



STATE OF NEVADA

STATE WATER PLAN STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

MEETING MINUTES -- MEETING OF THE STATE WATER PLAN STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

Date and Time: Monday, September 11, 2023, at 10:00 am PT

* There was no physical location for this meeting. This meeting was held through Microsoft Teams. *

Video recording of the full meeting: <http://water.nv.gov/waterplans.aspx>

The Nevada Division of Water Resources (NDWR) held a meeting with members of the State Water Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to review the State Water Plan timeline and discuss water use data to be included in the update of the State Water Plan. This meeting was conducted in accordance with Open Meeting Law (NRS 241.020).

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Bunny Bishop, Nevada Division of Water Resources, called the September 11 meeting of the State Water Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group to order at 10:00 AM. Roll call was performed by Nicole Goehring. Quorum was established for the meeting.

Name	Organization	Attendance
Bunny Bishop	Nevada Division of Water Resources	Present
Nicole Goehring	Nevada Division of Water Resources	Present
Kyle Davis	Nevada Mining Association	Present
Doug Busselman	Nevada Farm Bureau	Present
Kim Rigdon	Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission/Western Regional Water Commission	Present
Ed James	Carson Water Subconservancy District	Absent
Jake Tibbitts	Eureka County	Present
Jeff Fontaine	Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority	Present
Mervin Wright Jr.	Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe	Present
Zane Marshall	Southern Nevada Water Authority	Present
Kara Steeland	Truckee Meadows Water Authority	Present
Laurel Saito	The Nature Conservancy	Present
Kyle Roerink	Great Basin Water Network	Absent
James Eason	Great Basin Water Company	Present
Dave Baker	Nevada Cattlemen's Association	Present
Bert Bryan	Walker River Irrigation District	Present
Justin Huntington	Desert Research Institute, Reno	Present

Mathew Johns	NV Energy	Present
Joseph Davis	Moapa Valley Water District	Present
Daniel Weeks	Nye County Water District	Present

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bunny Bishop requested public comment. There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Bunny Bishop called for approval of the January 18, 2023 and June 6, 2023 meeting minutes. Doug Busselman, Nevada Farm Bureau, motioned to approve both meeting minutes; Bert Bryan, Walker River Irrigation District, seconded the motion. A vote from the SAG was called and both meeting minutes were approved. Zane Marshall (Southern Nevada Water Authority), Joe Davis (Moapa Valley Water District), and Kim Rigdon (Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission/Western Regional Water Commission) abstained due to absence from previous meetings.

4. REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN PROGRESS

Lauren Bartels, Nevada Division of Water Resources, began by providing an overview of the State Water Plan timeline and a progress update. NDWR staff are finalizing the second draft of the introduction to the State Water Plan and working through the first draft of the climate and water resources section. The goal is to send the SAG the first draft of the climate and water resources section by late-October or early-November for members to review and provide comment on before the next SAG meeting. NDWR will continue to draft sections of the plan throughout Fall 2023 and Winter 2024. An in-person SAG workshop is being planned for Spring 2024 to discuss water resources issues and collaboratively develop recommendations to go into the State Water Plan. Once a full draft is complete, the State Water Plan will be open for public comment, followed by an internal review of the entire document. Based on the current timeline, NDWR aims to have the State Water Plan published in Spring 2025.

Lauren also discussed how the SAG comments on the introduction to the State Water Plan were addressed, which included inputting the comments into a spreadsheet, organizing the comments by section, and addressing the comments one-by-one. Almost all comments from the SAG were accepted. Two recurring questions came up throughout the comments on the introduction: 1) will the State Water Plan set new policies or provide recommendations, and 2) will the State Water Plan address water quality issues. In response to the first question, Lauren clarified that the State Water Plan will only be providing recommendations and will not (and cannot) set new policies, regulations, or mandates. However, some recommendations outlined in the State Water Plan may ultimately influence policy and/or require policy changes. In response to the second question, Lauren clarified that water quality will not be a major focus of the State Water Plan. While the importance of considering water quantity and water quality in planning will be described, the State Water Plan will refer to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection on matters related to water quality. The spreadsheet with the comments will be emailed to all SAG members.

Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, asked how long the public comment period will be and questioned the window of time dedicated to public and internal review. Bunny Bishop said the public will be able to comment on the State Water Plan for at least a month, but the time period had not yet been decided; up to 10 weeks

could be dedicated to public comment if deemed necessary. Lauren said NDWR expected a substantial amount of public comment on the full draft based on the response rate of the NDWR State Water Plan public survey released in late 2021. Leadership within NDWR and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will also need to review the plan, which is why Fall 2024 and early Winter 2024/2025 are dedicated to addressing comments on the State Water Plan.

5. **DISCUSSION ON ESTIMATING CURRENT WATER USE**

Nicole Goehring, Nevada Division of Water Resources, presented the data and information available for estimating water use and led a discussion with SAG members on water use data. Nicole described the groundwater use data published by NDWR, which includes pumpage and crop inventory reports for specific basins across the state as well as statewide pumpage inventory reports for certain years. Nicole also discussed the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) water use publications that include estimates of surface water use. Issues mentioned included the lack of recent groundwater pumpage data, limited data on surface water use, and an extension in the State Water Plan timeline while more recent water use data is estimated.

Nicole posed four questions for the SAG, including: 1) are there any water use data sources NDWR missed, 2) what water use data are important for your planning purposes, 3) would you like to see more recent statewide water use data in the State Water Plan, and 4) are there any aspects of surface water use data that you would find useful.

Justin Huntington, Desert Research Institute (DRI), mentioned that DRI has been working with USGS on a national water use model; data from this project is expected to be released in 2024. Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County, highlighted the difference between pumpage and consumptive use, which are not always equal. Jake preferred consumptive use reporting rather than pumpage reporting but emphasized the need to be consistent and clear. Laurel Saito, The Nature Conservancy, asked if the State Water Plan would include water use by nature or only human uses of water. Nicole responded that to the extent possible, the State Water Plan will estimate water use for any use with a water right.

Kim Rigdon mentioned it would be useful if the State Water Plan clarified how NDWR determines the available water supply in the groundwater basins, as a better understanding of this process would help with their regional planning efforts when evaluating sustainable water resources. Daniel Weeks, Nye County Water District, agreed with Kim and also said it would be useful if the State Water Plan included basin- or county-specific estimates of water availability and projected growth to support local planning. Laurel Saito added that looking at water use trends would be helpful to include as well, and many stakeholders agreed. Zane Marshall, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), noted that SNWA puts a lot of time and effort into population and water demand forecasting and that some areas may need more help than others. Jeff Fontaine also noted that county water resource plans are required to have estimates of future water demand and could be a resource for the State Water Plan.

Many stakeholders agreed that having more recent water use data is preferred over relying on the 2017 Statewide Groundwater Pumpage Inventory. Kara Steeland, Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), noted that TMWA's pumpage varies widely depending on whether the year was wet or dry, and having a snapshot of groundwater pumpage over a single year would not paint a complete picture. Kim Rigdon expressed that if only water use for a single year is reported in the State Water Plan, then it is important to clearly explain the purpose this water use data

serves in the plan and that future data should be collected, especially if the plan will ultimately influence policy. Jeff Fontaine asked what is involved when putting together a statewide pumpage inventory, and if metering requirements make the reporting easier. Nicole explained that annual pumpage inventories are completed for basins that are the most active in groundwater use or have the biggest concerns, and this data gets rolled into the statewide pumpage inventory. For the basins without annual inventories, various estimation methods are used depending on the manner of use. Meter requirements can make the process easier and potentially more accurate, but a lot of data processing and QA/QC needs to be completed on the meter data. Jake Tibbitts mentioned that levels of meter enforcement vary between basins, and there is a lack of standardized reporting. Furthermore, not all meters are created equal, and some estimation methods may be just as good as meter readings.

Justin Huntington emphasized the challenge in estimating surface water use, as parsing out groundwater and surface water use is not an easy task. Surface water use is an important component of water use, and the USGS project he mentioned earlier may be able to assist in the estimation, but estimating surface water use is a big challenge.

6. FUTURE STATE WATER PLAN ACTIVITIES

Bunny Bishop discussed potential additional activities related to State Water Plan efforts. She first mentioned how the NDWR team will be traveling around Nevada to meet individually with stakeholders to get a better sense of local and regional water resource issues. The first trip will be around southern Nevada the week of September 25, 2023. Additional trips for central and eastern Nevada are tentatively planned for the end of October 2023 and in Spring 2024, and the NDWR team will visit with northwestern Nevada stakeholders on an ad hoc basis over the next six months. NDWR will reach out to SAG members to discuss potential meeting dates.

Bunny then described the in-person SAG workshop that is being planned for Spring 2024. The workshop will be a 1-2 day facilitated workshop in Carson City or Reno (location to be determined) to discuss water resources challenges and develop recommendations for the State Water Plan. NDWR does not have funding to support SAG travel, but the workshop will be communicated with SAG members in advance to facilitate planning.

The next SAG task will be to review the climate and water resources section of the State Water Plan before the next SAG meeting, which is tentatively planned for early December. The meeting in December will discuss the climate and water resources section, statewide and county population projections, and water demand forecasting methods.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bunny Bishop requested public comment. There was no public comment.

8. ADJOURNMENT – (Discussion/For Possible Action)

Bunny Bishop requested a motion to adjourn. Zane Marshall, SNWA, moved to adjourn; Bert Bryan, Walker River Irrigation District, seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:17 am PT.
