

Strategic Plan Development



Discussion
of Key
Topics &
Goals &
Objectives

May 15, 2024

California 
WATER COMMISSION

SWOT Analysis

- ***Strengths*** are internal factors or attributes of the organization that are helpful to achieving the organization's goals and objectives.
- ***Weaknesses*** are internal factors or attributes of the organization that may be harmful or prevent the organization from achieving its goals and objectives.
- ***Opportunities*** are external factors or conditions that would help our organization achieve its goals and objectives.
- ***Threats*** are external factors or conditions that are harmful or may prevent our organization from achieving its goals and objectives.

SWOT: Summary & Considerations

- *People* are the Commission's greatest strength
- Commission's weaknesses are its limited scope, power, visibility
- Commission can:
 - Lean into working with the public, interested parties, other agencies
 - Think about how to grow and improve current work
 - Take up new, important topics
- It is critical to stay focused and stay relevant

Mission & Vision Statements

- General agreement to revise **Mission Statement**:
*“Using its public forum, the California Water Commission explores water management issues from diverse perspectives ~~and formulates recommendations~~ to **advise** State decision-makers on ways to improve water policy, planning, and management in response to California’s changing hydrology.”*
- Support for **Vision Statement**, with suggested change:
*“To promote smart water ~~policy~~ **management** today for a sustainable California tomorrow.”*

Supporting DWR's Strategic Plan

- Commissioner input on DWR actions and Commission opportunities
- Some support for all actions
- Will bring actions into work on SWP, public engagement, and utilize public forum/advise decision-makers
- Focus on policy-level discussions that will help fulfill mission

Issues of Most Interest

Managing “weather whiplash”	6
Water infrastructure	6
Integrated water management/watershed networks	6
Groundwater recharge	4
Flood management	4
Adapting California’s water system to a changing hydrology	4

Flood Advocacy

- Five Commissioners are interested in pursuing
- Four Commissioners feel they need more information

Statutory Responsibilities

- State Water Project
 - Bring in water users, interested parties
 - Visit and assess need for new SWP facilities
- Water Storage Investment Program
 - Produce lessons learned/recommendations for improvement for decision-makers
 - Play a more active role with projects
- Continue to be as efficient as possible
- Scope of Commission

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

- Continually evaluate engagement
- Serve as forum for under-represented parties
- Bring in experts that truly represent diversity to advise on decision-making
- Conduct outreach to communities
- Use Commission forum to explore Human Right to Water
- Some caution:
 - What does this term mean?
 - How will it operate within current State law?
 - Open to legal challenges?

In Summary: Main Ideas & Themes

- Increase public engagement, bring in diverse perspectives
- Better explain Commission's role, highlight relevance
- Remain active with WSIP projects
- Be “hands-on” with SWP role: make visits, shepherd ideas
- Follow-up on white paper uptake
- Lean into DWR partnership
- Bring issues of interest into Commission meetings, work products
- Continue to explore flood advocacy
- Support JEDI

Draft Goals

Goal 1: Administer the Water Storage Investment Program to Achieve Public Benefits

The Commission will continue to administer the Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) to advance the public benefits of water storage projects.

Goal 2: Leverage the Public Forum to Advise Decision-Makers

The Commission will continue to serve as a primary public forum to explore pressing water management issues from diverse perspective to advise State decision-makers, including the Director of the Department of Water Resources (DWR or Department), on ways to improve water policy, planning, and management in response to California's changing hydrology.

Draft Goals

Goal 3: Assess State Water Management to Increase Equity and Sustainability

The Commission will enhance transparency around and assess State water management and infrastructure to promote public accountability and equity, as well as sustainability and resilience in the face of climate change.

Goal 4: Enhance Transparency Around DWR Decision-making

The Commission will carry out its statutory authorities associated with the Department of Water Resources to ensure that the Department's decisions on key programs and activities are based on sound information and advance equity and climate resiliency.

Draft Goals

Goal 5: Increase Equity and Public Engagement in Commission Activities

The Commission will promote equity and increase the engagement of interested parties in the Commission's work to encourage the sharing of diverse perspectives on, increase transparency and accountability around, and improve decision making related to water policy, planning, and management.

Goal 1: WSIP

Objectives:

1. On an on-going basis, move WSIP projects toward final funding by engaging with the interagency Strike Team and other partners and project proponents to identify and troubleshoot issues.
2. On an on-going basis, carefully track the progress of WSIP projects that have not yet received final funding awards to move projects toward final funding and assess the need for exercising Commission discretion.
3. On an on-going basis, review draft contracts for the administration of public benefits and make those documents available to the public prior to the decision to award final funding.

Goal 1: WSIP

Objectives:

4. On an on-going basis, make final funding decisions for projects that meet all statutory requirements.
5. On an on-going basis, use the Commission's public forum to provide interested parties the opportunity to inform Commission decision-making on WSIP projects, and encourage Commissioners to consider and engage with public comments.
6. On an on-going basis, for projects that have received final funding awards, fulfill contractual oversight responsibilities, including monitoring the public benefits received after projects begin operating, as well as adaptive management actions taken to ensure public benefits materialize.

Goal 2: Public Forum

Objectives:

1. In 2025 and annually thereafter, work with DWR to receive annual updates on the Department's activities, as called for in Water Code section 12634.3.
2. In 2025, support Goal 5 of the DWR's Strategic Plan, which calls on the Department to integrate and transform California water management, by requesting briefings from DWR staff, inviting related briefings from experts, soliciting input from interested parties, and producing recommendations to advise the Director of DWR as she advances this work.
3. On an on-going basis, invite briefings from experts, interested parties, and State representatives on pressing water management issues related to how to adapt California's water system to a changing hydrology and the resultant "weather whiplash." Explore integrated water management, water infrastructure, groundwater recharge, flood management, and other relevant topics, inviting diverse voices and public discourse.

Goal 2: Public Forum

Objectives:

4. On an on-going basis, work with DWR to use the Commission's public forum to evaluate and discuss progress toward implementing the Water Resilience Portfolio and Water Supply Strategy.
5. On an on-going basis, consider and advance opportunities to engage experts and interested parties in discussions of innovations related to improving water policy, planning, and management in response to California's changing hydrology.
6. On an on-going basis, track efforts related to previously issued white papers on conveyance, groundwater trading, and drought strategies, and invite briefings and public input on State progress on these topics.
7. Annually, in support of DWR's strategic plan, host DWR briefings and other presentations on emergency preparedness at the local, State, and federal level to understand integration across levels of government.

Goal 3: SWP

Objectives:

1. In support of DWR's strategic plan, in 2025, consult with and hear briefings from Department staff to understand how climate resilience, equity, and environmental stewardship is being embedded into major SWP infrastructure and investment decisions.
2. On an annual basis, continue to receive briefings on the State Water Project (SWP), and to produce a report, as specified by Water Code section 165, that includes its findings and recommendations for the Department and legislature. Report on how SWP is integrating climate resilience, equity, and environmental stewardship into infrastructure and investment decisions. Use the previous year's findings and recommendations to guide subsequent briefings, creating accountability.
3. On an annual basis, invite input from water users, local, State, and federal agencies, Tribal governments, and interested parties on the SWP, and consider this input when formulating the annual report specified in objective 2.

Goal 3: SWP

Objectives:

4. In support of DWR's strategic plan, in 2026, work with the Department to explore the opportunity for using nature-based principles to inform SWP project design.
5. In support of DWR's strategic plan, by 2028, work with the Department to identify and map the interconnections and dependencies of DWR-owned or controlled infrastructure on other infrastructure systems.
6. As needed, fulfill statutory authorities to hold a hearing for additional SWP facilities and to name SWP facilities, as called for in water code sections 166 and 161.5, respectively.
7. Beginning in 2025, examine flood management and flood advocacy in California and consider if there is a role for the Commission to support these efforts in line with its statutory authority as captured in Water Code section 12602 and 12604.3.

Goal 4: DWR Decision-Making

Objectives:

1. Review, consider, and approve, as appropriate, all regulations by DWR, and provide public participation in the rulemaking process.
2. Coordinate with DWR and the Delta Stewardship Council to ensure the priority areas for DWR's Delta Special Projects Program for flood control funding reflect the most pressing flood risks in the Delta.
3. Ensure that any of DWR's eminent domain proceedings are necessary and meet the standards specified in Civil Code 1245.230 by following the Commission's procedures for Resolutions of Necessity and Eminent Domain (revised May 17, 2023).

Goal 5: Public Engagement

Objectives:

1. In 2025, adopt a resolution that is in alignment with the policy of the California Natural Resources Agency and the Human Right to Water and that commits to considering equity in all aspects of the Commission's work.
2. In 2025 and beyond, develop, implement, and evaluate a targeted outreach approach to increase engagement in Commission work that considers:
 - a. Connecting with Tribes, communities, and historically under-represented parties
 - b. Engaging diverse and representative perspectives in Commission decisions, including agricultural and water district representatives
 - c. Connecting interested parties with topics of interest and relevance to them
 - d. Holding Commission meetings in other parts of the State

Goal 5: Public Engagement

Objectives:

3. In 2025 and beyond, increase the public's understanding and awareness of the Commission's work by utilizing creative social media, earned media, and public information campaign approaches.
4. In 2025 and beyond, support alignment between DWR and Commission outreach and engagement efforts and DWR's strategic plan by working with the Department to inform and leverage their engagement practices and lead and provide recommendations based on annual listening sessions.

Next Steps

Seek outside input (April-August 2024) Share early version of goals and objectives with key external partners and seek their input and support.

Develop draft metrics (April-August 2024) Develop metrics for use in monitoring and tracking the Commission's effectiveness at implementing its goals.