

Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council (GWAICC), Non-AMA Groundwater Committee November 14, 2019 Meeting Summary

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Location: Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR)

I. Welcome and Introductions

The following Committee members, including GWAICC members or their designees, participated in person or remotely via WebEx or by calling in: Representative Gail Griffin, Co-Chair; Jamie Kelley, Mohave County Water Authority, Co-Chair; Chris Udall, Agri-Business and Water Council; Sandy Fabritz, Freeport Minerals; Don Bills, Coconino Plateau Water Advisory Council and Watershed Partnership; Christian Stumpf, The Nature Conservancy; Patrick Bray, Arizona Farm & Ranch Group and Arizona Beef Council; Spencer Kamps, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona; Michael Curtis, Attorney; Bas Aja, Arizona Cattle Feeders; Pam Muse (for Lisa Atkins), Arizona State Land Department; Ron Doba, Northern Arizona Municipal Water Users Association; Jocelyn Gibbon (for Chris Kuzdas), Water for Arizona Coalition; Jeff Kros, Arizona High Ground; Sharon Morris, SRP; Cole Libera, Dorn Policy Group, La Paz County; Senator Sine Kerr (for Senator Karen Fann); Larry Robertson; Wade Noble, Yuma County Agriculture Coalition; Mayor Jen Miles, Kingman; Supervisor Holly Irwin, La Paz County; Patrick Cunningham, Mohave County; Crystal Tulley-Cordova, Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources; Mark Lewis; David Brown; Doug Dunham, EPCOR; Kathleen Ferris, Kyl Center; Attending from ADWR were Natalie Mast, Carol Ward, Karen Modesto, Zack Richards.

II. Follow-up on questions relating to wells, received after September meeting presentation by ADWR on the status of groundwater

ADWR responded to questions from the Sept. 23, 2019, committee meeting regarding wells and the type of data available for exempt and non-exempt wells along with information about ADWR's Wells 55 Database and ADWR transducer wells. There were additional questions regarding data availability for non-exempt wells inside of AMAs versus non-exempt wells outside of AMAs, including the reporting of water use from non-exempt wells inside the AMAs versus outside of AMAs.

III. Prioritization of topics for consideration as discussed by the Council at the Sept. 12, 2019 GWAICC meeting

Co-Chair Kelley suggested a strategy to narrow down and prioritize the list of groundwater discussion topics [previously determined by the Committee and Council]. She suggested items 3, 4, and 6 concerning watershed management and recharge could be addressed under the Best Management Practices (BMP) discussion (or discussed in the Long-term Water Augmentation Committee). She also proposed combining Items 15 and 21 concerning "at-risk" basins and groundwater issues.

There was discussion of how to engage stakeholders from the planning areas in identifying and prioritizing issues of concern to them without creating an unwieldy process. The Committee decided to focus on the issues that have already been identified and to prioritize them through the existing Committee and Council structure.

The Committee participants and Co-Chairs identified the need for additional data as their priority. The focus of the topic would be to identify what data are missing, uncertain, outdated, or insufficient; what gaps in information need to be filled in to better inform local understanding and decisions. Several committee members offered to direct the Department staff to companies, federal agencies and others that could be sources of data. It was noted that there are also means to extrapolate data, but this, as well as collecting and compiling data, requires resources. Staff will compile what data are available, identify gaps, and present to the committee for discussion and further development.

Co-Chair Griffin requested that cities and counties to be contacted about their BMPs for the purpose of educating the Committee, and for the Committee to determine what is the best way to educate the public regarding BMPs. She emphasized the importance of engaging and educating the public, along with providing incentives for groundwater pumping reduction (Item 5 on the discussion topic list). Ms. Griffin recommended it be moved to the top of the list. Additional discussion by the participants about data available from ADWR resulted in Co-Chair Griffin recommending that the Committee set understanding ADWR's data as its No. 1 priority, and the education of the public about BMPs as its No. 2 priority.

Committee participants requested that ADWR and the Committee combine and organize the discussion topics. Co-Chair Kelley recommended making it the first priority.

There was brief discussion of the identification of at-risk basins. It was suggested that if local communities feel their basin is at risk, they should bring their concerns to ADWR and the Committee, as Mohave County and others have done. Alternatively, additional data may help identify which basins could be at risk.

IV. Discuss next steps to proceed with highest priority topics

ADWR will work on refining and clarifying some of the items on the list and organizing it for further discussion. Committee members may contact staff with additional input.

V. Best Management Practices update

ADWR has requested and is still accepting information about BMPs from participants and is in the process of developing a survey to solicit information on municipal, agricultural, commercial, institutional, and industrial BMPs. After the survey is complete and the information is compiled, a report will be provided to the Committee. Committee members are asked to reach out to their contacts to encourage them to submit information on their BMPs to ADWR staff.

VI. Future 2020 meeting dates

During the legislative session, future meetings will have to be on Fridays. For some members, the 3rd and last Fridays of each month are unavailable.

The next meeting for this Committee has been scheduled for Friday, February 7, 2020.