MINUTES
of the
WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue
Seattle, Washington
June 7, 2012

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The Water Resources Committee meeting of the Western States Water Council was called to order by Committee Chair Jennifer Gimbel at 8:00 a.m. Those in attendance were as follows:

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

ALASKA	--
ARIZONA	--
CALIFORNIA	Jeanine Jones Betty H. Olson
COLORADO	Jennifer Gimbel Dick Wolfe
IDAHO	Jerry Rigby John Simpson
KANSAS	David Barfield
MONTANA	Tim Davis (via phone)
NEBRASKA	Brian Dunnigan
NEVADA	Roland Westergard
NEW MEXICO	Scott Verhines Maria O'Brien DL Sanders
NORTH DAKOTA	Todd Sando
OKLAHOMA	J.D. Strong
OREGON	Phil Ward
SOUTH DAKOTA	Garland Erbele
TEXAS	Weir Labatt Carlos Rubinstein

UTAH	Norm Johnson
WASHINGTON	Maia Bellon Stephen Bernath
WYOMING	Pat Tyrrell Sue Lowry

WestFAST MEMBERS

Dwane Young, Federal Liaison, SLC, UT
Jean Thomas, USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC
Becky Fulkerson, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, DC
Mike Norris, USGS, Reston, VA

GUESTS

Jim Davenport, JHDavenport, LLC, Buena, WA
Vince Tidwell, Sandia National Lab, Albuquerque, NM
Curtis Seaton, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Austin, TX
Herman Settemeyer, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Austin, TX
Robert Mace, Texas Water Development Board, Austin, TX
Dave Mitamura, Texas Water Development Board, Austin, TX
Dave Tuthill, Idaho Water Engineering for Idaho National Lab, Boise, ID
Rich Rankin, Idaho National Lab, Mountain West Water Institute, Idaho Falls, ID
Bret Bruce, USGS, Rocky Mountain Area Office, Denver, CO
Tony Morse, Spatial Analysis Group, Boise, ID
Buck Smith, Washington Water Resources Program, Bellevue, WA
Rick Gold, CDM Smith, SLC, UT
Tom Hicks, Resource Renewal Institute, San Francisco, CA
Lee Koss, Washington (via phone)
Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting, Yakima, WA

STAFF

Tony Willardson, Executive Director
Sara Larsen, Water Data Exchange Program Manager
Nathan Bracken, Legal Counsel
Cheryl Redding, Office Manager

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jennifer Gimbel welcomed members to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held March 15, 2012 in Washington, D.C. were moved for approval by Weir Labatt. Scott Verhines seconded the motion. There were no changes and the minutes were unanimously approved.

PROPOSED AND SUNSETTING POSITIONS/RESOLUTIONS

A. Proposed Positions

Rural Water Projects Completion Act

The Act would dedicate $80 million for the completion of already authorized rural water projects. The bill estimates that it will take $11 billion at present appropriations rates to complete these project and that dedicating fund to expedite completion will save some $7 billion. Senator Bingaman's staff would appreciate our support. Bingaman would likely reference our support in his introductory statements. The bill would use the Reclamation Fund as the source of the money.

Scott Verhines: These are projects that are authorized and in some stage of construction. This is something that proponents in New Mexico are working on. The Rural Water Supply Act of 2005 authorized an assessment of rural water needs, and contemplated Congress would then authorize these projects. However, there are already several projects that Congress has authorized. What's happening is that it will cost billions more to complete them, if we fund them at the current levels. At current funding levels, it will cost $1.4BM over 11 years to complete some of these projects in New Mexico. Senator Bingaman would like to get these projects completed and get them off the books. In New Mexico, the state has already leveraged funds.

Jennifer Gimbel: I understand the reason for tapping the Reclamation Fund, but will they have to take away $80 million from someone else to offset this money?

DL Sanders: I spoke with Tanya Trujillo, and yes, they will have to find the offset. It's not "pay go," it's more "cut go." Congress will have to take funds away from other areas.

Tony Willardson: It's basically the same principle as with the Indian water rights settlement fund, but that was authorized before off sets were required, and once it is triggered in the future, money will be automatically transferred and it would not require further appropriation.

Garland Erbele: I'll echo Scott's comments. In South Dakota, we have a rural water project that has been under construction for 10 years. The Administration proposed zero funding this year, but mithey eventually got $5million. The project has essentially been held in place. It costs more money to complete these projects later. Getting some dedicated funding to wrap these projects up would save a lot of money in the long run.

Tony Willardson: The unobligated balance in the Reclamation Fund is about $10 billion, with about $2 billion in revenues each year, but appropriations from the fund are only about $1 billion each year.

Scott Verhines: These are all projects that have been vetted. There is a federal commitment. The new bill tried to honor this commitment.

Jeanine Jones moved approval of the position, and Carlos Rubinstein seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

2012 WSWC Water Vision and Principles

Weir commented that the Council has been working on an effort to create a "water vision" for about two years. In Idaho Falls, a vision on water was adopted as an internal document on Oct 7, 2011.

A reworked document was laid out in Washington, D.C. on March 15, 2012 in which Tony included the five principles from the October 2011 document, and supplemented them with additional bullets, including items from the Western Governors' Association's Enlibra Principles, as well as items for the 2012 WGA Water Report, which have also been incorporated into the WSWC FY2012-2013 work plan.

Weir said he would like to continue to use the "water vision" as adopted in Idaho Falls in October 2011, and then allow Tony to use the ideas in the marked-up version in preparing the next WGA water report. If you have objections, then you need to let Tony know. If you do not contact him, then Tony has a green light to go ahead.

Pat Tyrrell: I suggest we retain the vision document as adopted in Idaho Falls. Let's call the other document something else, such as a guidance document. It will benefit us in the future to have the vision. However, we don't want it to balloon into something that's so large it becomes unworkable. We pared it down in Idaho Falls to five bullets to add clarity. We can have a separate document that we call a guidance document for the WSWC work plans and the WGA Water Report.

Tony Willardson: The October 7, 2011 document was adopted as an internal document. The WGA has not acted on the vision we adopted last October. Therefore, we do not have an external policy document. The WGA's current policy is expressed in two water resolutions adopted in June 2011, which the WSWC helped develop. The Council can adopt the October 2011 document at this meeting, since it was included in the 30-day notice. It's important that we have something that we present as an external policy.

JD Strong: Now I'm confused about whether both documents are external policy documents. Is one external and the other an internal position? What's the point of making them separate if we need to make both external?

Pay Tyrrell explained some of the history behind the documents.

Maria O'Brien: The marked-up version actually strikes some language. To have two documents would be confusing. I agree that the clarity of the shorter document is helpful, but it would be confusing to have two.

Jennifer Gimbel: Is this a formatting issue? The one page document would hit home a lot more.

JD Strong: There are some changes that modify the original.

Tony Willardson: Most of that is reformatting, and doesn't make substantive changes, but there are suggested additions.

Maria O'Brien: I think this could at a minimum create confusion. I think it would create confusion to someone outside the Council. In terms of the formatting, I think the new document could be approved, but not as an external document.

DL Sanders: I agree with Pat.

Todd Sando: Regarding the additional references to tribal water rights, I would have some issues with it, and I know that my governor's office would have some issues with it.

Jennifer Gimbel: We should officially adopt the one-page vision statement taken in Idaho Falls as our position.

Weir Labatt: I withdraw my motion.

Phil Ward: I move that we adopt the October 7, 2011 position as external policy with instructions to staff to develop a follow up position.

Both JD Strong and Carlos Rubinstein seconded the motion. It was approved by the Committee.

B. Sunsetting Positions

Position #315, regarding the Sustainable Watershed Planning Act will sunset, and the Executive Committee approved this action during their conference call.

Position #316 will be handled by the Water Quality Committee.

Position #317, regarding USBR's Field Services Program and the Bridging the Headgate Partnership, of which the Council was a member, will sunset. There were no objections to having this sunset.

Position #318, with respect to federal Principles and Guidelines (P&Gs) for federal water projects and programs, would also sunset as was determined by the Executive Committee. Although Jennifer noted that once the P&Gs come out of the Office of Management and Budget, we will likely have something to say.

Position #319 laying out earlier principles related to a Shared Vision will also sunset. It was replaced by Position #323 which is our current policy and will remain so for another year. No action on #323 is needed.

WSWC WATER VISION AND 2012 WGA WATER REPORT

This item was not revisited as the discussion held during the proposed positions covered the material.

WATER USE DATA EXCHANGE REPORT

Sara Larsen addressed Council members and noted that the name of the project is in flux. She began with asking for Council members to help create a catchy acronym.

Sara noted that a lot of progress has been made on outreach for the project. Sara and Dwane have now visited 8 of the 11 states they need to visit. Plans are underway to visit a few more states in the next few months. Information on the status of project development is contained under Tab I in the briefing books.

The glossary of terms will help to clarify some of the semantic differences between the states. Several state surveys have not been turned in yet. This data is needed in order to complete the report.

Many important issues have been identified through the visits Sara and Dwane have made with the states. They have determined that it would be nice if they could get to an 8-digit HUC data level, if possible. USGS is hoping to drill down to the 12-digit HUC scale level.

Sara asked: How do we remedy the spatial and temporal disparity between the datasets? How do we get to something that will be more seamless? We could have a portal that shows the state data as it is and contains "disclaimers." Or we could take some steps working toward a more consistent methodology and incorporate additional state information as it becomes available.

Sara next described what a Central Portal will look like, and a visual depiction is online at: http://www.westgov.org/wswc/169 council meeting – wa/WADE Summer Conference Update.pdf.

Sara and Dwane have been working with WGA and ESRI in developing the dataset. Tom Iseman framed this as ways that water is being used in the West. Sara expressed the hope that Council members would feel a bit excited about this project.

Questions

DL Sanders: I am still perplexed about why we are doing this. I cannot get excited about it. What are people going to do with the information? What is the benefit to our state?

Sara Larsen: We hope in the long run it will free up some of your staff from having to answer questions about some of this information. The goal is to make state data more accessible in the future.

DL Sanders: There are legal complications.

Jennifer Gimbel: Information is available in many different formats and, to me, the benefit is that the states are providing the data, and we are providing what we want others to be able to find.

Tony Willardson: The funding for this effort is coming from the WGA/Department of Energy (DOE) project. The goal is to use this data to update the Sandia effort to characterize water availability to meet energy demands. One of the items we hope to refine is consumptive use. Most states don't have consumptive use information. There is no comprehensive summary available anywhere at this time. Also, the governors want to have control of the data and over the message. There are different scales. I

just spent time in Oklahoma with the Governor and others and they asked me where to find information. There is no really consistent standard or metric for measuring consumptive water use. We won't be there on this first step. The Council is hoping we can set the standard and maintain control over the message.

Betty Olson: I have a concern about availability numbers. If the states are defining availability differently, what happens if someone plucks the availability information and uses it in other states? I would like to have a different standard.

Tony Willardson: We want to be able to provide a standard for measuring water use, similar to what the U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) uses, but they don't measure consumptive use. From the supply side, we have the USGS numbers. We will brand things ourselves.

Dwane Young: I agree. The methodology and design are key. Any data can be misused – and that is simply a reality. People don't misuse data as often as you'd think, because they misuse it once, and they learn. The data must be well documented.

JD Strong: I went through a similar exercise with the WGA Wildlife Corridors effort. This project parallels that effort. With respect to the Wildlife Corridors, we came up with a product that we could all endorse. There may be some things that cause us heartache, and we may determine that we do not wish those things to be included.

Jeanine Jones: I'm worried that this has more detriments to the State of California than benefits because of the potential for people to misuse the data, as well as the demands on staff. Our water use program is horribly underfunded. Not everyone is on board with this effort.

Tony Willardson: Part of the USGS effort is to assist the states through their Water Census. They have suggested they may be able to provide some resources in the form of state grants. As a region, doing this collectively, we might be able to make a unified proposal to obtain funding to help us develop this.

Water Resources Committee Chair Jennifer Gimbel suggested that those with angst about the project should contact members of the Subcommittee, and work together with them to resolve concerns.

WGA/WSWC SANDIA METRIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Tony Willardson and Sara Larsen provided the update, while Vince Tidwell of Sandia National Lab listened to the presentation and provided comments via teleconference.

Tony provided an overview of the project and identified the different transmission planning areas. This effort is primarily to provide input to the Western Electricity Coordinating Council's (WECC) 20-year plan. WECC and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) are conducting long-range (20 years) transmission planning studies that generally consider siting new power plants and related needs for new transmission capacity. This effort is a high-level, long-term analysis to provide relative and consistent measures of the availability of water and its cost throughout the western United States at roughly an 8-digit hydrologic unit code (HUC) level. This is the long-term planning tool.

A step down from this is WECC's 10-year planning process, which is looking at plants that will come online in the next 10 years. As part of this, they are looking at the impacts of drought and increasing renewable energy portfolios. The WSWC helps provide advice with respect to policy issues. They are looking at different fuel types and resources.

Sara Larsen addressed the development of the metrics, which were estimated based on available information. Sandia focused on withdrawals and estimated consumption, using various assumptions. The project will only cover data for states within the WECC and ERCOT service area footprint.

Sara's power point presentation also discussed the "unappropriated water" metrics, and is online at: http://www.westgov.org/wswc/169 council meeting-wa/2012 Sandia Metric presentation2.pdf.

For the "appropriated water" metric, data are gathered from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's census. Sandia limited the estimated conversion of agricultural water to energy uses to 5% of the irrigated area within a watershed. The cost metric is based on reported water rights transfer data printed in the *Water Strategist*. The appropriated water cost is aggregated.

Potable groundwater is another water availability metric. The recharge values are based on USGS estimated water use and state data. Capital costs include well field installation and operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, including electricity to pump the water from the average depth reported at the well. There are many basins closed to further groundwater development.

The wastewater availability metric is derived from wastewater that can be reused. Capital costs include treatment plants if needed and plant-to-plant piping based on land use density. O&M costs include labor, electricity, and treatment consumables. Sandia also determined whether the plants were closer to ephemeral streams or intermittent streams.

The brackish groundwater metric is a volume estimate of available brackish water. Capital costs including well field and treatment plant construction (at 5million gallons per day or MGD). O&M costs include labor, brine disposal, electricity, and treatment consumables.

A slide showed a map depicting the availability of water for energy power generation by 2030. There are some areas in the West that lack sufficient water for power production to meet electric demand, but surprisingly many areas do have water available.

Sandia's team will continue to refine the metrics. They will also identify watersheds where water resources impact sensitive aquatic and riparian habitat. They will evaluate climate vulnerability in select basins and undertake a survey of potential new demands by shale gas and biofuel development. They hope to develop a user interface to access, view, and explore all the collected data.

Questions

Scott Verhines: Can you describe the delta demand (competition factor)?

Vince Tidwell: We used the projected overall decrease. If there was an overall negative, then we zeroed it out. We worked with each state to collect information from water plans for information on project

water use. We used the state data to project where the growth in demand would be. We started with the cheapest water, and looked at it until it was exhausted.

DL Sanders: You mentioned something about the groundwater metric excluding anything greater than a 40 foot drop over some period of record.

Vince Tidwell: It is based on different well data that USGS is gathering. We calculated a deficit between pumping and recharge. It varies from well to well, and varies over time. It is historic.

Stephen Bernath: EPA's "PCS" database for wastewater in Washington is not accurate. The state can provide better data.

Dwane Young: The EPA clean watershed data is good.

Robert Mace: When you show "unappropriated" water for Texas, it may be appropriate to call it "firm water with infrastructure" for purposes of water availability.

Vince described how they calculated Texas' information.

Robert Mace: (Asked something and then Tony repeated it for Vince.)

Vince Tidwell: We have projects on the books to add the "firm water" back into our estimates. Vince suggested anyone could email him with questions.

LANDSAT THERMAL IMAGING AND WATER MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS

Tony Willardson showed a picture of the thermal imager to indicate the size of the payload. Landsat 8 will not have nearly the fuel capacity nor the redundancy that Landsat 5 had, which means that it will probably not last as long. Thus, there is a need to support Landsat 9 to ensure data continuity. Landsat 8 will be launched on the large Atlas rocket. Other satellites that failed were launched on smaller rockets. USGS is trying to fix the "MSS" component for this summer, but the thermal imager is dead.

Garland Erbele asked if Landsat 5 will be fired up for the summer season. Tony responded that the Landsat 5 thermal imager is dead.

Tony Morse talked about one other application that goes on with the thermal imager. He showed a slide of irrigation wells on the Eastern Snake Plain. He also showed a slide that indicated pumpage for crops from power meter data. The cost for the data from the power meter is $119 per well. To get the data from the METRIC process, the cost is $32 per field. Geospatial technology may not save you time, or money, as it opens up a huge amount of information for new applications. There are many things that can be done, that you couldn't do before. There are also societal benefits. It will help us make better decisions, and do better work. The whole reason to use the geospatial technology with the water data is to do better work.

Questions

Pat Tyrrell had a question about the terms on the slide.

Tony Willardson: How accurate are the Landsat measurements?

Tony Morse: They are accurate within about 5%.

Robert Mace: What assumptions would we have to revisit to port this to the High Plains?

Tony Morse: Nothing. It ports to the High Plains the same as in Idaho. The model does not care about what the vegetation or crop is.

Tony Willardson: There are a couple of limitations, one of which is clouds. Other limitations include mountains, different orographics, etc.

Tony Morse: All of the other variables are implicit in the models.

FY 2013 FEDERAL WATER DATA PROGRAMS

Tony Willardson referenced the document under Tab N in the briefing book, and reviewed the spending on water data programs of interest to the Council.

Sue Lowry commented on discussions the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) has held with Director Marsha McNutt with respect to the USGS budget. The Appropriations Committee asked ICWP to provide them with information. ICWP put together a one-pager that was given to the staff.

Also of note, Melanie Stansbury, the new OMB analyst, asked what is the appropriate role for government in water data collection efforts? About 10 organizations (known as the "stream team") have come together to try to gather information to respond to this question. A White Paper is in draft form right now, and will be delivered in about a week. ICWP will be seeking signers from other organizations.

WASHINGTON WATER RESOURCES PROGRAM ISSUES

Maia Bellon expressed her thanks for the Council coming to the State of Washington. She gave a brief self-introduction, and acknowledged Buck Smith, Barbara Munson, and Stephen Bernath. Maia said that as of July 1, Washington hopes to become a full member of the Council.

Maia noted that the Department of Ecology director is appointed by the governor. The Director runs ten programs. The program managers run the programs. Maia was hired by Ecology Director Ted Sturdevant as the Water Resources Program Manager. At the present time, Washington representatives to the WSWC can only attend Council meetings hosted in Washington due to an out-of-state travel ban.

The State of Washington's total General Fund balance is about $31 billion. The latest projections show a $891 million shortfall in the state. This translates to a $2-3 million in cuts to the Department of Ecology's budget. The next revenue forecast is expected on June 20, 2012.

The state is still experiencing a bad downward economic trend. Washington was one of the last states to feel the downtrend, and they will be one of the last states to pull out of it. They are watching with concern the potential European financial crisis. The Water Resources Program is 98% dependent upon the General Fund for appropriations with some licensing and application fee revenues.

For the Fiscal Year 2007-09 biennium, the water resources program was at $42million. For the current 2011-13 biennium, they are at $35 million – a $7 million reduction. Some 125 employees run the entire program. The program is down 40 FTEs right now, under dwindling resources.

One way they are trying to deal with these cuts, is to provide an analysis of how things are operated and funded. They opened up their books to explain what the staff does, what services they provide, etc. They brought one of the most controversial water reform bills ever to the legislature. There was a robust dialogue, but the bill did not pass. A big piece was to be fully funded programs with cost recovery provisions for work they did to act on permits. They ended up getting half-way with the user community. Through this process, the program gained a lot of respect. Although the bill was not passed, it definitely provided a good education about many of the things the water program is doing. They have performance measures with penalties for underperformance, and need to make 500 permit decisions or receive a $500,000 cut.

Maia also mentioned they are trying to wrap up the Yakima Basin adjudication, and re dealing with the State of Idaho.

With respect to GIS information, Washington has put at least 50% of their state map online.

Washington is launching a program on the Yakima Groundwater Basin applications. It will be the most comprehensive groundwater study done to date. They will also process some 10,000 ground water applications in the area, and some involve conflicts with Yakima Basin users and the Yakima tribe.

The staff has gone six years without a raise.

INNOVATIVE AUTOMATED IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGIES/EFFICIENCES IN US AND AUSTRALIA

Trevor Boomstra from Rubicon addressed the Council. Rubicon was founded in Australia by a group of agricultural engineers to help during a drought and assist in developing water policy.

Rubicon has been driving reform in water for 15-20 years in Australia, and also has a few offices in the United States The province of Victoria has endured a long, extreme drought. A lot of policy and technical work has been done.

Rubicon worked with Victoria to address their drought challenges. Water use in Victoria is very similar to that in the United States, or more particularly in the western U.S.

Mr. Boomstra showed a video of an automated canal system in Victoria. The entire project is centrally managed. Victoria's reforms have created an allocation framework. About 500,000 acre-feet is traded each year. It is mainly all surface water. There is very limited groundwater. The Murray-Darling

Basin is the area most under threat. Much of the irrigation system was designed by a couple of brothers from California.

In 2006, the government began a plan for how to increase their water supply. They found modernizing their irrigation system was the key. The traditional methods lacked management control and resulted in significant inefficiencies.

The Rubicon system can identify high-loss sections in a canal. Some large-scale operations are achieving 90% application efficiency. Under these conditions, they get more consistent flows, which allows for more efficient planning. Farmers can now automate on-farm irrigation.

Mr. Boomstra mentioned that his company has installed some of the gates shown in the video in ten western states. There is often a large amount of water lost by irrigation delivery systems. Sometimes, the infrastructure is over 100 years old. Through investing in modernization, the state found 360 thousand acre feet of water per year could be saved by improving their irrigation system. Victoria now employs canal automation, involving both hardware and software.

WSWC/CA DWR EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS WORKSHOP

Last spring, the WSWC held a meeting on extreme weather. One thing for follow-up, was the WSWC adopted a position in support of the concept of a 21st Century system of observing major storms. At the meeting held in Idaho last fall, Council members heard some presentations on extreme weather. The WSWC is holding a workshop in San Diego from July 30 to August 1 to address subjects such as implementing a 21st century observing system for extreme precipitation in the West, improving seasonal climate forecasts and drought prediction, developing new approaches for flood frequency estimation, and improving extreme event preparedness and response. The event will bring together representatives from the research community, federal science programs and water agency managers to discuss ways to advance the usefulness of hydroclimate research and to put new methodologies into practice.

Another workshop will be held in San Diego on NIDIS reauthorization. What do we want to do "post-NIDIS?" The WGA and NOAA held a workshop in Seattle about six weeks ago, and discussed the fact that people are as interested in wet extremes as they are in dry extremes.

FY 2012-2013 WORK PLAN

Jennifer Gimbel asked everyone to look at the work plan with respect to staff time, as well as what sub-committees you may have an interest in joining. Tony reviewed each work plan item. Specifically, he asked for feedback on the Farm Bill item. Weir Labatt moved approval of the 2012-2013 Committee work plan as set forth under Tab E in the briefing book. Pat Tyrrell seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously accepted the work plan.

OTHER MATTERS

Tony went over the New Mexico letter recently sent to Secretaries Vilsack and Salazar regarding USDA and DOI trustee status claims on groundwater damages in New Mexico. This letter was adopted by the WGA.

Tony also reviewed legislation dealing with energy-water issues. These included H.R. 5827 and H.R. 5826 as introduced by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson from Texas. The Council may want to look at this legislation at the next meeting.