

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

During preparation of the Groundwater Management Plan, several major conclusions were drawn as the work proceeded. Initially, the Commission concluded that the previous (1993) Groundwater Management Plan needed a comprehensive review and revision. The assessment of groundwater issues and problems, including management issues, was the first major work task and it identified the significant and widespread groundwater needs in the basin to be addressed. Actions were considered for each issue and problem, a conclusion was reached, and recommendations made on how to best address each of them. The selected management plan was then developed based on the series of recommended actions.

A critical and long-term part of the Commission's mission, as reflected in the 1971 Compact, is the achievement of a balance among environmental, human, and economic needs in the management of the basin's water resources. This is done by careful consideration of a wide range of factors including water resource sustainability, protection of existing users, adverse environmental impacts, actions to minimize or mitigate impacts, protection of high quality water from degradation, effective interagency coordination, and public understanding of groundwater issues. The recommended water resource management actions in the plan were formulated with the goal of balancing economic development and environmental protection as a primary consideration.

Implementation of the management plan is dependent on the Commission, federal government, member states, local jurisdictions, and project sponsors making resources available for this purpose on a phased and prioritized approach. Conclusions have been reached and documented on which group(s) has the lead, co-lead, or support responsibility for each of the elements of the management plan and where project sponsors need to do required analyses. It is anticipated that all parties will make a "good faith" effort to fulfill their responsibilities. All recommended management actions also were assessed to determine prioritization ratings and schedule time frames. Conclusions were reached on assigning top priority, high priority, or priority ratings and continuing, short- or long-term schedules.

The Commission has approved this plan to effectively address major groundwater resource issues in the basin that are within the Commission's purview. With adoption of the plan, and in recognition of the significant relationship between groundwater and surface water, the Commission has taken an important step toward a unified management of water resources. The Commission will monitor progress on plan implementation and periodically review and update the plan.

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