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## 2014 Annual Action Plan

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## i Introduction

In early 2011, the California Urban Water Conservation Council adopted a Strategic Plan for 2011-2015. Each year during the Strategic Plan's five-year planning horizon, Council staff solicits input from its membership and the Board to develop an annual Action Plan. The emphasis of the annual Action Plan is to identify tasks that will be accomplished during the following year and to re-focus staff and material resources in the areas most needed to realize the objectives identified in the Strategic Plan.

The following objectives are designed to maximize progress toward achieving the Council's mission during the next five years. In essence, these objectives help the Council become the "go to" organization for advances in and support of conservation and water use efficiency information and initiatives:

- 1) Identify and promote innovative water conservation and efficiency strategies.
- 2) Support the Council's membership to achieve their water conservation and efficiency goals.
- 3) Develop partnerships with institutions and organizations which can effectively promote and/or require conservation.
- 4) Support and expand public awareness, education, and technical assistance in water use efficiency and conservation.
- 5) Sustain and build the Council's capacity.

### **Key Roles**

The Council has been built on a strong coalition among water agencies, environmental organizations and supporting organizations promoting BMPs for water conservation since 1991. Urban water users served by Council members provide half of all water served by retailers in California; and Council wholesale members serve more than 75 percent of the urban water demand in the State. Council staff and the Board of Directors have a long history of working together to plan and implement the organization's goals. Much of this work has been performed through the Council's standing programmatic committees. In 2014 this cooperative, collaborative relationship will continue. Staff will look to the Board to provide input and direct Council processes, while the Board will expect the staff to report on achievements and progress.

### **Looking Forward**

In 2014 the Council's key initiative will be to roll out the New Norm for California Landscapes. In 2011 the Council identified this concept as an important endeavor and tasked its Landscape Committee with defining it. Work on how to implement the concept began in 2012 and continues to date. In 2014 the Council will join with the California Department of Water Resources, Department of Pesticide Regulation, CalRecycle, State Water Resources Control Board, and the University of California, Davis, to conduct symposia that will further this concept and help to bring allied efforts together to reach our common goals. Five of the Council's programmatic committees

(Landscape, CII, Residential, Education, and R &E) have included the New Norm in their proposed 2014 work plans.

### **Reading this Plan**

Many of the plan goals outlined in this document are inter-related; they are intended to be mentioned in multiple places throughout. For example, what can be viewed as a general goal, such as improved communication, is an integral part of the program goals described herein. Although committee priorities are mentioned throughout, summaries of each program committee are listed on page 9.

## I. Complete Key Projects and Grants

The ongoing projects outlined below support the Council's strategic objective to sustain and build the Council's capacity. These projects are scheduled for completion in 2014.

- **Reporting Database (July 2014)**
  - Complete Phase 2 and bring additional functionality and a better user experience to the Council's reporting database application. Improvements will include: simpler GPCD reporting and the inclusion of weather normalization data.
- **Prop 50 Funding**
  - *Statewide Rebate Program for Cooling Tower Conductivity Controllers* - Under the change in scope approved in 2013, Council staff is working with a member agency to complete this project using one site.
  - *Smart From the Start* – This grant was envisioned as involving work with a local water district to bring a pilot project to a new development in California. In light of the January 2014 gubernatorial declaration of drought, we are looking to work with DWR to repurpose this grant to a more drought-responsive topic. Re-purposing will likely require re-authorization.
  - *Technical Assistance* – Publish existing BMP Guidebooks on new website.
  - *pBMPs* – Initiate and complete research on up to two pBMP topics under consideration by the Research and Evaluation Committee. Topics currently considered are residential pressure regulators, irrigation pressure regulators, and real time water monitoring devices. An amendment to extend this work through the end of 2014 has been reviewed with DWR staff.
  - *Workshops* – An amendment and extension has been submitted to DWR to fund Water Conservation Coordinator and CII Workshops through 2014.
  - *Directed Action Grant* – Has been negotiated and is expected to be implemented in 2014. Topics include: AMI/AMR, Water Rates and Revenue, Water Loss, Landscape: A Watershed-Based Model for Sustainability, Value of Conserved Water, Water Conservation Coordinators Conference, and Drought Planning and Response Workshops. We are currently looking into repurposing parts of this grant to allow greater funding for Drought Planning and Response.

## II. Develop New Norm for California Landscaping

This initiative will support the Council's strategic objectives to identify and promote innovative water conservation and efficiency strategies, and develop partnerships with institutions and organizations that can effectively promote and have requirements. In 2014, these efforts will include the following:

- Build on partnerships with State agencies that started in 2013 to conduct two symposia in 2014 designed to bring agencies and organizations with similar interests together to collaborate on achieving a New Norm for California landscapes that can, among other things, reduce runoff in our waterways, reduce organic waste in our landfills, reduce pesticide runoff, and save water.
- Continue work with Landscape Committee on development of a strategy for implementing and promoting the New Norm for California Landscaping;

- Incorporate the work of the Residential, CII, Research and Evaluation, and Educational committees into the New Norm strategy;
- Further develop partnerships with ACWA, nonprofit environmental groups, landscape professionals, and professional associations to promote the New Norm and the Save Our Water Campaign.

### III. Expand Our Resource Center and Technical Assistance

Providing the technical assistance that our members need to be successful in their conservation efforts is a cornerstone of Council activities and will continue in 2014. This is consistent with the strategic objectives to build the Council's capacity and support Council membership to achieve their water conservation and efficiency goals, and to support and expand public awareness, education, and technical assistance. Work will include:

- Initiate and complete up to two pBMP reports recommended by the Research and Evaluation Committee;
- Complete Phase 2 of the database reporting application, which will provide additional functionality; integration of GPCD calculations; and collection of GPCD weather normalization data, among other improvements;
- Update the Cost and Savings Study through a grant from the California Water Foundation;
- Continue the BMP 1.4 revision discussions; and
- Complete the new landscape programs spreadsheet tool and explore its applicability in other areas.

### IV. Improved Communication / Help Desk Approach

Effective communication is essential to carrying out the mission of the Council. The organization must work to improve internal communications and external communications to better serve its members. These improvements should be immediate and ongoing in most cases. There are a variety of communication loops that can be improved upon: staff to staff, staff to board, board to staff, board to members, staff to members, and staff and board to partners. Essential to this goal is the adoption of an affirmative help desk approach on the part of Council staff. Council members expect a high degree of customer service as a part of membership. Providing this is an important function of staff. Communication goals in 2014 include the following:

- Continue to improve upon timeliness, quality and accuracy of materials coming from staff;
- Improve and update the resources included on the Council website;
- Communicate how the Council can help agencies: respond to the drought and meet 20x2020 goals;
- Broadcast good news when we receive it;
- Tell members when we've done something they requested;
- Show how we are improving the value of being a member; and
- Make connections with other water-related groups as described above.

The following tools will continue to be employed to improve communications:

- Standard operating procedures to document internal protocols;
- Regular Council Link updates sent to members;
- Regular updates to the new Council website; and
- Continue to publish BMP Reporting News.

## V. Training

A robust training program assists Council members in achieving their water conservation and efficiency goals. It represents a significant part of Council effort in terms of supporting and promoting the mission of the organization. The Council's 2014 training goals are outlined in the following sections:

### 1. Overarching Training Goals

We will continue to provide members and others with high quality training that is formulated with the following goals in mind:

- Be responsive to members' December 2013 surveyed preferences;
- Provide members a discount;
- Continue to offer a mix of webinars and face-to-face training, while increasing the number of webinars;
- Beginning summer 2014, offer one training (at least) every other month; and
- Improve webinar training skills and delivery.

### 2 Ongoing Annual Training

In addition to its regular trainings, the Council is also in seeking to obtain funding from DWR to conduct AWWA Water Audit tool workshops and Cost Effectiveness Analysis Tool workshops for 2014.

### 3. BMP Reporting Support

To support BMP Reporting, we will build on trainings offered in 2013 and continue to provide training on Phase 2 improvements to the database application.

## VI. Provide Added Value to Membership

This is a critical step to help meet the Strategic Objective of increasing the Council's capacity. The Council Board and staff will need to cooperate in the following steps to achieve this goal:

- Provide guidance to members on how to approach or start a program; in particular, seek DWR funding to prepare a "jump start" tool kit to help members identify programs that can ramp up quickly in response to the ongoing drought;
- Seek DWR funding to collect, review and house existing "how to" videos and to produce additional videos to fill in any gaps.
- Explore opportunities to provide low cost or free training to members;
- Provide requested and regular updates and information through Council Link, and BMP Reporting News; and

- Develop a white paper, with funding from the DWR Direct Action Grant, on the value of conservation, especially as compared to other alternative water supplies.

## VII. BMP Revisions/Updates and Refinements - Looking To and Beyond 2020

The Best Management Practices, reporting on their implementation and collection of data and tracking of those efforts is the *raison d'être* of the Council's MOU, which was written and signed in 1991. Over the course of its history, the Council has maintained a series of dialogues about potential upgrades or modifications to these BMPs to ensure that the conservation goals of its members and state of California are met. In 2014 we anticipate the following efforts:

- Continue the BMP 1.4 discussions via the ad hoc Board committee;
- As DWR makes recommendations to update and revise the 20x2020 goals, position the Council to help its members meet those needs through its existing BMPs and other tools as they are developed.

## VIII. Developing Partnerships

Working with institutions and organizations that can effectively promote conservation is one of the key priorities in the Strategic Plan. In our 2014 Action Plan the following partnerships have been called out:

- Seek to work with AWE on its landscape study
- Continue to work with the US Bureau of Reclamation to support contractors' water conservation and reporting, and to find mutually beneficial research and implementation projects to support;
- Continue to work with DWR to support members' efforts to meet SBx7-7 goals and to assist DWR in the development of resources for the achievement of 20x2020 goals through funding provided by the Direct Action Grant that includes funding for work on AMI/AMR, Water Rates and Revenue, Water Loss, Landscape: A Watershed-Based Model for Sustainability, Value of Conserved Water, and Water Conservation Coordinators Conference.
- Continue to use the New Norm effort as a catalyst for new partnership with other water-related efforts;
- Continue working with the California Water Energy Coalition (CALWEC) to further educate water and energy providers' on the benefits water conservation and water use efficiency efforts have in energy and climate change efforts; and
- Continue to work with the CPUC on areas of mutual interest including the water and energy connection.

## IX. Funding

The Council will continue to work to diversify its funding sources in order to build organizational capacity. The Council has had a historic relationship with the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation who have provided funding via the CalFed program and Proposition 50. With changes to the proposition funding process and Federal restrictions on Bureau funds directly supporting non-profits, the Council is focused on diversifying our funding base.



In 2013 the Council staff and Board sought and obtained new funding for the Cost and Savings Study from the California Water Foundation, and Phase 2 of the Database application from Reclamation. The Council is also finalizing a Directed Action grant with DWR.

- Work with the CA Water Foundation to fund Phase 2 of its effort to support Council efforts to assist the state in achieving real water savings of 20 percent by 2020;
- Actively solicit funding to update H2Ouse;
- Continue work with the California Public Utilities Commission and energy providers to identify opportunities where energy efficiency funds can be used to support water use efficiency that results in verifiable energy savings; and
- Find opportunities in which the Council can apply to assist Integrated Regional Water Management Planning regions in efforts that support statewide improvements in conservation.

## X. Program Committee Work Plans

Council staff supports Council committees by posting of comments, meeting arrangement and taking meeting minutes on an as-needed basis. In 2010, the Council Board began an initiative to increase our capacity by involving program committees more directly in the implementation of the Council's Strategic Plan. This happens through direct input to the Annual Action Plan. The following is a brief summary of the proposed 2014 action plans for Council committees. Many of the plans summarized below are included in the items described in detail throughout this Action Plan.

It should be noted that most programmatic committees have included a component of the New Norm in their 2014 work plans.

### **Education**

- Collaborate with the Landscape Committee to promote the New Norm;
- Initiate first annual Statewide Video Contest to promote water use efficiency; and
- Maintain and expand the Council's Save Our Water Partnership and WaterSense promotional activities.

### **Residential**

- Articulate and develop a New Norm for water use and consumption;
- Promote market transformation and new development standards that further water conservation and efficiency; and
- Share knowledge with other committees and other groups.

### **CII**

- Indoor Focus: Develop tools to help get CII resources and materials into the hands of customers;
- Outdoor Focus: Use components of the Landscape Committee Action Plan to address all landscape issues related to CII; and
- Support Activities: Compile a list of water use ranges by NAICS codes, develop a tool to monitor premise water use, update the CII Guidebook, initiate development of an ROI tool, and evaluate creating a CII version of "Save Our Water" website.

### **Utility Operations**

- BMP 1.2 Water Loss Control – Review AWWA water loss spreadsheets submitted in 2013 and provide input and training on BMP 1.2;
- BMP 1.3 Metering and Commodity Rates – Finish work on water use efficiency impacts and cost-effectiveness of BMP 1.3G.1 “Criteria for meter testing, repair, replacement and accuracy,” and BMP 1.3G.3, “transition to monthly billing schedules for all accounts;” and
- Work with staff to organize AML symposium, with consideration to Landscape Symposia scheduled for 2014.

#### **Research and Evaluation**

- Review pBMP reports for recommendation to the Board;
- Review and establish water savings assumptions for recommendation to the Board;
- Develop and refine water savings and research tools for Council members; and
- Assist with updated Cost and Savings Study project.

#### **Landscape**

- Develop New Norm Landscape Symposia in conjunction with staff, other committees and funding agencies;
- Produce a list of New Norm best practice recommendations for resource efficiency and protection, stewardship, and market transformation;
- Develop a targeted list of potential New Norm partners by sector and initiate outreach; and
- Pilot implementation of the New Norm toolbox.

## **XI. Appendix**

Projects listed in the 2013 Action Plan that have been completed are listed below for ease of cross reference.

- **Reporting Database - Launched in June 2013**
  - Provide training to members, including on line user documentation and webinars
  - Provide updates through BMP Reporting News
- **New Website (March 2014)**
- **Prop 50 Funding**
  - Completed the One-Stop Rebate Program
- **Technical Assistance**
  - The following BMP Guidebooks have been completed and posted on the website: CII, Public Information, School Education, Utility Operations, Landscape and Residential.
- **BMP Reporting Support**
  - With the launch of the new database reporting application in June 2013, the Council conducted seven in-person workshops throughout the state to familiarize members with the software.
  - The Council developed the following user guides to assist members with use of the application:
    - Getting Started
    - Foundation BMP Reporting
    - Programmatic BMP Reporting
    - GPCD Reporting

- Historical Data
  - Wholesale BMP Reporting
  - The Council also produced and made available online webinars showing members how to use the software covering the same topics as the user guides listed above.
- **Council Link** – Re-tooled the previous “Hot News” email newsletter and provided regular editions to Council members.
- **BMP Reporting News** – Issued regularly to answer frequently asked questions and provide guidance to members in reporting.
- **Committee Leadership** – Instituted quarterly conference calls among committee chairs and board liaisons to provide updates on committee work and discuss areas of mutual interest.
- **Council Fact Sheet** – Sent to members to provide boards of directors, GMs and other decision makers with information that outlines the value of Council membership.
- **BMP 1.4 Option 2 ALEA Tool** – Completed development of a tool that refines and simplifies the Option 2 method as outlined in BMP 1.4.

2014 Action Plan Priority Table

#	Item	Rank	1. Complete Key Projects	2. Develop New Norm	3. Expand Resources & Technical Assistance	4. Improved Communication	5. Training	6. Value Added to Members	7. BMP Revisions	8. Develop Partnerships	9. Funding
	<b>Ranking key:</b> <b>1 = Highest priorities. Plan to accomplish this year.</b> <b>2 = Important. Hope to accomplish or substantially advance this year.</b> <b>3 = Will work on as time and resources permit.</b>										
1	Help our members and the state respond to drought	1			X	X		X			X
2	Work with Committees and Partners to implement New Norm	1		X						X	
3	Continue BMP 1.4 revision discussions	1						X			
4	Reporting database – Complete Phase 2 improvements	1	X		X			X			
5	Improve & update resources on new website	1			X	X		X			
6	Complete Phase 1 of Cost & Savings Study; obtain funding for Phase 2	1			X			X			X
7	Prop 50 Funding Grants – pBMPs – complete two reports	1	X		X			X			
8	Prop 50 Funding Grants – Technical Assistance – Publish BMP guidebooks on new website	1	X		X			X			
9	Prop 50 Funding Grants – Smart from the Start – Repurpose or extend grant	1	X								X
10	Tell members when we've completed their requests	1				X					

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	<b>Ranking key:</b> <b>1 = Highest priorities. Plan to accomplish this year.</b> <b>2 = Important. Hope to accomplish or substantially advance this year.</b> <b>3 = Will work on as time and resources permit.</b>										
11	Provide requested and regular updates through Council Link/BMP Reporting News	1				X		X			
12	Seek DWR funding to develop a white paper on the value of water	1			X			X			
13	Seek DWR funding for "How to Videos"	2			X			X			X
14	Seek DWR funding for "Jump Start" kit	2			X			X			X
15	Prop 50 Funding Grants – Cooling Tower	2	X								
16	Prop 50 Funding Grants – Directed Action Grant – AMI/AMR; Water Rates & Revenue; Water Loss, Landscape & others	2	X		X			X			
17	Actively solicit funding to update H2Ouse	2			X						X
18	Obtain funding to complete the new landscape programs tool; explore its application to other programs	2			X			X			
19	Explore opportunities for low/free cost training to members	2					X	X			

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20	Collaborate with AWE on at least 2 projects: updated rates study and initial phase of new outdoor water use study	2			X					X	
21	BMP Reporting Support – Build on trainings offered in 2013	2					X				
22	Obtain funds from DWR to plan AWWA Water Audit & Cost Effectiveness workshops	2					X				
23	Find opportunities for the Council to apply for Integrated Regional Water Management Planning funds	3									X
24	Continue to work with Reclamation to support contractor reporting	3						X		X	
25	Continue to work with CALWEC	3								X	
26	As E.D. has time, work with CPUC and energy providers re: energy efficiency funds for water use efficiency; where possible, tie into drought responses (Item 1)	3								X	X