



# STATE OF NEVADA

## STATE WATER PLAN STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

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

**Date and Time: Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 2:00 pm 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 findings from meetings with stakeholders, provide an overview of the draft climate and water resources sections, discuss data and methodologies for projecting water demands, and begin to plan the in-person SAG workshop. 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 January 16 meeting of the State Water Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group to order at 2:00 PM. Roll call was performed by Nicole Goehring. Quorum was established for the meeting.

| <b>Name</b>       | <b>Organization</b>  | <b>Attendance</b> |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| Bunny Bishop      | Nevada Division of Water Resources   | Present           |
| Nicole Goehring   | Nevada Division of Water Resources   | Present           |
| Kyle Davis        | Nevada Mining Association  | Absent            |
| Doug Busselman    | Nevada Farm Bureau   | Present           |
| Kim Rigdon        | Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission/Western Regional Water Commission  | Present           |
| Ed James          | Carson Water Subconservancy District   | Present           |
| 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  | Absent            |
| Laurel Saito      | The Nature Conservancy   | Present           |
| Kyle Roerink      | Great Basin Water Network  | Present           |
| 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                        | Absent  |
| 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 suggested postponing the approval of the September 11, 2023 meeting minutes until the next SAG meeting. Kim Rigdon, Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission/Western Regional Water Commission, motioned to approve postponing the vote on the meeting minutes. Dave Baker, Nevada Cattlemen's Association, seconded the motion. A vote from the SAG was not called. The September 11, 2023 meeting minutes will be revisited at the next SAG meeting.

**4. DISCUSSION OF THEMES FROM STATE WATER PLAN SITE VISITS**

Vice-Chair, Nicole Goehring, and Lauren Bartels, Nevada Division of Water Resources summarized the major themes from meetings with stakeholders and interested parties across the state. Nicole began by giving an overview of the goals of the stakeholder meetings, listing the topics of discussion, and describing the process of deriving themes. The trip around southern Nevada took place September 25-29, 2023, and the conversations revolved around growth, climate change, additional water sources, and water waste and conservation. The trip around central and eastern Nevada took place October 30-November 3, 2023, and the conversations revolved around relationships, data, funding, and transparency.

Lauren then summarized the themes common across trips, which included the over-appropriation of groundwater, the need to analyze the cumulative effects of development, and the desire to see more guidance from the State. Some success stories shared by stakeholders were shared with the SAG, including the Death Valley Regional Groundwater Flow Model, Oasis Valley and Duckwater environmental restoration projects, and water conservation efforts in Las Vegas and Mesquite. NDWR also asked for recommendations for the State Water Plan during these meetings, and stakeholders wanted to see a transparent document that could provide guidance and data to local entities, as well as information to legislators and the public. Lauren finished by discussing the upcoming tours for 2024, which includes local day trips in western Nevada from January through May and another week-long trip along the Humboldt River in April or May.

**5. PRESENTATION ON CLIMATE CHAPTER OF STATE WATER PLAN**

Lauren Bartels, Nevada Division of Water Resources provided a brief overview of the content of the climate chapter of the State Water Plan. The goals of the climate section were reviewed, followed by an overview of the process for drafting the section. Select content was highlighted, including maps showing average annual statewide temperature and precipitation, a graph of projected statewide temperature changes, a table outlining climate impacts to water resources, and a list of links to additional resources. The SAG should expect to receive the climate section for review by the end of the week (January 19, 2024) and will have about a month to provide comments.

Justin Huntington, Desert Research Institute (Reno), asked if projected changes in evaporative demand are included in this section. Lauren responded that it may be addressed briefly, but that he should feel free to suggest additional text related to this topic. Laurel Saito, The Nature Conservancy, asked if climate impacts to ecosystems were included in this section. Again, Lauren responded that it may be addressed briefly, but that she should feel free to suggest additional text related to this topic. Daniel Weeks, Nye County Water District, mentioned that he has been doing research related to precipitation changes in Nevada and will send along resources as part of the review process. Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, asked how far the climate projections go into the future. Lauren said that the graph showing temperature projections goes out to the end of the century (2100), but the State Water Plan is currently focused on a 20- to 30-year planning horizon.

Bunny Bishop reminded the SAG that the text is being kept short and high-level for this iteration of the State Water Plan; future publications can explore topics in-depth.

#### **6. PRESENTATION ON WATER RESOURCES CHAPTER OF STATE WATER PLAN**

Vice-Chair Nicole Goehring provided a brief overview of the content of the water resources chapter of the State Water Plan. The goals of the water resources section were reviewed, followed by a preview of the content describing surface water and groundwater in Nevada. Nicole also posed the idea of drafting regional overviews, which would be more in-depth descriptions of climate, land use, socioeconomic data, and water resource topics across the state. The SAG should expect to receive the water resources section for review by the end of February and will have about a month to provide comments.

Ed James, Carson Water Subconservancy District, made the comment that regional descriptions by county would dilute the information, and he recommended breaking up the regions by watersheds (and potentially subbasins). For example, Lyon County includes the Walker, Carson, and Truckee Rivers, each which has a different set of issues. While breaking up socioeconomic data by watershed is more challenging, it would be worthwhile. Justin Huntington, Desert Research Institute (DRI), also suggested flow systems as a way to divide the state.

Daniel Weeks, Nye County Water District, supported this effort as a supplemental publication following the State Water Plan to prevent a delay in publishing. Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, seconded the idea of a supplemental publication.

Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County, saw this effort as a way to provide support for county-level efforts, especially counties with less resources, but believed the majority of planning should still be done at a local level.

Laurel Saito, The Nature Conservancy, offered two additional ideas instead of regional overviews. The first was to draft case studies of areas across the state facing pressing water resource issues (e.g., White River flow system). The case studies could be presented in a consistent fashion with similar data, but she thought it would be informative to highlight the constraints of different systems. The second idea was to develop profiles of water users to share different perspectives on water use and availability. For example, these could include municipal,

agricultural, and tribal water users. Nicole mentioned that this second idea is what the team was planning with the vignettes to be included in the State Water Plan.

Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, mentioned that many counties do not have the capacity to obtain the data and summarize this information themselves, so however the regions were divided, he thought this type of product would be a worthwhile effort.

## 7. **DISCUSSION ON WATER USE ESTIMATIONS AND PROJECTIONS**

Vice-Chair Nicole Goehring introduced the next section of the State Water Plan that the water planning team will tackle: water use estimations and projections. Nicole informed the SAG that work for the 2021 Statewide Groundwater Pumpage Inventory has been initiated, with the goal of having the data published before the 2025 legislative session. Nicole then solicited input from SAG members regarding the water use projections for the State Water Plan, including data, methodologies, available resources, and limitations. Due to resource constraints, the water use projections will be limited in scope, but the team has access to data from the State Demographer, local water resource plans, and methodologies used by other states.

Ed James, Carson Water Subconservancy District, noted that looking at population growth alone is not sufficient for estimating future water use, as water use patterns differ by user group. When looking at historic water use, he also stressed that it is important to consider how far back in time you look. Getting a handle on population growth far out in the future is challenging, but the population projections should be reasonable for the planning horizon of the State Water Plan (20 to 30 years).

Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County, mentioned that Eureka County does not use the State Demographer's data; the data is not useful for rural communities who are beholden to the next mining project, which can double the population of a community overnight and reduce it in half the next. Two suggestions he had for obtaining accurate population data was through the County Assessors, either the Assessors Association or the individual assessors, or the Regional Development Authorities, each which may have insight on population projections for their respective areas.

Kim Rigdon, Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission/Western Regional Water Commission, echoed Ed's comments regarding historical water demands – the conservation efforts over the last decade have significantly reduced water consumption, so this needs to be considered when using historical data to project future demands. She suggested using the Regional Planning Agencies as a resource for this section. For example, the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (TMRPA) uses four population models to capture variability from different scenarios, then uses the average of the models as the population projection. These population projections are paired with water demand models from water suppliers to project future water demands. The TMRPA consensus planning report can be found on their [website](#).

Justin Huntington, Desert Research Institute (Reno), brought up the [recent effort](#) by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to estimate water use for different sectors from 2000-2022 at the HUC-12 level. The Desert Research Institute worked with the USGS to estimate water use from agriculture using remote sensing, so the water use estimates for this sector are very specific to

Nevada. Furthermore, as part of the Nevada Water Initiative, his team is looking at future evaporative demands, which can serve as a basis for future water demands from irrigated lands; he is happy to help NDWR estimate future water demands for irrigation as part of the State Water Plan.

Laurel Saito, The Nature Conservancy, also mentioned the USGS has a published, verified [dataset](#) that estimates national water use, by county, for the year 2015. She also suggested looking into the [USBR WaterSmart Planning and Project Design Grants](#) to help fund a contractor for the water use estimations and projections.

Zane Marshall, Southern Nevada Water Authority, recommended using a scenario planning approach for population and water demand projections. By using different scenarios for population and growth, the variability in future water demands can be captured, and you can plan and make recommendations for various outcomes.

#### 8. **STATE WATER PLAN TIMELINE UPDATE AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Chair, Bunny Bishop discussed the revised timeline for the State Water Plan and upcoming activities related to State Water Plan efforts. Due to the 2021 Statewide Groundwater Pumpage Inventory, the timeline for the State Water Plan has been pushed back slightly; the final version of the State Water Plan is expected to be published at the end of 2025. This means the SAG will likely have one additional meeting than originally planned.

Bunny also described the current plan for the in-person SAG workshop. The two-day workshop will be held the week of June 3, 2024 at the Desert Research Institute in Reno, Nevada. The workshop will be facilitated by a third party and will only have an in-person attendance option. SAG members voted on their availability for that week, either June 4-5 or June 5-6. The water planning team will evaluate the results and pick the two days that work for the majority of SAG members.

Lastly, Bunny reminded the SAG that they will be asked to review the climate and water resources sections over the next couple of months. The next SAG meeting will either be in March or April (likely April), and a Doodle Poll will be sent to assess availability.

Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, asked for clarification on the anticipated publication dates of the water planning efforts. Bunny responded that the team was aiming to complete the 2021 Statewide Groundwater Pumpage Inventory prior to the 2025 legislative session, and the State Water Plan by the end of 2025.

#### 9. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

#### 10. **ADJOURNMENT** – (Discussion/For Possible Action)

Bunny Bishop requested a motion to adjourn. Joseph Davis, Moapa Valley Water District, moved to adjourn; Ed James, Carson Water Subconservancy District, seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm PT.

---