressing integrated management strategies identified in Bond funding.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Environmental Stewardship policy paper, which was adopted by the Governance Board in 2009, and include this policy as part of the Department Administrative Manual.

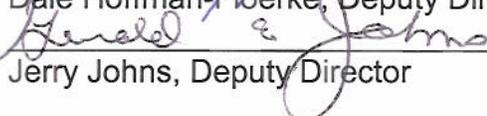
APPROVED:



Mark W. Cowin, Director



Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Deputy Director



Jerry Johns, Deputy Director

9/21/2010
Date

9/2/10
Date

9/13/10
Date

Department of Water Resources Policy Paper

Environmental Stewardship

DWR Mission:

To manage the water resources of California in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the State's people, and to protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments.

Environmental stewardship is a concept and commitment of responsibility to manage and protect natural resources (water, air, land, plants and animals) and ecosystems in a sustainable manner that ensures they are available for future generations.

The value of the State's natural resources including plants, animals and ecosystems is reflected in State codes and law. DWR has a role and responsibility to protect and restore the environment, as reflected in its mission statement. Environmental stewardship is an ethic that DWR embraces as it makes and carries out decisions that deal with future demands on water resources and flood protection throughout California. DWR shall work towards the sustainability of public trust resources related to water resources projects and the environment.

The goal of an environmental stewardship ethic is to create human systems consistent with natural systems, where each is ultimately sustainable. Systems of water supply and flood protection are more successful when they accommodate and sustain ecosystem functions. Sustainable systems are also more economical over time.

DWR fosters the environmental stewardship ethic by embracing broad concepts of impact avoidance and protection of natural resources, minimization, mitigation and restoration and enhancement of natural functions and values. DWR will incorporate ecosystem restoration as an objective in water and flood management projects, including partnering with restoration efforts of others, to achieve net environmental benefit. Ecosystem restoration is the process of reestablishing, to the extent possible, the structure, function and composition of the natural environment.

DWR will use science to understand the functions of natural biological and physical systems, so as to help plan and design water supply storage and conveyance systems and flood management systems that also benefit native plants, and fish and wildlife resources.

DWR managers will embrace environmental stewardship as part of their responsibilities. As managers develop and deliver reliable water supplies and provide for flood protection for the State's residents, they can incorporate environmental stewardship in several ways:

- Integrate ecosystem protection and restoration into water storage and conveyance and flood control/management planning
- Include environmental stewardship and ecosystem protection and restoration as a criteria in project funding decisions for all DWR programs
- Plan for conservation, restoration and maintenance of the biological diversity and natural physical processes of aquatic and related terrestrial ecosystems

Department of Water Resources Policy Paper
Environmental Stewardship

- Plan and implement projects that contribute to the recovery of aquatic and riparian species listed under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts and other laws, as well as other at-risk species.