2013 - California Water Rights - CA Water Plan Update

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California Water Rights

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State Water Resources Control Board
Overview

- Evolution of Law
- Types of Water Rights
- Permit Process
- Beneficial Use/Waste
- Instream Flows/Public Trust
- Federal Preemption
- Klamath Case Study
Evolution of Water Rights Law (1)

- Riparian Law Rights Law dominates in the Eastern US
  - Attach to land adjacent to stream
  - Works with Plenty of Water
Riparian Water Rights

- Natural Flow
- Correlative Share
- Use within watershed
- Not Lost by Non-Use
- Unity of Title Rule
Evolution (2)

- Mining Customs and Prior Appropriation
- Rule of Capture
- More adapted to arid climates
- First in Time, First in Right
Appropriative Water Right

- **Priority System**
- **Notice/Due Diligence/Beneficial Use**
- **Quantified**
- **Transferable**
- **Use It or Loose It!**
Beneficial Use

Types

- Domestic
- Municipal
- Irrigation
- Industrial
- Hydropower

More Recently:

- Recreation
- Groundwater Recharge
- Fish and Wildlife
Codification of the Law

1872 Civil Code Provisions
- Notice establishes priority date
- Not the exclusive method
- Forfeiture (Use it or Loose it!)

1914 Water Commission Act
- Permit System
- Creates Administrative Agency
Reasonable Use—No Waste

1928 Constitutional Amendment--Article 10, Section 2
All water use must be reasonable and waste is prohibited (both riparian and appropriative)
Evolving Doctrine--Case by Case Determination
What is Reasonable or Wasteful may change over time
  - Gravel mining
  - Frost protection
  - Leaky ditch
SWRCB Permit Process

- Applies to:
  - Appropriations after 1914
  - Subterranean Stream

- Process:
  - Application/Notice
  - Water Availability
  - Protests/Hearing
  - Permit
  - Due Diligence/Time Extension
  - License

- SWRCB Continuing Authority
In-Stream Flows

- Water for recreation and preservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources is a beneficial use
- SWRCB considers in water availability analysis
- No permit but may transfer
- Public Trust Doctrine
Evolution (3)

- Dual Water Right System in California
  - Reasonable and Beneficial Use
- State Retains Ownership and Control
  - Water is a “Common Resource”
  - Water Right is “Usufructory”
  - SWRCB has “Continuing Authority”
- Public Trust Doctrine
Other Types of Surface Water Rights

- Pueblo
- Prescriptive
- Federal Reserved Rights
Reserved Rights

- *Winters v. US (1908)*—Tribe has right to water sufficient to serve purpose of reservation
- *Priority Date of Reservation*
- *Not Lost by Non-Use*
- *Extended to other federal reservations—National Parks and Forests, military bases, Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Areas*
“Primary” Purpose of Reservation

- **Antiquities Act 1906**—to preserve areas of scientific and archeological significance
- **Organic Act 1897**—creates National Forests to “furnish timber and protect watershed”
- **Wilderness Act 1964**—to preserve land in its natural condition
Adjudications

- *All water users on a stream system*
- *Quantify amount and priority date*
- *All types of rights (may include groundwater)*
- *California—28 adjudications*
  - Court Reference
  - Statutory
Sources of Federal Power

- Treaty Power (art 1, § 8)
- Commerce Clause (art 1, § 8)
- Property Clause (art IV, § 3)
- Supremacy Clause (art VI, cl. 2)
Federal Water Projects

1902 Reclamation Act
- Dep’t. of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

1920 Federal Power Act
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

Rivers and Harbors Act, Flood Control Act
- Army Corps of Engineers
Federal Preemption

- No state law may conflict with a federal law (Supremacy Clause)
- Question of Intent
- Field preemption v. direct conflict
§ 8 Reclamation Act

“That nothing in this Act shall be construed as affecting or intended to affect or to in any way interfere with the laws of any State or Territory relating to the control, appropriation, use, or distribution of water used in irrigation, or any vested right acquired thereunder, and the Secretary of the Interior, in carrying out the provisions of this Act, shall proceed in conformity with such laws....”
§ 27 Federal Power Act

“Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed as affecting or intending to affect or in any way to interfere with the laws of the respective states relating to the control, appropriation, use, or distribution of water used in irrigation or for municipal or other uses, or any vested right acquired therein.”
Federal Preemption continued

- **Cal. v. US (1978)**—Section 8 protects state water law. SWRCB may condition water rights of project unless a direct conflict.

- **Cal. v. FERC (1983)**—FPA preempts the field. SWRCB may not condition water rights of the project.
Water Quality Certification

- **Clean Water Act § 401**
- **State must certify that federal project complies with state’s Water Quality Plan**
- **PUD#1 v. Jefferson County (1994)**
- **Water Quality Standards/ Beneficial Uses**
- **Minimum flows upheld**
Klamath Case Study

**Interests:**
- Farmers
- Tribes
- Fishermen
- Environment

**Issues:**
- Extent of Tribal rights?
- Who’s on the hook for ESA?
- Water Quality
- How to balance needs
Physical Setting

Pacific Ocean

CA Water Plan Update 2013
Vol. 4 Reference Guide

Compiled by M. Neuman, USBR Klamath Basin Area Office, 10/97
J.C. Boyle Dam
Wildlife Refuges
Klamath Fisheries

- Anadromous fish
  - Lost River and shortnose suckers
  - Coho
  - Chinook
Water Quality

- Eutrophication
  - Phosphorus
  - Nitrogen
- SWRCB water quality certification
  - Collaborative
  - Hearing
Reasonable Use?

- Inefficient irrigation methods
- Subsidies encourage waste
  - Water
  - Electricity
Upper Basin Tribal Water Rights
Upper Basin Tribal Water Rights

- Implied water right to preserve hunting and fishing rights (Instream water right!)
- Not abrogated by Klamath Termination Act
- Priority date “Time Immemorial”
- Reserved right for agriculture on remaining parcels with 1864 priority
- Must be quantified in State adjudication
Lower Basin Tribal Water Rights

![Diagram of the Lower Basin Tribal Water Rights area, showing the Old Klamath Reservation, Klamath River, Hoopa Valley Square, and Trinity River.]
Klamath Water Rights Adjudication

- Began 1975
- All pre-1909 users
- All federal claims
- Department of Interior
  - Tribes (Bureau of Indian Affairs)
  - Klamath Project (Bureau of Reclamation)
  - Wildlife Refuges (US Fish and Wildlife Service)
Klamath Water Project Order of Priority

- *ESA requirements*
- *Tribes*
- *Irrigators*
- *Wildlife Refuges*
Tule Lake
2001: Train Wreck!

[Image of a train accident scene]
2001 Bucket Brigade
2002 Fish Kill
Potential Solutions

- Klamath River Compact Commission
- Water Bank/Fallowing
- Wetlands Restoration
- Dam Removal
- Open Scott and Shasta Adjudications
"Uncertainty allows for the possibility of improving the future in a way that certainty doesn't."

Mike Wills (1946–)

"We trained hard... but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form into teams we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising... and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation."

Petronius (died AD 65)
"Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting over."
-Mark Twain
Additional Information

- SWRCB website: www.waterrights.ca.gov/
- Marc Reisner, Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water