



Nevada Division of  
**WATER RESOURCES**

STATE OF NEVADA  
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## HUMBOLDT WORKING GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT

### TIMELINE AND PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING CONJUNCTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In 2023, the Nevada Division of Water Resources (NDWR) launched a series of workshops and listening sessions designed to explore practical strategies for implementing conjunctive management and addressing conflicts between groundwater pumping and surface water rights in the Humboldt River region. As part of this effort, the NDWR sought to ensure the inclusion of new and diverse ideas from stakeholders, ensuring that various voices were heard. This process involved issuing a call for abstracts on Humboldt River Basin conjunctive management, inviting stakeholders to submit proposals and present their ideas to the State Engineer and other interested parties. All of the information that was presented by NDWR and stakeholders in 2023 and March 2024 is available on the NDWR [website](#).

Findings from these meetings, presentations, and comments were gathered, and the ideas presented were refined, summarized, and narrowed down to 19 concepts based on key criteria of authority, implementation, and impacts/benefits.

To further evaluate these ideas and advance the development of conjunctive management strategies that prevent future conflicts, mitigate the impacts of existing ones and avoid the curtailment of established rights - a stakeholder working group was convened. Stakeholders had the opportunity to nominate representatives to act on their behalf. This process resulted in diverse representation from various sectors and regions, enabling collaborative analysis and further refinement of ideas for water management in the region. The group held its inaugural quarterly meeting in June 2024 and met for a second time in October 2024.

### STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Humboldt Working Group represents a diverse range of water users in the region. Its primary purpose is **to evaluate and propose strategies for reducing water right conflicts in the Humboldt River region, including solutions beyond the authority of the NDWR**. Specifically, the Working Group will conduct in-depth reviews of ideas, engage in technical analyses, and introduce solutions that support the long-term well-being of the region.

Additionally, the group may advocate for policies, legislative actions, and other initiatives outside the NDWR's jurisdiction that are feasible, reasonable, and effective in mitigating conflict. Should the curtailment of water rights become necessary, the group will be informed about the rationale behind it, as well as the process and timeline involved.

### STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP OBJECTIVES

#### 1. Collaborative and Inclusive Discussion

To facilitate inclusive and constructive discussions, ensuring that all perspectives are considered and that the solutions reflect the interests and concerns of the entire Humboldt River community.

## 2. In-depth Analysis and Solution Development

To conduct in-depth discussion on technical analyses and develop actionable, evidence-based solutions that reduce water right conflict in order to address the long-term health, economic, and environmental needs of the Humboldt River region.

## 3. Consensus-driven Actionable Recommendations

To deliver clear, consensus-driven recommendations to the State Engineer and other relevant parties to foster sustainable water management practices, provide certainty to both surface water and groundwater users, and to enhance the overall welfare of the Humboldt River region.

### NDWR APPROACH FOR CONJUNCTIVE MANAGEMENT IN THE HUMBOLDT RIVER REGION

The following approach and principles will guide the Humboldt Working Group's efforts in developing effective water management strategies for the region:

1) *Core tenets of conjunctive management strategy:*

- Optimize beneficial use of water resources, both underground and surface water.
- Adhere to the Prior Appropriation Doctrine.
- Prevent increase in conflict from underground water rights moving into the future.
- Reduce conflict from existing UG water rights.
- Minimize harm to local and regional economies.
- Use data- and science-based, building block approach.
- Through engagement with stakeholders.

2) *Conjunctive management must work within the confines of Nevada water law and the Humboldt Decree.*

### DISCUSSION PRIORITIES FOR THE WORKING GROUP

Since its inception, the stakeholder working group has held two meetings, during which various important topics and proposals were discussed:

- Updates on the Middle Humboldt Model and Report ETA
- Goals of conjunctive Management
- Capture management goals and tools
- Process and timeline for implementing conjunctive management in the Humboldt
- Consideration of forming Conservancy District(s)
- Offset requirements
- Possible curtailment timeline
- Historical and legacy capture

In upcoming meetings scheduled for 2025, the remaining ideas and concepts proposed by stakeholders (see list below) will be further explored through focused discussions. Of particular interest for the first meeting in 2025 is the topic of offsets (items 7, 11, 12 in the list of ideas below) which the group has expressed a strong desire to learn more about due to its centrality to any future solutions for the Humboldt River conjunctive management issue.

## LIST OF CONJUNCTIVE MANAGEMENT IDEAS FOR THE HUMBOLDT RIVER REGION

- 1) Curtailment of UG by priority
- 2) Focused curtailment of UG by impact
- 3) Establish Capture Management Zone
- 4) Establish conservancy district
- 5) Special considerations for public water supply
- 6) Consider methods from other Western States
- 7) Use of Decree to offset capture
- 8) Use of pumping reductions or UG relinquishments
- 9) Limit irrigation seasons and duties to that of Decree
- 10) Improved management of Decree
- 11) Managed recharge as offset
- 12) Augmentation as offset
- 13) Conservation as offset
- 14) Water right buy back
- 15) Use of private agreements
- 16) Market-based approach
- 17) Nature-based solutions
- 18) Exemptions
- 19) No Action