

Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council Non-AMA Groundwater Committee July 23, 2019 Kickoff Meeting - Summary

Time 10:00 am – 11:30 pm

Location Arizona Department of Water Resources

Attendees

- Co-chair **Jamie Kelley**, GWAICC Council Member, Mohave County Water Authority
- Co-chair Rep. **Gail Griffin**, Legislative District 14, designee for House Speaker Rusty Bowers, GWAICC Council Member
- **Wade Noble**, GWAICC Council Member, Yuma County Agriculture Water Coalition
- **Pat Graham**, GWAICC Council Member, The Nature Conservancy
- **Chris Udall**, GWAICC Council Member, Agribusiness and Water Council of Arizona
- **Tom Farley**, Arizona Assoc. of Realtors
- **Jeff Kros**, Water for Arizona Coalition
- **Chuck Podolak**, designee for Dave Roberts, GWAICC Council Member, SRP
- **Bill Garfield**, GWAICC Council Member, Arizona Water Company
- **Brad Hill**, City of Flagstaff Water Services
- **Kim Mitchell**, Western Resource Advocates, Water for Arizona Coalition
- **Chris Kuzdas**, Environmental Defense Fund, Water for Arizona Coalition
- **Holly Irwin**, La Paz County Board of Supervisors, District 3
- **Pam Muse**, designee for Lisa Atkins, GWAICC Council Member, AZ State Land Dept.
- **Stefanie Smallhouse**, GWAICC Council Member, Arizona Farm Bureau
- **Bas Aja**, GWAICC Council Member, Arizona Cattle Feeders
- **Rob Anderson**, Fennemore Craig, designee for Spencer Kamps, GWAICC Council Member, Central Arizona Home Builders Assoc.
- **Don Bills**, Coconino Plateau Water Advisory Council, Coconino Plateau Watershed Partnership
- **Ron Doba**, GWAICC Council Member, Northern Arizona Municipal Water Users Association
- **Doug Dunham**, EPCOR Water
- **Sandy Fabritz**, GWAICC Council Member, Freeport McMoRan
- Sen. **Lisa Otondo**, Legislative District 4, designee for Senate Minority Leader David Bradley, GWAICC Council Member

On the Phone

- **Kathy Ferris**, GWAICC Council Member
- Sen. **Sine Kerr**, Legislative District 13, designee for Senate President Karen Fann, GWAICC Council Member
- **Crystal Tulley Cordova**, Navajo Nation Water Management Branch
- Mayor **Jen Miles**, City of Kingman

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Co-chair Griffin opened the meeting and introduced herself as Rep. Gail Griffin, and Co-chair Kelley introduced herself as Jamie Kelley with the Mohave County Water Authority. Co-chair Griffin explained that she and Co-

chair Kelley developed the agenda. Co-chair Griffin described several handouts that she provided for the Committee. ADWR provided a map of the 22 Strategic Vision Planning Areas. The handouts prepared by Rep. Griffin included:

- “Accomplishments for Arizona Water”
- Information on Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCs), including a map of the NRCs and a flyer describing the AZ Assoc. of Conservation Districts
- Map of private land in Arizona
- City of Sierra Vista water conservation accomplishments
- Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network projects description

II. Define Goals / Committee Objectives

Co-chair Kelly read the three goals that are listed on the agenda and stated that the Co-chairs recognize the goals as only a starting place and noted that the Committee would have input.

A. To achieve a baseline understanding of Arizona groundwater in non-Active Management Areas.

Co-chair Kelley stated that they believe ADWR has information and can provide a presentation to the Committee by groundwater basin status in the planning areas using existing data for only non-AMA groundwater and nothing along the main-stem of the Colorado River.

B. To identify and develop voluntary alternatives to address groundwater issues by planning area while protecting individual property rights.

Co-chair Kelly stated she has participated recently in other committees and that Arizonans are very concerned that efforts should be voluntary.

C. To make recommendations to the full Council for Best Management Practices at the local level.

Co-chair Kelley read a statement submitted by Kathy Ferris, GWAICC Council Member, expressing her opinion that the committee should be able to discuss all potential measures to address groundwater issues. Ferris also expressed confusion about language on the agenda regarding private property rights. She noted that the Arizona Supreme Court determined that groundwater in Arizona belongs to the public and that its use may be regulated for the public good. Co-chair Kelley then asked for comments from any other committee members.

There was substantial discussion by many attendees about the Committee’s predetermined goals and specifically **Goal B**, regarding concerns over individual property rights, and voluntary versus mandatory alternatives to address groundwater issues. Many committee members shared specific issues and concerns from the areas, communities, and various water users which they represent. Some committee members were satisfied with the goals as presented while other members expressed a need for an additional goal that would allow the committee to discuss a wider range of alternatives to address groundwater issues. The Committee voted in favor of adding an additional goal, identified as “*Further discussion of issues that may be brought forward.*” Subsequent discussion by Sen. Otondo, GWAICC Council Member designee, about the wording of the new goal, resulted in the committee voting to add additional language to the goal that would allow for recommendations to the Council of issues discussed by the committee. Agreed-upon language: ***Goal D. Further discussion and recommendations of issues that may be brought forward.***

Regarding **Goal C**, there was general discussion led by Co-chair Griffin about Best Management Practices (BMPs) and water savings. She requested that the Committee members submit their BMPs for the Committee to compile for the purpose of educating the public.

III. Potential Topics for Consideration

- A. Approach by planning area**
- B. Quantify the number of nonexempt and exempt wells by planning area**
- C. Well monitoring or measurement**
- D. Forest management**
- E. Phreatophyte and invasive species management/removal**
- F. Education of the general public and groundwater users, and incentives for documented groundwater pumping reduction**
- G. Recharge methods**
- H. Groundwater transportation basins**

The Co-chairs, primarily Co-chair Griffin, led a brief discussion through each of the suggested potential topics listed above which might be further considered by the Committee to address groundwater supply concerns. There was participation by many committee members with substantial discussion of Items A and F.

Discussion of Item A resulted in ADWR Assistant Director Clint Chandler agreeing that ADWR would provide a “broad-brush” presentation on the status of groundwater in the State; including information about available groundwater models, estimates and methodology for groundwater recharge, and an overview of data available from ADWR.

Discussion of Item F included how the [general stream] adjudication might impact groundwater users, along with the need for education of the public about the adjudication process.

Co-chair Griffin noted, regarding Item H, that there is an AZ House Committee meeting next month concerning the Harquahala INA.

IV. Discuss Next Steps / Items for Next Meeting Agenda

There was no discussion of this item.

V. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Date

Co-chair Griffin informed the committee that there would be another meeting and the group will be notified after they [the Co-chairs] determine a date.

Public Comments were received from Rep. Regina Cobb, District 5 (La Paz and Mohave Counties), who agreed with the addition and expanding of Goal D. She stated that the La Paz County and Mohave County study committees (HB 2467) will look at options other than only an AMA and can bring recommendations forward. With respect to the idea of self-governing, they will be considering rural management areas, and agreeing that one size does not fit all as each county has its own issues.