

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF GROUNDWATER
IN THE LAS VEGAS VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN

Meeting No. 72

9:30 A.M.

April 17, 2017

Las Vegas Valley Water District
1001 S. Valley View Blvd., Las Vegas, NV

Members Present:	Richard Avila Todd Croft John Guillory John Hiatt	Kumiko- Katie Moore Robert McLaughlin Trent Scarlett
Members Absent:	Stacey Lindburg	Kelli Ross
Also Present:	Andy Belanger Katie Horn	Jason Mace Natalia Londono-Arroyo

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Advisory Committee for Groundwater Management met for its 72nd meeting on April 17, 2017. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. and ended at 10:34 a.m. Natalia Londono-Arroyo, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), facilitated the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members from the public wishing to speak.

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 24, 2017 MEETING

Mr. Hiatt made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 24, 2017. The motion was approved.

RECEIVE UPDATES FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Hiatt stated that there was an article in the Las Vegas Review Journal on Southern Nevada's water system. The article focused on the notion that 90 percent of water comes from the Colorado River. Mr. Hiatt noted that an article focused on the 10 percent of groundwater resources would be helpful, and added that many people were unaware of groundwater and this was a vital resource.

Mr. Avila agreed with Mr. Hiatt's comments and noted that the article did not reference the percentage of water that was returned to the water system.

RECEIVE PRESENTATION ON PERMANENT ARTIFICIAL RECHARGE/GROUNDWATER MONITORING

Jason Mace, SNWA Water Resources, gave a presentation regarding permanent artificial recharge in the Las Vegas Valley.

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Mr. Mace provided an overview of the history of groundwater in the valley. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Mace focused on the permanent artificial recharge program (program) that was initiated in 1998. The program provided a tool for basin management and flexibility of well use in the aquifer.

The program has made substantial achievements. Between 1990 and present, the aquifer rose approximately 120-feet. The aquifer is making significant progress to reach predevelopment conditions. The total amount of Colorado river water recharged to date is 365,088 acre-feet. Mr. Mace also showed maps of several monitoring wells and how permanent recharge had stabilized the aquifer overtime.

Mr. Hiatt asked for clarification on the opinion of the Nevada Division of Water Resources (NDWR) in terms of the value of avoiding uneven subsidence in this valley versus recovering that water. Mr. Guillory responded that under Order No. 1176, the SNWA had recoverable recharge, which allowed the water could be recovered at some point. If in fact this were to happen, it would be something that the NDWR would have to address in the future.

Mr. Belanger indicated that the process by which the water would be recovered would occur over time and that NDWR had some mechanisms in place to ensure that there was an orderly withdrawal of the water. Mr. Belanger asked Mr. Guillory if he had more information on this for the committee. Mr. Guillory could not recall if Order No. 1176 addressed Mr. Belanger's issue.

Mr. Hiatt asked if NDWR considered if the rate of natural recharge in the system could be dropping due to climate changes. Mr. Guillory responded that staff reviews all studies and evaluated perennial yield. He added that perennial yield had not changed in the Las Vegas Valley since it was established many years ago.

Mr. Hiatt asked if Mr. Guillory was aware of anyone who was researching perennial yield or annual natural recharge. Mr. Guillory responded that the NDWR's hydrology department was researching this; however, he had not heard any discussions regarding changing the perennial yield.

Mr. Belanger noted that the Las Vegas Valley groundwater aquifer was in a good situation due to the recovery of water levels.

RECEIVE UPDATE ON GROUNDWATER BILLS UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE NEVADA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. Belanger provided an update of the bills that are currently active during the Nevada Legislative Session.

SB21 - This bill repeals the act of 2007, creating the Nye County Water District in Pahrump. After almost 10 years of this entity being in existence, some of the governing boards would like to see it go away. The SNWA did not take a position on this bill.

Mr. Belanger commented that the NDWR had three bills that were working their way through the legislative process:

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SB47 – This bill proposes several changes to state law regarding application for appropriation, declaration of forfeiture, temporary permits and wells. This bill had a couple of amendments added and includes the changes to the GMP that were reviewed by the Advisory Committee at the January Advisory Committee meeting.

SB51 – This bill repeals a section of water law and proposes changes to prove beneficial use, use for irrigation, the preparation and execution of surveys and maps, and the submission of statements of each source of water in a stream system to which a claimant claims a right.

SB74 – This is the Governor's drought resiliency bill which allows for the collection of rainwater without a water right. It also allows the NDWR to establish an advisory committee on water conservation and drought resiliency, and makes various changes to water conservation plans that municipalities are required to submit on a five-year process.

Mr. Belanger stated that a few other bills were not moving forward, including some that were associated with basin inventories and temporary use of water by mining.

SB271 and SB272 – Both bills are related to water from domestic wells. SB271 allows withdrawal from domestic wells for indoor domestic use and watering pets and livestock. This bill was approved with an amendment that requires meters for all new domestic wells.

SB272- This bill authorizes the NDWR to limit withdrawals of groundwater to ½ acre-foot of water per year for any domestic well not in existence on or before July 1, 2017 in any basin that had been designated as a critical management area or where the withdrawals of groundwater consistently exceeded the perennial yield of the basin.

Mr. Belanger also provided an update on several assembly bills:

AB298 – This bill establishes the process by which the NDWR would allow 3M plans on major or complex water projects. It also defines specific terms in water including perennial yield, environmental soundness, unappropriated water and existing rights.

Mr. Hiatt asked if AB298 was going to make any modifications to the definition of perennial yield. Mr. Belanger responded that for the first time, this bill would add a definition of perennial yield to the statute. At present time, the statute does not include a definition.

Mr. Hiatt asked if a holder of a permitted water right could ask for up to five years of non-use extension of that right and whether the NDWR would grant the request. Mr. Guillory responded that only municipalities could request up to five years on an extension to extend filing proof of beneficial use.

Mr. Hiatt asked if a holder of a permitted water right could elect to reduce their use temporarily and still retain their water right, or if they would be required to forfeit their water right after a period for non-use. Mr. Belanger noted that AB209 was designed to address that question.

Mr. Hiatt asked if AB209 was not approved, then what recourse would those water right holders have. Mr. Guillory reported that if a permit holder went five consecutive years without using water,

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then the water right would be subject to forfeiture, during that time, the permit holder could file an extension of time to prevent forfeiture and the NDWR would review and either grant or deny the request on a year to year basis.

Mr. Hiatt noted that the reason for his questions were that he was aware of some golf courses in Pahrump that had shut down. The golf course owners said that they had a water right and were basically having to pump water into the ground to avoid losing the water right.

The committee had no further questions or comments on this item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members from the public wishing to speak.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.