

TLB Individual Households Solutions Pilot
PSAG Minutes
Board of Supervisors, Visalia
12/5/13

Attendees: Maria – CWC, Shen – CWC, John – P&P; Michelle – DWR; Ernie – DWR; Ed – Keller & Wegley; Dennis – Keller & Wegley; Paul- SHE; Jessi – SHE; **Ken – Pacific Water Quality Association**; Michael Tharpe – Schafer; Eric – Kings; Karen – RCAC; Michael Hickey– Tulare GIS

Overview/updates

Maria: We are focusing on the developments solutions for individual households/communities rely on private wells and septic systems in this pilot today. Gives an overview of the report with presentation.

Dennis: Color coding and tabs have been added to the appendices to make it more user-friendly.

Discussion/feedback on the report

Comments deadline by Dec. 19th.

1. Are there relevant challenges/solutions that are not identified?
2. What do you think of the solution charts? Are they useful? How can they be improved?
3. Are there additional specific resources or funding opportunities that should be identified in the report?

Michael Tulare GIS: 50,000 people in boonies/dairies/farming areas in clusters of less than 4 people on private systems in Tulare County. This is a significant percentage of the population in Tulare County. Valley is much more rural. Given this, this particular pilot is very important.

Dennis: This is why this was selected as a pilot.

Michelle: Adding statistics about people affected would be very helpful in the introduction and description of the problem.

Ernie: The solutions for individual households can be a good interim solution until long term solution can be found. Can be broadly used.

John and Dennis: Still deciding where to put the statistics in the individual different reports' introduction sections or in the final report. These 4 separate pilot reports are meant to be stand-alone.

Michelle: If you are working with DACs to do individual solutions, you want to the report to be a resource to take to Sacramento or IRWM, and make it easy for people reading the report to understand with statistics and a map.

Eric: Adding a vulnerability map and real-world examples and regional solutions would be helpful, so individual well owners will be more interested in reading the report and can implement solutions.

Maria: There are a lot of good case studies in the local regional efforts. The Kings Basin DAC study identified a number of communities of private well owners who had a strong potential of implementing a joint solutions. We should draw from that report. Communities where a joint or community based solution include: Monson, Easton and Orange Center and Lanare for a wastewater project.

Eric: Is there more to come for the recommendations section?

Dennis: Two other reports cover technical solutions and water quantity for communities on larger public water systems. At some point communities with individual solutions will transition to community solutions. There isn't adequate linkages between individual and collective solutions among the different reports right now. We want to make sure these linkages happen.

John: Also there is management solutions to consider once you move to community based solutions.

Eric: Gaps need to be addressed one way or the other, regardless of formatting. Should at least be addressed in the final report.

Dennis: Land use issues, legislation, Gov.'s office how to help DWR and CDPH funding looking for recommendations. They will not look at report – so we need to make recommendations in a more streamlined way to make it apparent.

Maria: We need to look how to link them, but each of the pilot should be strong on its own and document solutions for communities with specific characteristics. No matter what, we will have to document how the implementation process differs for communities of individual systems vs. already established community water systems looking to increase economies of scale.

Maria then explained the overall process to develop recommendations: first draft of recommendations by lead engineers, review by project team, vetting with the SOAC and incorporation in the final report or reports. Development of recommendation will require learning the obstacles. Obstacles can be learned through the community and PSAG process. It's also important that the recommendations are developed and supported by all stakeholders.

John: Please be focused on giving comments on individual households.

Michelle: In the solutions section, you should add joint efforts solutions, such as consolidation, partnering with neighbors and joining on to community system.

Dennis: We will have to link community solutions to Michael's report.

Eric: You need to beef the report up with resources. Be specific – name the organizations, agencies for additional information/guidance/funding.

Michelle: Give info about County's resources.

Maria: Environmental Health Departments have a lot of resources about disinfection, water quality testing that could be included in the report.

Dennis: We are working with 4 counties in the report, we could add the contact info.

Maria: SHE has resources for private well owners.

Paul: We had loan program through USDA, but no longer operating that program. This program used to allow us to loan private well owner money when their wells would collapse or go dry.

Maria: The report should mention the need for these types of programs in the report.

Dennis: This will not be in the report that will be in the main report. It's beyond the control of individual household owners or communities. This would be influenced by Gov. or legislation.

Karen: Do you envision going beyond the 3 areas (water quality, water quantity, wastewater solutions) discussed in the report?

Dennis: This is a living document. There are other issues that won't be addressed in the pilots, but are important. E.g. lowering/ratcheting of MCL for primary contaminants.

Michelle: Can you talk about the reality of what communities face, instead of focusing on stricter regulations?

Dennis: Alpaugh had arsenic wells drilled with 17 ppb, but out of compliance with the newer MCL of 10 ppb. This is not within the context of this study. This study is solutions for current MCLs. Do you invest in change of standards? Maybe drilling new well is not a good solution. Maybe well head protection is a better approach. We are making recommendations for down the road.

Michelle: It would be good to note that individual households are generally renters, up front in the report.

Dennis: We use careful language "person impacted by that circumstance." Maybe this person could be a renter is looking for solutions. This wording is used so to tailor to who is occupying the house.

John: We need to emphasize "renter" more, given that we use "homeowner" throughout the report.

Maria: Renters are important to consider for individual household solutions. In the CDPH preplanning funds application, renters could also sign the petitions for support, in addition to homeowners. In Monson, woman couldn't get filter from Rotary/CWC project until homeowner said ok. Renters are people impacted in the community and are also interested in community solutions. Owners typically don't know about water testing resources.

Ernie: Owners probably can put in a new well because they have the resources, but not renters. Maybe renters can put in POU filter. Owners and renters might choose different solutions, based on resources.

Maria: The report should talk about costs and pros/cons associated with your own well vs. going to community services district. E.g. in Monson, once a landlord was contacted by the County to drill a new well because he well was serving more than 25 residents. Upon learning of this and the costs associated with the new well, he immediately became interested in a community based solutions and potential collaboration with the neighboring community of Sultana. .

POU and Point of Entry filters use: we should note several other things in the report. Contaminant levels fluctuate over the year, and each private well's water quality is different. We have also learned that filters are not made for compliance. CDPH is a good resource. You can buy TDS monitor, about \$30, to monitor the performance of the device, so making sure that your public health is protected. These are useful tips for people interested in POU filters.

John: There is an awareness gap with individual households – don't know about water quality testing because they are not required too.

Michelle: If you are renter with bad water, what responsibilities does the County or landlord have? This is what I would think about. You should include in the report. Did you collect individual household water quality data?

Dennis: No. We just assembled existing info. We caught general big problems.

Shen: From our POU projects in Monson and South Kern, we have learned a lot about limitations of POU that should be discussed in the report. For example, POU's only certify to a certain limit of contaminants. For example, in Monson, we found several homes that have nitrate levels that exceed the certification limits, and the filters won't able to take down the nitrate levels below the MCL. In addition, most communities have co-contaminants, and filters may not be able to take them out effectively.

Karen: From my experiences being part of the workgroup that wrote the national guidelines for EPA for wastewater, we struggled to write a report that would be a good to fit every stakeholder. As a result, we wrote a guidance manual that broke out specific sections – planning, finances, resources, disposal, funding. It was better to structure the document this way, so factsheets could be pulled out of each section, so we could make it individualized to different audience. To write a living document – how do you actually do this, so you can best fit the needs of each user, from homeowner to Sacramento?

Michelle: It seems that water quality affecting private well owners is anecdotal in the report, given that there is no data or references. Can you please explain?

Dennis: Yes, we didn't find any resources. Owners won't want to disclose water quality results. Concerned about property values.

Michelle: That shouldn't prevent you from making recommendations that water quality monitoring is a need.

Shen: Actually there are existing efforts to monitor private well water quality with voluntary efforts, such as CDC Private Well Initiative, GAMA, Central Coast Regional Board voluntary monitoring, USGS databases.

Maria: Referencing studies such as UC Davis and DWR can help put teeth in the report.

Michelle: I would like to see references and these database resources in the report.

Maria: In the solution charts, include more questions than having 1 question per page. It would be nice to have it all together for readability. In addition to the solutions charts, there is info that the report should include, that would allow the user to be able to answer the questions. The report should include information on how to do water quality testing, include costs and lab. Factsheets.

Paul: I know that Kern has maps for regions with nitrate and arsenic.

Maria: Geotracker is another resource for maps.

Michelle: For the solution charts, there could be three different options: "yes," "no," and "I don't know – how do I find out." Add this third option.

Dennis: Good idea.

Michael Tharpe: HHSA, Counties, call them for info about water quality, so you know what to test for. Do a bacti if you are a septic system – put this as a recommendation in a report. Do this as a community--checking of water quality, septic systems—can be a good incentive for real estate purposes.

Maria: Known challenges – private wells are going dry in East Porterville, Orange Center over the past few months. Note this in the report. Temporary, immediate solution now is getting water from their neighbor.

Karen: Has a lot of experience with circuit rider programs to serve multiple communities for drinking and wastewater needs. There have been 8 communities in CA that have implemented wastewater management and monitoring of septic systems are very successful – inspection, O&M. More guarantee of public health with ongoing circuit help. Get community pointed to direction that they have a problem and how to pinpoint it, with the help of direct community

individual(s) involvement. RCAC and CWC are looking for candidates from local communities to train them as certified water operators, a big need in this area, and establish circuit riding program.

Next Steps:

Maria: The new draft section of the report (Section 5 Tutorial) will be added on the website. Comments are due on December 19, 2013. Community Review Process will likely take place with stakeholders from Monson, Easton and Orange Center in 2014.

Summary

- Add data/statistics of individual households/people affected, reliant on private wells. E.g. UC Davis, DWR reports; CDC Private Well Initiative, GAMA, USGS databases.
- Individual household solutions can also be used as interim solutions for communities working on long-term solutions – note this.
- Make the report a resource that is user-friendly and can be tailored for different audiences with different sections and factsheets that can be pulled out.
- Add maps. E.g. vulnerability maps, regional water quality maps. See Geotracker, County, TLB data by Gavin from P&P.
- Add case studies of real-world examples that have happened in Tulare Lake Basin, such as in the Kings study, communities such as Monson, Easton, Orange Center.
- Recommendations section needs work.
- Solutions section needs work – add join efforts/collective solutions.
- Need to link individual and collective solutions in this report and between 3 other reports.
- Resources section needs work - Be specific – name the organizations, agencies for additional information/guidance/funding. Examples: County contacts for 4 counties throughout TLB, Environmental Health Departments. Also include information such as how to do water quality testing, list of local labs and costs of tests, disinfection of private well procedures.
- Discuss programs that work / don't work and give recommendations on how to improve– USDA Revolving fund for private well owners, RCAC circuit rider programs and successful implementation of management of wastewater solutions in 8 communities in California.
- Discuss challenges that communities face more. Add that private wells are going dry and examples in communities such as East Porterville, Orange Center.
- Note that individual households people can also be renters, not just homeowners. Renters play various roles in the development of solutions.
- Solutions charts – color coding and tabs are helpful. Include more than 1 question per page in solution charts. It would be nice to have a summary of the flow chart on 1 page for readability. Also, in answers to solution charts, add third option, “I don't know – how do I find out.”