

**MINUTES  
of the  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
KwaTaqNuk Resort-Casino  
Polson, Montana  
August 4, 2022**

**Table of Contents**

Welcome and Introductions .....	3
Approval of Minutes .....	3
Report on Budget and Finances .....	3
Sunsetting Policies .....	13
Executive Director’s Report/WSWC Activities and Events.....	13
Future WSWC Meetings.....	15
Council Membership Update .....	15
Draft FY2022-2023 Executive Committee Work Plan.....	16
Sunsetting Postions for 2022 Fall Meetings .....	16
Other Matters .....	16

**MINUTES  
of the  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
KwaTaqNuk Resort-Casino  
Polson, Montana  
August 4, 2022**

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT**

Italics indicates virtual attendance.

<b>ALASKA</b>	Emma Pokon
<b>ARIZONA</b>	Amanda Long-Rodriguez
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	Jeanine Jones (virtually)
<b>COLORADO</b>	
<b>IDAHO</b>	Jerry Rigby
<b>KANSAS</b>	Earl Lewis
<b>MONTANA</b>	Anna Pakenham Stevenson
<b>NEBRASKA</b>	Tom Riley
<b>NEVADA</b>	Micheline Fairbank
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	Andrea Travnicek Jennifer Verleger
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	Sara Gibson
<b>OREGON</b>	
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>	Nakaila Steen
<b>TEXAS</b>	Jon Niermann
<b>UTAH</b>	

**WASHINGTON**

Mary Verner

**WYOMING**

Jeff Cowley

**STAFF**

Tony Willardson  
Michelle Bushman

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Jen Verleger, Chair of the Executive Committee, called the meeting to order and requested self introductions for those attending both in-person and virtually.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on April 6, in Crystal City, Virginia were moved for approval and the motion was seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**REPORT ON BUDGET AND FINANCES**

a. Alaska Full Membership

Tony: We're glad to have Alaska here and participating as a dues paying and voting member. They have already heard that we should be holding our meetings next summer in Alaska.

b. FY2021-22 Budget Status Report

Tony: For the biggest part of this meeting, I want to address the budget. I apologize, but I just sent an update email this morning, with a few changes. We have a lot more information now than even what we send out in the briefing materials, as far as what our budget is going to look like. The document shows our approved budget for the last fiscal year, and our financials for May. We do not yet have our June financials from our bookkeeper. We have estimated what our final expenses should be for FY 2022. I've also moved forward with splitting the numbers between our base WSWC budget and our Water Data Exchange (WaDE) budget. We have restricted funds for development of WaDE from our philanthropic supporters. I wanted to give you an idea of what that looks like as well.

c. WaDE Grant Status  
- IOW BHP & Moore Foundation Grants

- Water Foundation Grant
- USBR WaterSMART Applied Science Matching Grant

Tony: We have received about \$600,000 that was committed in the last fiscal year, and part of that just came in from the Water Foundation (WF). They gave us the money upfront, and we just have to explain how we spend it. We have a commitment of \$510,000 over two years. It is a one time contribution. We received \$255,000 in April and another 255,000 that we will receive after the first of the next year.

We have received around \$246,900 from the Moore Foundation in this fiscal year, and about \$57,000 through the BHP Foundation. Under both of those grants, we submit reimbursement requests for our expenses. We're still working on submitting our reimbursement request for the second quarter of this calendar year, and we will receive that money in this fiscal year.

It all requires some balancing as we have four different grants that we're administering related to WaDE. With the WF grant that we got in a lump sum up front, for this past fiscal year, our overall budget is \$222,000 in the black. Of course most of that money will be carried forward to meet our future WaDE expenses.

Also, regarding WaDE, I should add we did get a WaterSMART grant award through the Bureau of Reclamation for \$200,000 over two years. That was just finalized in May. We have not yet received any funds, but can include WaDE expenses as of April 1, 2022. We will be tapping those funds. It does take a long time to get through the federal grant process. Again, we're hoping to find something more permanent than trying to apply annually for other WaterSMART grants. So that has taken some time, but we now have all of those pieces in place. These grants will carry us through at least the next two years, but then we're going to be looking at additional sources of funding to support WaDE.

For the Committee's consideration and approval, our budget projections for FY 2023 are that our income will be a little over a million dollars. That does include the WaDE related funding. Our projected total expenditures may be \$100,000 less than that.

As I said, we have divided the budget between what we receive for WaDE and our core functions. As part of those WaDE grants, we do receive 10% of salary and benefits and some other expenses as overhead for the Council. About \$50,000-\$60,000 to support the Council's core functions will be coming from WaDE. That again is short term income. As you know, we have grant commitments through the next year or two. We've had discussions with the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) within Interior about a possible cooperative agreement(s) to support WaDE. Hopefully, we can find a more permanent source of revenue to maintain the WaDE work that we're doing, which we think is as valuable for the federal agencies as it is for the Council and Council members.

Yesterday, some of you participated in the "hands on" demonstration of WaDE's Western

States Water Data Access and Analysis Tool (WestDAAT). We have the water rights portion completed, though there may be more features coming. As I mentioned today, water rights information alone may not be all that useful until we can actually marry consumptive use with the water rights. I had asked that for the Upper Colorado River Basin, for example, how much water is there that is used under rights that predate the Colorado River Compact. Permitted diversions may be 100 times the flow of the Colorado River. Obviously, those are diversionary rights, and they don't represent consumptive uses. There are return flows that are used over and over again.

We're diverting much more water for agriculture in aggregate than any other water use, but much of that's just returning to the river or stream to be diverted again. So trying to quantify that use in the Upper Colorado River Basin requires calculating consumptive use or actual depletions. The upper basin states have just reached agreement between the four states as to how to uniformly measure those depletions. So we still have a long ways to go.

#### d. FY2022-23 Budget Discussion

Tony: As far as the proposed budget, without WaDE funding, we would not have the \$60,000 or so accruing as grant overhead for the Council's budget, so subtract that from our estimated \$100,000 surplus we think we might have at the end of FY2023.

The other important reason for our projected surplus relates to Cheryl's retirement. Cheryl says hello to everyone! Cheryl retired as our office manager in June after 35 years. Julie Groat is assuming some of her responsibilities, but we have also hired a contractor to handle some of the financial tracking and reporting. We're still sorting out what we will need as far as permanent staff and possible contractors.

We now have a contractual arrangement with Erica Gaddis, former Director of the Utah's DEQ Division of Water Quality. She's expressed an interest in continuing that arrangement for some time, but likely no more than two years. She has a couple of teenagers that she wants to get out of school before she takes on another full time position, which is part of the reason why she left her last position. She appreciates both the flexibility and the variety of her work as a contractor for the Council. She has been able to bring a lot of experience to the Council.

As you know, we had a full time policy analyst, Jessica Reimer, but she left last year, to pursue a Ph.D. We have not filled that position. So we could spend any budget surplus on additional staff assistance, whether it's permanent staff or assistance from contractors.

I would mention too, that obviously, our travel budget has been de minimis with COVID. We expect that we may not travel as much as we have in the past. I'm looking at maybe about a \$30,000 travel budget this year for the Council's core functions, and maybe \$15,000 for WaDE. We have at times in the past had a \$50,000-\$60,000 travel budget. I think that will be reduced because of the opportunity to do many more meetings virtually.

There are a other couple of other budget anomalies. Our telephone expense, as shown for the

past year, was way down, because apparently our provider overcharged us and we got a substantial credit. So we only spent about \$350 on telephone expenses last year, but that will increase and is only a fraction of what I have budgeted.

I'm asking for the Committee's approval of the budget with a caveat, recognizing that the budget is a working tool, that gives the Management Subcommittee authority to make changes in the future.

e. Dues

Tony: At the last meeting, we did agree we would discuss the possibility of a dues increase. You'll recall that a couple of years ago, we increased our dues. They'd been \$30,000 per state for a decade, and we considered raising them by 20%. We determined we would raise dues 10%. If we're going to look at hiring more staff and maybe adding another full-time policy person, I think we need to look at raising dues again by another \$3,000 per state. We'd have gone from \$30,000 a decade ago, to \$33,000 now, and up to \$36,000 – obviously, with the Committee's approval. That would bring in another \$54,000 assuming 18 dues-paying states. Hopefully, that would be sufficient to hire another policy person full time. To hire anyone with any sort of experience, with benefits, will likely cost at least about \$100,000 (for one FTE). I'd be happy to take any questions.

Mary Verner: Tony, regarding Cheryl's position, in particular, and your recruitment, you're currently trying to contract out some of her past work. Is the salary a huge impediment or is it just you do not have a recruitment pool, big recruitment pool, with the right skill set?

Tony: I think right now, we're trying to determine what skills we need. Cheryl did a lot of our financial tracking, not only with the grants, but with our pension. She was not thrilled with doing some of that work. We do have a bookkeeper, Allan Darrington, on retainer. Usually, when I asked Cheryl for financial information, she would respond, "I'll ask Allan." He has worked with for a long time, and he has his own way of doing things. We're looking to changing some of that to improve organizational efficiency.

With Allan, since he's not on site, we put our bills in his box and may wait a week or two for him to come in and pick them up, prepare checks and return them for signature in a week or two. If I had a income, expenses or budget question, it might take me a month to get that answer. Our new contractor now has access to his QuickBooks, or at least to a version of all of our accounts, so that if I have a question, she can immediately pull those up. We then periodically update the official books. I think it's going to facilitate a lot quicker action and may not take nearly as much time. I apparently have not been asking enough questions, because while I talked to her last, she said she's only spending about five hours a week responding to our requests.

Cheryl also handled our our travel, meetings and other things as well. She was only three-quarter time. I'm still trying to figure out how much Julie will be able to pick up and how much I will ask the contractor to do for us. I should have mentioned that Erica's commitment is about 15 to 20

hours a week. But that's been a tremendous help, particularly as we got ready for these meetings. I also have to apologize that we were a little slower getting briefing materials out.

Some staff have had some extended leave. Michelle was in Costa Rica for two weeks. Adel was in Palestine for three weeks. Erica was in France with her son. Also, I got COVID over the Fourth of July holiday. So we were stretched a little thin, even though we were working remotely even from Costa Rica, France, and Palestine.

At this point, we are still evaluating what we need as far as staff. Given this uncertainty I've been a little hesitant to make a commitment on hiring new staff.

I would mention to that we've been worked very closely with Jeanine Jones of seeking congressional support for funding improvements to sub-seasonal to seasonal (S2S) precipitation forecasting. The Council has been working on this for some time. It takes a significant commitment of staff resources, particularly for us. With a small staff over a two month period we've probably spent 60 to 70 hours contacting western senators and representatives.

In addition we've sponsored some S2S workshops, as well as setting up meetings with key Administration officials. WestFAST has been helpful there as well. Our federal liaison Heather Hoffman will end her detail with us at the end of the year. We'll be looking for a new federal liaison. That position is paid for by the federal agency from which the detailee comes.

In the briefing materials on page 49, you will find that we have eight states that have already paid their dues for the current fiscal year. We will send out a reminder for those that have not. Some states may have partially paid, since they share dues between different agencies.

Jon Nierman: The timing for a dues increase, at least from Texas' perspective, is not horrible. We actually have some money in the state budget. It sounds like a somewhat modest increase. You're not getting pushback from Texas on an increase.

Tony: Oil prices are higher in North Dakota and Wyoming, too! I have to ask Jeff if this would raise concerns, because I think you're on a biennial budget, and I don't know when your next biennium comes up.

Jeff Cowley: We just started July 1, but I think we can find it.

Jeanine Jones (virtually): I don't know if you guys can hear me, but I just wanted to chip in with a comment in support of an additional policy staffer. As Tony alluded to, we did spend a chunk of concentrated time on the S2S work and looking for funding. That was just a bare minimum amount of work actually that was needed to be successful. I have acquired some lobbyist resources that I have also dedicated to this cause, but obviously, S2S isn't the only thing that the Council is interested in. If we want to be more effective in working in D.C., particularly with regards to appropriations for things like, you know, snowpack data, and everything else, additional staff resources are sorely needed.

Tony: I would mention as well, that I've taken more of an oversight role with WaDE. I am spending probably at least 20 hours a month on WaDE, or a little over 10% of my time, and often more. In a quarter, that that usually adds up to at least 10 days. I'm hoping that I can have our new financial person take over some of that work.

Jon: How much of the time you're devoting WaDE can be covered by WaDE grant funds? Is it just 10% of the full amount?

Tony: We were billing for my time as well, in addition to our 10% overhead. Obviously that helps us defray our fixed costs. At this point, we're charging all Adel's time towards WaDE, as well as Ryan's time. He is our informatics specialist. So yes, the budget that I sent you this morning, does not include the time that I spend on WaDE.

Julie Pack: So I'm gonna be upfront with the other states about where Alaska stands in our membership, and also what that means for paying any increased dues. I think that, you know, we stepped away from Council for a little bit, in part because there was a sense that Alaska doesn't have a lot in common regarding many water issues with other western states. We have a lot of water, so a lot of the water rights issues are fundamentally different. So it has taken a lot of discussion and a lot of work to get us back in the Council. A lot of what it does that is really valuable to many of the member states isn't necessarily as relevant for us. So as we were experiencing our budget shortages, this was one of the things that fell off. The relative value just wasn't there for us. I am surprised to see that our dues are recorded as not being paid for this year. My understanding is that we had arranged for that after the DNR Budget Committee meeting. I'll follow up.

Tony: If we have received it, it may just not be recorded yet.

Julie: So I want to be frank and not make a commitment that I can't follow up on later, though \$3,000 doesn't seem like an extraordinary amount. I also just kind of recognize our presence here is a little bit tentative. As we kind of get back into the swing of the Council's work and meetings, we will re-evaluate our membership.

Tony: One option might be that we delay any dues increase to FY 2024 or FY2025, so as to give everyone sufficient notice to include it in your next fiscal year, or your next biennium. I don't know if there's anyone else on a different fiscal year plan.

Jeff: We are in the same boat. Given cost increases to get qualified personnel. It is what it is. I'm ok with the dues increase.

Jen: I have two comments and maybe this is more an Andrea thing, because she is the one that does the budgeting. I think it's important that we have a lot of lead time as far as when the dues increase is going to actually go into effect. We're going to need to budget and pay the money. I think several of us, only meet every other year. We're building budgets now, for basically two years out, when the money's going to be due. I don't think we can raise dues today and expect that to be paid next month



or even in the next year, from money that's already been appropriated. That's my one comment. We just simply need to be very cognizant of the budgeting cycle.

My second comment is I don't think we should raise dues just for the sake of raising dues. We don't need to stockpile other people's money. However, I think it is important to continually raise that dues slowly so that it is there when we're going to need it. I think we went too many years without raising dues, and I get, again, budgets get tight. It becomes a lot more problematic when you want to raise dues by \$3,000 instead of you know, \$1,000 here and \$1,000 there. It's kind of like the reverse of death by 1000 cuts. We need 1000 cuts in this situation in my opinion.

Julie Pack: More specifically, if we do add another policy analyst, do you have someone in mind? What would you've done specifically with that additional position?

Tony: Well, you know, we have the three working committees with work plans. We've been constrained in what we could do. As we discussed with the Water Resources Committee, there's been an interest expressed in looking again at groundwater management and recharge, and our states' statutes. We did a lot of work on that in the 90s. We also have been looking more at the energy and water nexus, and we heard what some of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) labs are doing now. Those are just a couple of areas.

We have also looked at working with the Open ET folks and seeing if we can't ingest that consumptive use data into WaDE. The dialogue is not just about Landsat data, but there are several different remote and on the ground observation networks that we support. Idaho has done a lot with consumptive use information and matching that to field boundaries and water rights to more tightly regulate actual water use. I think that's what we're going to see in the Upper Colorado River Basin. As was mentioned by Chris Brown, it's just going to become more and more of a challenge to meet water demands, unless we get a whole lot more snow. Without the Council's Landsat support in Congress, we likely would have lost the thermal infrared imager used for Open ET and by Idaho to measure and monitor water use remotely.

I think another position would allow us to do more work in the legislative arena. As has been pointed out at this meeting, there are eight different bills that are moving through the Congress with some sort of nexus with water. We are being asked to weigh in on a lot on different bills.

With the administration, there are a number of different issues. Obviously, Alaska, has had an interest for example in the rule defining Waters of the United States, which is going to continue to be an issue. The baseline may be reset by the Supreme Court, again, this fall. Then we'll go through another rulemaking all over again.

Interstate, international and interbasin water transfers are another issue. One thing I have said is I am going to retire before we start talking about a water pipeline from Twin Falls, Idaho to Lake Mead, or from the Yukon to the West. Some past proposals were actually part of the basis for the formation of the Council. We have done some work on interbasin transfers and more and more proposals to move water around the region or even the continent keep coming up. The only transfer

that I've seen that I would call interregional, between major river basins and between states is the Rio Chama project that diverts water from New Mexico's share of the Colorado River in the State of Colorado moves it to the Rio Grande basin. That's the only one that is between two states and two major river basins. It only works because it's New Mexico's water. They're just taking it from a different source and putting it into another stream. I'm sure you've all heard about proposals to move Mississippi River water west, via transfers to Colorado's Front Range, and then leaving more water on the West Slope to move downstream. I've said I know that will never work, because Coors won't change their mantra from beer made with pure Rocky Mountain spring water to muddy Mississippi River water! The point is major interregional water transfer schemes are still around.

Micheline Fairbanks: I have a couple of observations with regards to the policy analyst need. Tracking Congressional legislation and stuff is absolutely worth the investment, but also state legislation. Michelle's phenomenal but she's just one person and does, you know, have a life that's well outside of Western states Water Council. I agree with Jen that incremental increases with time to plan for those increases is imperative. On the policy analyst side of things, Jessica was doing a lot that was extremely helpful. As I'm kind of looking into the crystal ball, this is going to be a significant issue that's going to continue to consume a lot of time and energy to try to navigate.

I'm still not confident that we're settled with respect to, the United States Forest Service's federal reserved water rights claims, and that they are not actually going to go ahead and assert such claims. I still think that there's a probability that policy that they were throwing around a few years ago is going to rear its ugly head again. That's going to be a significant issue. Nevada doesn't have the most National Forest lands, but we have enough to make it concerning. I keep tracking some of those things.

There's still the ongoing issues with VR. Nevada has one significant VR facility, but it's still an issue.

I think having the ability for this organization to track these things, digging in to and analyzing issues, and then representing the states' positions on those particular issues is invaluable. I know, as an agency, we don't have the capacity to do it all. So having that kind of partnership is incredibly valuable. Having staff available to be able to devote that time, I think, is something that's important.

I guess the long and short of it is that I support the concept of retaining that additional position, and I support the concept of increasing dues. I think they go hand in hand. Like Jen said, I think having enough time to go ahead and plan, anticipate and have certainty as to the cost is key, at least for those of us like that are on a biannual, especially in budget cycle, as well just helps us make sure that we've got funds, and we're not trying to rob Peter to pay Paul.

Tony: I should point out as well that we do have some reserves in the neighborhood of about \$360,000. Our budget for the year from as far as the Council's side is \$667,000 this year, so our reserves would cover about six months expenditures at current levels. We could get by on the reserves that we have, with at least the commitment I think we have from Alaska for dues for one more year.

I would not foresee any issue if we approved the increase and made it effective in FY 25. Further, by FY2025, I probably will retire so the Council is going to have to replace me too!

I would just note that we have eight states that have already paid their dues for the current fiscal year. We will send out a reminder for those that have not. Some states may have partially paid, since they share dues between different agencies, member agencies.

Jeff: What about the idea of just considering some incremental increases? We're going to calculate your 2% for the next few years or five years. I get it, it really sucks, but maybe stops us from getting into the situation where we are not able to increase dues, but having that built into the budget consideration for the states may be helpful over time. I'd also like everyone suggest filling the policy analyst position. It's really important for me and my assistants to decide what we're going to dig into, because there's been so much that's come out of the federal government. Trying to keep up is a challenge. It's helpful to have had that information come through the Council.

Tony: I might add that before we hired Jessica, we had only two policy staffers for a long time. Historically, we had three, we went for a long time with just two of us. And now we are back to two, with the exception of WaDE staff, but again, that's separately funded and is soft money.

Micheline: Jessica made an observable contribution, not that you guys aren't doing an amazing job continuing, but you can tell that it helped.

Tony: Yes, Erica, has been a big help too over the last couple of months with the WOTUS workshop and paper. We would not have been able to do that without her.

Jen: So regarding Erica, does she have limited hours? Or is it her that's limiting her hours? Or does she want more hours?

Tony: About 15 to 20 hours a week is what she wants to commit

Jerry: Even though she's back, or because she's back from France?

Tony: She might be willing to do more. I've budgeted for her for the next year. She might be willing to do that for a couple of years. That, again, weighs into the balance. Do we continue to contract with her for maybe another year or two. We have not started looking for a person full time. Adel has his doctorate. Ryan has a master's degree. Michelle has her law degree. And Jessica had her master's degree and left us to pursue a doctorate degree. So I think that when we repost her position, it might be more expensive to attract a qualified candidate.

Jon: In terms of duties, I hear two proposals on the table. One is to approve an increase to be effective for FY2025. The other is to take an immediate interim incremental step, which might be inconsistent with some states needs to plan ahead. Neither is a problem from my perspective, but I think if every year it's gonna go up 2%, you would just build that in when you're doing your budget.

Jen: I think it's new. Yeah, like if every year it's gonna go up 2%, you would just build that in when you're doing your budget

Tony: We could tie it to the consumer price index, but then it's going to be 10% this year.

Laughter

Sara Gibson: I don't speak for DEQ who shares costs with us. They tend to have more money floating around than we do, but also this is new, and they pay five other entity's memberships. Also, we are losing our ranking U.S. Senate this year, and we certainly will be relying more on the Council for policy work, because we're not just going to be able to call the Senator's staff anymore. We could probably just assign money in the Water Board budget for DC help. I don't know if planning for a 3% increase years ahead is going to be very different than an incremental increase. I don't know that we want to commit to an incremental increase forever.

Mary Verner: I agree with Jon that there seem to be the two proposals. Washington State can afford the increase now. I do think we'd be better off if we plan this for our biennial cycle. I think all our states are probably on FY2025 as our next biennium. I don't like having to go request something in the supplemental budget year, just because every line item in supplemental budget gives the legislature more time to examine and ask questions. We certainly could justify the expense. But it just means a lot of work to get an extra \$3,000 approved in a budget. So it's better for me, if we just submit it with our biennial budget. Nobody pays that much attention to the line items in the Water Resources Program, general fund requests, they just say, "Okay, that looks reasonable or not," as opposed to me having to go back during a supplemental session and ask for an increase. So I like that we could do either one, because we happen to be in pretty good general fund shape this year. Right now, we're in our budget.

Jerry Rigby: In Idaho, it doesn't matter which year we're not going to do it.

Andrea: We can deal with a \$3,000 increase. Now, if you guys need it. I would rely on Tony to decide if you need it now or not.

Tony: We could definitely wait to FY2025. If we need to, we could dip into reserves. And some of that, again, is uncertain, as we will find out over the next few years where WaDE is going to be. That is another reason why we have tried to divide the budget. So it's clear what soft money we have that's committed to WaDE to meet our commitments there.

Micheline: Jen do you want a motion? Okay. So I would move to approve the budget as submitted by Tony, and to increase the dues by 2% or FY2025.

Tony: So that would be a \$660 increase in dues in two years.

After discussion the motion was amended.

Mary Verner seconded the amended motion.

Jen: We have a motion to approve the budget plan sent out this morning, and for a dues increase of \$3,000 increasing from \$33,000 to \$36,000 in FY2025. All right. All in favor say aye. Aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? One. Okay, the motion is approved.

### **SUNSETTING POLICIES**

As usual, the sunseting positions are addressed by the working committees.

Position No. 434 – Preservation of Radio Frequencies for Weather Forecasting/Water Management

Position No. 435 – Resiliency of Our Nation to the Impacts of Extreme Weather Events

Position No. 436 – Regarding Hydraulic Fracturing

Position No. 437 – Supporting Water Research Department of Energy National Laboratories

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT/WSWC ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

Tony Willardson reported that he had been on a 1500 mile road road trip from home to Boise, Idaho for the meetings of the Council of State Governments – West with state legislators, then to Coeur d’Alene, Idaho for the annual summer meetings of the Western Governors’ Association, then Polson for the Council meetings. Attending these meetings, proved to be very useful. The presentation in the Water Resources Committee by the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab on energy and water nexus was arranged with scientists I meet in Boise, and complemented consideration of our related sunseting position.

Obviously, the governor’s meetings are a opportunity to interact with the governor's and with their staff council. A last minute addition to the agenda was a drought session that included Mike Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, and Tanya Trujillo, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science. Both are members of the “Water Subcabinet” and long-time friends of the Council. Gloria Montano Greene, who addressed us in April, also spoke to the governors on the same panel. She is USDA’s Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area. Homer Wilkes, USDA’s Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, addressed the governors along with Randy Moore, Director of the U.S. Forest Service. I had a chance to chat with all of them, and raise issues of importance to the Council and reiterate our work with WestFAST.

I was also telling Jerry that I met the Canadian Consul overseeing the Columbia River Treaty negotiations. He was very open about things that they were working on with the United States to try to find some kind of accommodation addressing both countries interests.

Further, if at the written summary in the briefing materials, you'll see the number of different groups with which we collaboration. I would mentioned that I am now the new vice-chair of the

Internet of Water (IOW) Coalition for this next year, then I will be the chair for a year. IOW has a lot of support staff to help with those commitments. So I'm not anticipating that will be a huge burden. I now co-chair the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Executive Council along with representatives of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and USDA. Both these organizations look at us as a critical partners.

We're also pretty active with the American Water Resources Association, and have presented on WaDE and other topics. I've recently been asked to talk to the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies (NAFSMA) this next week in Park City, Utah. We do a lot of outreach and interaction with other interstate organizations, as well as with Congress and the administration. We're all familiar with the work that we do with WestFAST, and I think that's been particularly helpful. WestFAST is a unique organization and it's use is growing.

I think the only Trump Executive Order that President Biden did not receive recind that creating the Water Subcabinet! I think there's a continuing recognition through different Administrations of the importance of water resources. Because of our long standing nature, we've had close associations with Interior and other agency officials on both sides of the aisle. The Water Subcabinet is meeting on a regular basis. Andrea was involved with some of those workings in the last Administration

Andrea Travnicek: I think they're still trying to figure out their priorities, because I was talking with another counterpart last week on it. I think they are still trying to figure out how to move forward. I wasn't killed. It's still alive. There are a few of us that are looking through a report that the Water Subcabinet did put out, and you might want to just take a look at it too. There's about everything in there you could want, and from your state's perspective you may want to see some things continue to move forward. I don't think that higher level policymakers have been engaged.

Tony: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been very engaged, and the Department of Energy (DOE) was involved in the past, but has not been involved at all at this point.

Andrea: Yep, there's certain ones that are stepping up and others that are not.

Tony: Regarding WaDE, some of you know Brad Udall, a Senior Water and Climate Research Scientist/Scholar at Colorado State University. We presented a demonstration of our new Western States Water Data Access and Analysis Tool (WestDAAT) for him and a few other academics. His reaction was paraphrasing, "This is amazing. I had no idea how you got the states to do this. No one else could have done this." I think we have been able to do it not only because the work was initiated by the governors and with the governor's continuing support, but because of the support of all of you, as well as your as the staff. I think it really works and will provide important regional benefits. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has recommend states use our WaDE architecture for reporting water use. Part of reason for WaDE was to provide state data in one location, without federal agencies and others approaching you for your water use data for every new federal study, etc. We will try to keep that data updated, and are working with our states and our consultants to improve the tool. I think once the tool is actually available, we're going to see a lot of interest from a lot more folks. Brad

observed that Texas may not have a lot of interest in Idaho's water use, but obviously Washington, Oregon and Montana do. Similarly, along the Rio Grande between Texas and New Mexico, and among the seven Colorado River Basin States. Each state will be watching their own and other states' water use more closely.

### **FUTURE WSWC MEETINGS**

Jen: Our next Council meetings will be held Sulphur, Oklahoma, October 20 to 21st. I think next up after that is Kansas, and I say we should meet in Alaska.

Tony: Yes, the way the usual rotation would go – Earl, we would be in Kansas in the spring. We would be in North Dakota, in the summer, and Nevada in the fall. Unless we see other changes. We will discuss this further at the next meeting.

Also, the sooner we decide the better so we can find dates and states can plan travel. Utah could not be here because it conflicts with their board meeting. Jon and Jim Macy were not able to attend the spring meetings because of a conflict with meetings of the Environmental Council of States (ECOS). There are always going to be conflicts, but the further out we can schedule, the more we can mitigate or avoid these conflicts.

Jen: Yeah, I guess that is something Tony and I have also discussed. Maybe we need to start picking dates further out, because we're a big enough and an important enough organization that other organizations will schedule around us if our meeting dates were set in advance, rather than use trying to schedule around them. We need to flip that around.

Julie: How much planning is needed and so we have a sense of what is involved and what if any costs are usually associated with hosting the meetings?

Tony: The states choose the location, and then help us find a suitable hotel and sponsors for our social hour. Other than that, we look to the state to help us with putting together the agenda. We have even had the governors address the Council in the past.

### **COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

Tony: The only thing I would say is we are a unique organization and our members are appointed by the governors. Sometimes it takes a while to get an appointment letter from the governor, so that we know who's appointed. We'll work with each of you on that, but if you have not yet been appointed, please let us know how we can work with your governor's office to get a letter.

### **DRAFT FY2022-2023 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

Jen: Please turn tab G. Very quickly, there are just some minor updates, except that we have added a big section on State Water Agency staffing and retention concerns. That has impacted all of our states, I think pretty dramatically, especially with the economy. There have been a couple of webinars on that led by staff and some surveys and some discussions. I definitely think that's an important topic and as a Council maybe we can try and help other each other and other states.

The work plan was approved without objection.

A question was raised regarding state assumption of Section 404 wetlands permitting, and it was noted that was included in the Water Quality Committee work plan as part of the discussion of Waters of the United States (WOTUS).

### **SUNSETTING POSITIONS FOR FALL 2022 MEETINGS**

Position No. 438 – Research for Water Resources Applications  
Position No. 439 – Support for Implementation of the SECURE Water Act  
Position No. 440 – State Filing Fees in State General Stream Adjudications

### **OTHER MATTERS**

There being no other matters, the meeting was adjourned.