



STATE OF NEVADA

STATE WATER PLAN STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

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

Date and Time: Monday, July 29th, 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: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwhr7dK9MF0>

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 workshops. This meeting was conducted in accordance with Nevada Public Meeting Law (NRS 241.020).

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Bunny Bishop, NDWR, called the July 29, 2024, meeting of the State Water Plan SAG to order at 2:00 pm. Roll call was performed by Nicole Goehring, NDWR. A 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	Absent
Doug Busselman	Nevada Farm Bureau	Absent
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	Present
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	Absent

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Bishop, NDWR, requested public comment. There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Chair Bishop, NDWR, requested a motion to accept the September 11, 2023, SAG meeting minutes and the January 16, 2024, SAG meeting minutes. Kim Rigdon, Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission/Western Regional Water Commission, motioned to approve the September 11, 2023, and January 16, 2024, SAG meeting minutes; Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County, seconded the motion. A vote from the SAG was called and both meeting minutes were approved.

4. NEW STAFF INTRODUCTION

Chair Bishop, NDWR, introduced the new Water Planning team members Bob Zeyer, Water Resource Specialist I, and Lake Shank, Assistant Water Resource Specialist, to the SAG.

5. DISCUSSION OF THEMES FROM STATE WATER PLAN SITE VISITS

Bob Zeyer, NDWR, summarized the major themes from meetings with stakeholders and interested parties across the state. Bob 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 meetings in the Truckee Meadows area occurred on March 7, 2024, and the conversations revolved around growth, climate change, water supply strategies, and administrative hurdles. Bob summarized the major themes common across trips. Discussion for growth included significant increases in water demand due to residential and industrial development. The bolstering of treatment capacity has been one way to address this increase in demand and has resulted in successful regional coordination. Bob also mentioned that the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) is tasked with assessing incoming economic development and water use and the WaterWise focus group meetings held for stakeholders to discuss water use issues. Changes in climate are increasing wildfires, and the threats wildfires pose to water quality, the challenges of dealing with extremes from year to year and evolving reservoir management. Discussions around water supply strategies included the unique "One Water" perspective and using a combination of groundwater and surface water to allow for adaptive management, and potable reuse. Administrative hurdles included discussions about the need to update statutes, codes, and regulations to support reuse projects. Currently, the permitting process can be cumbersome.

The site visits in the Carson River and Walker River Basins occurred on May 14 and 21, 2024. The conversations during these visits revolved around relationships and outreach, funding and capacity, and infrastructure. Stakeholders expressed an interest in seeing NDWR staff out with boots on the ground, in the field, and meeting with people. Meetings are needed to sustain good relationships and to provide education. Funding and capacity discussions revolved around the challenges of having limited staff to carry out all the work that needs to be done. Many agencies are dependent on federal funding for projects and equipment. There is also pressure to automate and increase efficiency of infrastructure.

The trip along the Humboldt River took place July 16-18, 2024, and the conversations revolved around water rights, monitoring and reporting, conjunctive management, and capacity. For water rights, concerns were expressed about temporary permits and extensions and how these are processed and the need for more guidance. There were also concerns about transparency on water rights transfers, and inter-basin transfers. Stakeholders would like more guidance from NDWR with water rights. Stakeholders expressed an interest in more comprehensive, consolidated, and accessible water use data and water level monitoring. There is also a need for accurate weather monitoring for rural communities. There are concerns about Conjunctive Management and declining water levels. Capacity concerns included staff turnover and being short staffed.

Common themes for these site visits included:

- Over-appropriation and conjunctive management continue to be concerns people want to see addressed
- Capacity and turnover are major barriers for operations and projects
- Comprehensive, consolidated, and accessible water use and weather monitoring data are of interest to stakeholders

Stakeholders would like more transparency, guidance from NDWR, comprehensive monitoring (Data), governmental efficiency, education, and outreach.

Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, asked for clarification about the description of concerns in the Humboldt basin between groundwater users and other groundwater users. Bob said the concerns were about groundwater wells being in competition for groundwater with each other and declining water levels. Jeff Fontaine asked if the canceled meeting with Pershing County Water Conservation District was ever rescheduled. Bob replied that it has not been rescheduled yet but is on our task list. Jeff Fontaine also asked if there will be an opportunity later, when the draft plan has circulated, for others to provide recommendations and input. Chair Bishop, NDWR, replied that yes, after we have a full draft, the intent is to have a public comment period for everyone to provide input.

Mervin Wright Jr., Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, made comments about economic development focusing on the Carson, Truckee, and Walker Rivers and talked about reservoir management evolving, including studies. All these things being mentioned do not lead to any action. We have been wanting to fix the Lower Truckee River, restore the habitat, but all we have been doing is talking, meeting, planning, and studying, and nothing has been done in the last thirty years. The Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) holds promises for water flows to Pyramid Lake. What we have seen in the past five years, specifically wet water years, is very limited flow to Pyramid Lake, but if you look at the reservoirs, they are all full. Decision makers are deciding not to allow the water to flow to Pyramid Lake. Water rights certainly have founded our region and our state. But when we talk about economic development, and you hear the politicians pushing for growth, you cannot have an economy without growth and development. While we are facing situations driven by climate change, increased temperatures, you will see and hear in northern Nevada 100-degree temperatures and the duration of those 100-degree trends. When we see the development occurring, he has seen a shift that human interests are going to be a priority over everything. Agriculture is an industry that everyone relies on and is needed for communities. So, people can't think that there is an end in sight when it comes to agriculture. Yes, they have a fishery here on Pyramid Lake. Yes, the Truckee River has been adjudicated along with the Carson River for purposes that are competing, but what we have seen over the last twenty years has been more of an acknowledgement of the value of this resource we call water. In the past he remembers one of the board of directors for Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID) saying all the TCID and Newlands project irrigators want is their headgate entitlement no more no less. And that's all we want below Derby Dam, is the entitlement for fish recovery no more no less. So, you

have that concept of understanding a limited resource is a valued resource. At the same time, we also recognize that you can't abuse the resource we can only take what we have an entitlement to. He wanted to make these comments regarding study. Study tends to lock the resource. Study tends to lock the system until we get answers, but there may never be an answer to the question you are asking. We tend to get pulled into studies. We must study this because we don't know. He says this because this is what they see on the Lower Truckee with their fish recovery. They must study it. We want to fix the river, but they must do a five-year study then they have to do another study to study the results of the first study. He's not opposed to studying and wanting to learn. We know what we know, he thinks this state and those of us that have lived in these systems for as long as we have, have the experience to tell you what is good and what is not good. What is right and what is not right. He is looking forward to this process that we are undertaking here. He will do his best to contribute what he can.

Chair Bishop, NDWR, mentioned that the intent of these one-on-one meetings with stakeholders is to take all the information in and roll it into an issues and recommendations section. With input from stakeholders, the intent is to identify measurable outcomes and steps to take incrementally that can be initiated over the short term, intermediate term, and long term.

6. REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN PROGRESS

Nicole Goehring, NDWR, provided a brief overview of progress on the State Water Plan to date. This overview included a summary of the comments received from the SAG on the draft climate and water resources chapter of the State Water Plan. Nicole began by thanking the SAG members who provided comments. The comments received ranged from big picture view to very detail oriented. The way some comments included context, or suggested language, or included some other explanation was very helpful. All comments were addressed and it was noted if a comment would be better addressed in upcoming chapters. The main thing that changed in the climate section was the addition of citations. There were several comments about citations, so we bolstered the citations. While addressing comments we had to limit getting into more regional/local details, but some additional information and clarification were added. In the water resources section, we added a short conjunctive management description, updated some references, made some terminology clearer and more consistent, and incorporated additional evaporation data.

Nicole provided an update on the progress of other chapters. For the Water Use chapter, the 2021 statewide pumpage data is being collated. Some individual basins already have the 2021 data posted on our website, but the 2021 statewide pumpage data will fill some of the data gaps. Also hoping that some interesting statistics focused on agriculture use data research will be available from Desert Research Institute (DRI) for use in the Water Use chapter. Bob Zeyer, NDWR, is beginning to draft the text for the Supply and Demand Strategies chapter. To inform the Issues and Recommendations chapter a series of stakeholder meetings and upcoming workshops are being coordinated to provide valuable input that can be refined for the plan.

Kim Rigdon, Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission/Western Regional Water Commission, thanked Nicole for considering the comment about conjunctive management and including a definition in the draft chapter. She thought Nicole did a great job.

7. STATE WATER PLAN ACTIVITIES

Chair Bishop, NDWR, discussed upcoming activities related to the update of the State Water Plan. Provided an overview of efforts to coordinate a facilitated State Water Plan Workshop Series being planned for Fall 2024. The four meetings in the workshop series will be smaller groups of stakeholders focused on a specific topic. The next SAG meeting is potentially to be held in Winter 2024/2025. A Doodle Poll will be sent out. Also, we have been exploring potential funding sources to support plan development. Specifically, we are seeking funding to support the development of projections for population and economic growth and water use based on a range of projections.

Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority/Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, asked to hear more about the need for projections and what the options might be. He asked if we were looking to bring in a consultant or to partner with another agency? Chair Bishop, NDWR, replied that we were considering the possibility of consultants, universities, or research institutes. Jeff mentioned that we had talked recently about the county plans and that projections were one of the issues for the development of the county plans too. If we are pursuing funding for projections for the state plan, Jeff suggested considering if there was room to include assistance for the county plans as well. Chair Bishop, NDWR, suggested following up on this request as it would be beneficial to consider the county plans as well.

Zane Marshall, Southern Nevada Water Authority, commented that he liked the format of the workshops as presented. Zane likes the smaller groups because we will probably get more granular feedback. He believes it's a good approach.

Laurel Saito, The Nature Conservancy, agrees with Zane Marshall that she likes the workshop approach. Laurel asked if we were planning on having all the workshops at the same location or were we planning on moving around the state? Chair Bishop, NDWR, replied that we were initially planning on having all the workshops in Reno or Carson City. We are still leaning in that direction, but we are considering having one workshop in southern Nevada depending on availability. No decisions have been made yet because we still need to determine everyone's availability.

Ed James, Carson Water Subconservancy District, stated he also likes the idea of the workshops. Ed had questions about NDWR staff assigning stakeholders to attend workshops because all the workshop themes are relevant to the Carson Water Subconservancy District. Chair Bishop, NDWR, replied that everyone would have the opportunity to attend a couple workshops based on their availability and interests. Chair Bishop, NDWR, reminded the SAG that everyone would have the opportunity to provide comments during the workshop report-outs too.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Bishop, NDWR, requested public comment. There was no public comment.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bishop, NDWR, asked for a motion to adjourn. Laurel Saito, The Nature Conservancy, moved to adjourn; Dave Baker, Nevada Cattlemen's Association, seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:32 pm PT.