

WRAC update on TMA Secret Committee activities for 7/07/10, by John Snyder

Status of the “Twitchell Management Authority” (TMA) Technical Group, Secret Committee Report:

The report is posted on Santa Maria’s website at: <http://www.ci.santa-maria.ca.us/home.shtml>
Unlike Nipomo Technical Group the TMA is required to have a public comment period but that comment period is over. The report must be approved by the TMA members, the vote for the City is proportionate to the Cities allocation of Twitchell Yield.

There is no maximum “Supply” number in the TMA report or the NMMA report.

Important change in number for yield from the Twitchell Project Manual April 23 2010 Page 2:

“The reservoir supplies about 20,000 AF of recharge to the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin annually”
This number is inconsistent with the stipulation use of “Twitchell yield” which is defined as : “Twitchell Yield is 32,000 acre-feet per Year (“afy”)”

Back ground history From Certified NCS D Waterline Intertie Project EIR Page V-49:

“However, management of the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin has been evaluated and restructured by the Settlement Stipulation and Judgment with specific provisions related to groundwater rights, groundwater monitoring programs and development of plans and programs to respond to potential water shortage conditions. The City of Santa Maria recently entered an agreement, dated July 7, 2005, with other water purveyors in the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, which stipulates that a proposed entity will monitor groundwater levels and water quality in the basin, as well as recommend groundwater management actions if needed. Therefore, groundwater extractions would be limited to maintain a safe yield. **Any limits set forth by the adjudication could also limit the NCS D deliveries. The City would not be able to provide water to the Nipomo area in excess of limitations of the adjudication.** This would act to further protect the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin, resulting in a less than significant impact.”

The TMA reports and the City of Santa acknowledges limits on export of “supplemental water”

Santa Maria Valley Management area, 2009 Annual Report page 28: 4.3 Exported Water

“... Since the Wholesale Agreement and the environmental documentation on the Waterline Intertie project reflect planned intra-basin export of water from one management area to another, three technical concerns about the planned project were expressed in the initial (2008) annual report for the SMVMA; as included in that report, those technical concerns were:

- “First, while there has apparently been extensive analysis of the need for supplemental water in the NMMA, prior to and through a recently certified EIR on the project, the Nipomo CSD “Waterline Intertie”, **there has been no analysis to identify the existence of any surplus water in the SMVMA.** There has similarly been no analysis of any impacts to water supplies in the SMVMA that might derive from an export as described in the MOU.”

- “Second, the MOU includes provisions that the water delivered by Santa Maria shall be of the same quality that the City delivers to its customers; the project EIR notes that the water will be a mix of City groundwater and SWP water. In the year prior to the signing of the MOU, the City delivered an average blend of 87 percent SWP water and 13 percent local groundwater to its customers. In 2008, those respective fractions were 53 percent and 47 percent. Using both sets of fractions for illustration purposes only, the delivery of “supplemental” water to the NMMA could represent about 1,600 to 2,600 afy of SWP water and about 400 to 1,400 afy of groundwater pumped from the SMVMA. **There has been no analysis of the source(s), pumping locations, or potential impacts of such groundwater pumping for export from the SMVMA.**”

- “Finally, and perhaps of greatest concern, there is an apparent **conflict with regard to importation and use of SWP water between the Stipulation and the MOU.** In the Stipulation

provisions specific to the SMVMA, the City of Santa Maria is to import and use within the SMVMA at least 10,000 af of SWP water. The only exception to that amount of importation and use is in years when SWP availability to Santa Maria is less than 10,000 af; in those years, Santa Maria is to import and use all its available SWP supply in the SMVMA. However, if Santa Maria were to export water in accordance with the MOU in years when its SWP supply was less than 10,000 af (i.e. in years when overall SWP reliability is less than about 60 percent), Santa Maria would be out of compliance with the Stipulation in all those years, leading to more groundwater pumping for municipal supply in the SMVMA than envisioned by the Stipulation.”

While no new technical work on the preceding issues was completed in 2009, Santa Maria has initiated efforts to address them as follows. On the first item, the City has listed a combination of water supplies that, in the quantities listed by the City, notably exceed its existing and currently projected water requirements. Those water supplies **include appropriative rights to groundwater in the SMVMA, reportedly quantified in the Judgment;** a portion of the yield from Twitchell Reservoir operations; SWP supplies; and return flows from SWP use by the City. **While those aggregate supplies exceed the City’s water requirements, there remains no analysis to identify whether there are sufficient supplies in the overall SMVMA whereby there is a “surplus” available for intra-basin transfer without causing a shortage in the SMVMA. Through its Utilities Department, the City has indicated a willingness and intent to analyze that issue in 2010.**

On the second concern expressed in the 2008 report, the City’s blended fractions of SWP water and local groundwater were essentially the same in 2009 as in the preceding year: 53 percent SWP water and 47 percent local groundwater. Had the Water Sales Agreement been operational with SWP availability as it was in 2009 (40%), the fractional use of SWP water to a combination of City customers and the Nipomo CSD would have decreased to about 41 percent; SWP water use in the SMVMA would have decreased from full availability (7,120 af) to about 5,900 af; and total groundwater pumping by the City would have increased from about 6,600 af to slightly more than 10,000 af. **As indicated in the 2008 annual report, there has been no analysis of the source(s), pumping locations, or potential impacts of such an increase in groundwater pumping on the SMVMA. As with the first concern discussed above, however, the Santa Maria Utilities Department has indicated a willingness and intent to analyze that issue in 2010.**

On the last concern expressed in the 2008 report, the preceding discussion is a good illustration of the potential conflict between the Stipulation and the Water Sales Agreement (the MOU when included in the Stipulation). Had the Water Sales Agreement been operational with SWP availability as it was in 2009 (40%), and with the City’s SWP Table A Amount as it now is (17,800 af), the City would have been unable to satisfy both the Water Sales Agreement and the Stipulation. Since SWP availability to Santa Maria in 2009 was less than 10,000 af, the Stipulation calls for all that water to be used within the SMVMA (which occurred, as discussed in Section 3.2.2 above). Without access to additional SWP water, however, the City could not dedicate all its current SWP allocation to the SMVMA (as required by the Stipulation when that allocation is less than 10,000 af) and also deliver any to the Nipomo CSD. If the Water Sales Agreement were operational, such would be the case in all year-types when SWP allocations were less than about 70 percent. The City recognizes this issue and, based on informal communication with its Utilities Department, has begun to work on its resolution by initiating efforts to increase its SWP Table A water supply, but on a schedule that recognizes the practical realities that remain to be addressed before the Nipomo CSD will be in a position to request delivery of water under the Sales Agreement. Notable among those practicalities are a yet-to-be completed MOU among water purveyors in the NMMA and a yet-to-be scheduled election in the NMMA to authorize construction of the pipeline connection to Santa Maria. While those practicalities are being addressed in the NMMA, Santa Maria has begun work toward ultimately securing up to 10,000 af of additional SWP allocation from some combination of suspended SWP Table A allocation in Santa Barbara County and unused SWP Table A allocation in San Luis Obispo County.

The City’s described intention is to secure the additional SWP supplies in order to enable deliveries under the Water Sales Agreement while also satisfying the provisions of the Stipulation; however, it is also attempting to limit its financial commitment to purchase additional SWP supplies until it is certainly needed, i.e. when the Nipomo completes all its requirements to actually request water deliveries from Santa Maria.”

(In short Santa Maria can not supply supplemental water to Nipomo unless it has at least 10,000 AF of SWP a year, or a 56%, from it’s 17,800 AF entitlement of SWP, unless it can buy extra entitlement)