

<h1>POLICY MANUAL</h1>	Date Adopted: October 24, 1989
Classification: WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	Date Last Amended:
Subject: Water Resources Position Paper	Approved By:

**Introduction:**

The Fresno County Stream Group Watershed area (the surface and groundwater basin encompassing the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan area) enjoys a unique opportunity, but also suffers a distinct challenge, concerning its water resources. Through the availability of developed water supplies from the Kings and San Joaquin Rivers and the existence of a major groundwater aquifer, the region has a significant supply of high quality water to meet its projected long term needs.

The management of this resource is challenged however by the competition for the resource from dynamic urban and agricultural uses and by land use practices which have contaminated large portions of the groundwater supply. Further, the maximization of the beneficial use of this resource requires an intensive effort to convert surface water entitlements of the urban interests to groundwater; and, to protect the quality of both the surface and groundwater supplies for both agricultural and urban interests.

In recognition of the unique water resource management needs of the local region, the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, the County, the Fresno Irrigation District and the Flood Control District developed and adopted the Water Resources Management Plan of 1986. While the Plan addressed existing water resource management capabilities relative to its water quantity and quality management objectives, progress has not been as rapid as desired. Water deliveries for groundwater recharge in the urban cone of depression have not yet been maximized and water quality program objectives have not yet been met. In addition, water quality degradation, increased demands for water supply and increased regulatory restriction have evolved more rapidly than anticipated.

It is the purpose of this statement to summarize the perspective of the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District concerning the responsibilities of stewardship vested in the District and the other water agencies in the area.

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**Value of the Resource:**

The abundance and quality of our region's water resource has historically been taken for granted, resulting in an under-valuing of the resource. The future demands on the resource to serve the equally important needs of agricultural and municipal constituencies mandate a full recognition of the value of the resource. That value is reflected by the following:

1. The total water resources available within the area are finite. While there is little opportunity for the development of "new" water supplies within the area, there is extensive opportunity for preservation and maximization of the existing resource through management.
2. Historic entitlements and existing contracts have allocated the developed water resources of the area to specific lands and contract holders. Such allocations should be honored and enforced unless a greater water resource benefit can be achieved for the collective interests of the local constituencies through the modification of such allocations.
3. The water resources of the area should not be exported from the area unless a greater water resource benefit can be achieved for the collective interests of the local constituencies as a result of such exportation.
4. All waters of the area, including wastewaters, storm waters, etc., are essential in meeting its water supply needs and all such waters should be captured and put to beneficial use wherever possible.
5. The maximum beneficial use must be made of all waters of the area and all unnecessary or wasteful uses must be minimized.
6. The true value of the area's water supplies must be reflected in (1) the price paid for the water, (2) in the policies established to govern its management, and (3) in the quantity and quality of the resources allocated to the management effort.

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**Public Agency Action:**

The stewardship of the area’s water resources is entrusted, by statute and necessity, to specific public agencies. These agencies, principally the County of Fresno, the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, the Fresno Irrigation District and the Flood Control District, each possess specific authorities and responsibilities relative to distinct portions of the stewardship function. The faithful performance of the stewardship responsibility requires the following:

1. Each agency must act individually, allocating the quantity and quality of resources and establishing and implementing policies consistent with the true value of the area's water supplies.
2. Each agency must examine its capital programs and inventory of facilities for the purpose of maximizing beneficial use of such programs and facilities in achieving the water resource management goals and objectives.
3. Each agency must be a cooperative joint participant with the other four agencies, pooling effort, resources and facilities in activities and programs which fulfill the collective stewardship responsibility.

**Water Resources Management Plan:**

Beginning in the 1970's, the major local water agencies of the area undertook substantial water resource investigations and planning activities. The extensive "Interim Best Management Plan For Water Quality, Fresno-Clovis Urban and Northeast Fresno County" was adopted by the County of Fresno, the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, the Fresno Irrigation District and the Flood Control District in August 1979. That research and planning document, developed under Section 208 of the federal Clean Water Act and approved by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, recommended the development of a detailed water resources management plan.

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The "Water Resource Management Plan" was developed as recommended, also as a joint effort of the five agencies, and was adopted in June 1986. The Plan, prepared pursuant to Section 205J of the Federal Clean Water Act and adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, established detailed water quality and quantity programs and objectives. The achievement of those objectives requires the following:

1. The Plan identifies, and quantifies where possible, the surface and groundwater resources of the area. The participating agencies must cooperatively and continually update and implement the recommendations of the Plan so as to insure the continued availability of an adequate supply of water for the variety of local uses in need of such supplies.
2. The Plan identifies, and quantifies where possible, contamination or risks of contamination of the area's water supplies. The participating agencies must cooperatively and continually update and implement the recommendations of the Plan so as to insure the continued availability of high quality water supplies in the area.
3. The Plan proposes administrative structure, procedures and relationships necessary to achieve Plan implementation. The participating agencies must cooperatively implement and maintain the administrative recommendations of the Plan to insure achievement of its water quality and quantity objectives.

**Summary:**

There exists an essential linkage among the three components of the water resource program as outlined above (value of the resource, public agency action, and the water resource management plan). The value of the resource must be recognized both in program action and in political policy. This recognition has been accomplished through the adoption of the Water Resource Management Plan by the five cooperating agencies.

The public agencies must identify their specific stewardship responsibilities and their opportunities for improved and collective resource management efforts. These identifications have been made and are set forth in the Water Resources Management Plan.

The local community, inclusive of its five major water agencies, recognized the necessity of the

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Water Resource Management Plan and the objectives and programs it addressed. The successful fulfillment of the local agencies' stewardship responsibilities for the water resources of the area requires faithful implementation of the Water Resources Management Plan through continual updating and consistent dedicated effort.

No plan, however, particularly one dealing with such a dynamic environment as water resource management, can be expected to maintain its validity and usefulness without monitoring, evaluation and updating. The rapidly changing extent of known groundwater contamination, the increasing demand for new supplies and the continually changing regulatory arena will make any plan, including the Water Resources Management Plan, obsolete in short order without persistent vigilance, effort and updating. It is the opinion of this District the Water Resources Management Plan is a solid foundation which will support the updates and implementation programs required to insure our long term water resource management objectives.

**Recommendation:**

Timely substantive action is essential to the realization of the objectives specified for the community's water resource management effort. The District therefore urges the following:

1. Renewed efforts be made toward a regional multi-agency perspective relative to water resource management, with specific emphasis on protecting against a fragmentation of effort among the involved entities.
2. Initiate discussions to explore development of a formal joint powers authority, composed of the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, the County, the Fresno Irrigation District and the Flood Control District, to effect implementation of the programs and objectives set forth in the Water Resources Management Plan.