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Thoughts and comments on 4.5 vs 8.5 RCP

Please go into detail to explain “most likely” vs “worst case”. If experts disagree, then anyone making any kind of plans would be a fool to not choose *worst case*, because what if you choose *most likely* and then get caught with your pants down?

We are getting *worst case* already with climate change, the heat and fires, the stuff we are seeing now was supposed to be in 2050. World climate cooperation has been torpedoed by Trump; we seem to be going down the tubes in multiple ways and *worst case* is a realistic assessment across the board. *Worst case* has the most costs for everybody, that’s reality. We’re not in the Post WW2 economic boom Kansas anymore.

With people everywhere showing they are incapable of cooperating on serious collective issues, *most likely* seems naïve to me, like an optimistic business as usual. *Most likely* what? Normal? There is no normal anymore.

For example, one major GSP mitigation is to call for voluntary conservation, but this demands that people sacrifice their own interests to benefit someone else. People don’t do that; *normal*. *most likely* behavior results in tragedy of the commons outcomes.

Plus, there’s no money now to help pay people to offset stakeholder’s GW losses, many are already losing out big bc of social inequities and there’s no help, school distance learning internet access for example. Who will pay for new wells? That gets into a used car replacement-value dilemma. A stakeholder has a working well that is undercut by well competition, but the well will only be valued for as old and used as it is. Thus, the well owner will be cost burdened to have to replace it, even though their well was fine.

Staff is using the Santa Rosa Plan example of the difference between 4.5 and 8.5 for projected ag pumping and GW depletion. This is 27% vs. 33%, and less GW baseflow to streams with 8,5

Can the AC see a Sonoma Basin example? Is staff is saying that the SR Plain is an accurate proxy for all county basins? Isn’t Sonoma basin different because of the depletion areas?

The notion that all three basins must have the same RCP (Lisa Porta), and that Sonoma Water is presenting only one basin example to illustrate the diff between 4.5 and 8.5 RCP, shows that admin considerations, plus lack of time and money are maybe overriding GSA independence.

If Sonoma Valley is a high priority basin, how can we get fudged into a 4.5 future? How could the county’s medium priority basins be forced to take 8.5 because of the Sonoma basin?

Time and money pressure

From a volunteer's perspective, we have had lots of unused time already, yet most AC meetings end up with not enough time for adequate discussion, and the process rarely achieves a level of robust, thorough discussion where members are satisfied they have talked stuff out. Members end up making comments by e-mail, and no one knows what others are saying. The AC Charter's call for consensus has been fudged, and staff has taken over the role of deciding what the consensus opinion is. Board member Rabbit's call to not have recommendations be "baked" has put the AC on a whole other level than the AC Charter had laid out.

It seems county GSAs are getting shoe-horned into having to make rushed sub-optimal choices bc of funding issues. If funding continues to be a severe limitation, then GSPs may want to choose 8.5, bc lack of money is also going to result in lack of ability to mitigate GW loss.

Will lack of money be a valid uber excuse for DWR, for dialing all SMCs back bc of inability to meet them, and DWR is willing to accept systemic gaps and weak sustainability based on lack of money? Will we ever get to a place where the science shows one thing, but we have to choose a suboptimal treatment regime bc of lack of funds?

Consequences of 4.5 and 8.5 for sustainable yield

If the GSA chooses 8.5 but has inadequate funds for mitigation projects, then that IMHO, steers to mandatory conservation. If we choose 8.5, we will have to go back and adjust our GW levels SMC, so we are dialing ourselves in to plan for trouble.

If the GSA chooses 4.5, and more voluntary conservation, we are liable to end up with not enough "money in the bank" in terms of GW storage for sustainable yield.

Or, if the GSA chooses 4.5, and we use Thomas Harter's GW sustainability health metaphor, then we may be choosing a riskier course of action for our future health. (For example, poor people can only afford to buy unhealthy food at WalMart; that's the way it is.)

Restoring health has two basic pathways for groundwater: supply enhancement and/or demand reduction. This is where the GSP will explore management options and possible projects, and why we need to choose one or other now so as to run the model and make decisions based on model outcomes for the 2022 GSP deadline. But with the no-money rationale looming behind everything, supply enhancement through recharge or expanded recycled water use look less likely.

The compass points to mandatory demand reduction, because of climate forecasts and people's proven inability to cooperate and sacrifice.

Layered onto the above considerations is the fact that an RCP option must be chosen now, soon, and the model run, to generate futures where projects and management actions may be seen and triggered. It is unclear at this point if the GSA can just kind of take a time out to the next five-year milepost, and then get serious about projects. What near-term plan is intended

to be taken by staff? Is this 4.5 vs 8.5 really not that important now? Or is it a serious reality check we would best to properly assess and take now

Why does it matter so much to choose 4.5 or 8.5 now if we can just bide our time for the five-year milestone and do adaptive management? Why not run both 4.5 and 8.5 in the model and then compare? Do a 6.5 if people get cold feet for the more Draconian 8.5

If the AC were doctors or financial advisors, and a seriously uncertain future awaited, it would be bad advice to not take the worst outcomes seriously and have plans and actions ready in that case. Shoot, if we are in worst case, time to start acting now.

And this is all embedded in the Water Budget presentation today, with clearly not be enough time to explore the nuances, and also to cover the rest of the agenda. Suggestion: staff volunteer to have an extra AC meeting next week to cover whatever we miss today. That will address the cost issues, and demonstrate and model the sacrifice we will be asking all to make later.