

MINUTES
of the
WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DoubleTree by Hilton
West Fargo, North Dakota
July 25, 2024

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MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *(via zoom)*

ALASKA	Christina Carpenter <i>Tom Barrett</i>
ARIZONA	<i>Trevor Baggione</i>
CALIFORNIA	Joaquin Esquivel Jeanine Jones
COLORADO	Jojo La <i>Lauren Ris</i>
IDAHO	Jerry Rigby John Simpson
KANSAS	Earl Lewis Tom Stiles Connie Owen <i>Matt Unruh</i>
MONTANA	Anna Pakenham Stevenson <i>Jay Weiner</i>
NEBRASKA	Justin Lavene Tom Riley
NEVADA	Jennifer Carr Cathy Erskine Melissa Flatley
NEW MEXICO	<i>John Rhoderick</i> <i>Tanya Trujillo</i>
NORTH DAKOTA	Andrea Travnicek
OKLAHOMA	Sara Gibson

OREGON	Racquel Rancier
SOUTH DAKOTA	Nakaila Steen
TEXAS	Jon Niermann
UTAH	Sarah Shechter Todd Stonely <i>Candice Hasenyager</i>
WASHINGTON	<i>Ria Bearns</i>
WYOMING	Chris Brown Jennifer Zygmunt <i>Jeff Cowley</i>

GUESTS

Eric Dodds, AE2S
Jeff Hruby, AE2S
Aaron Vollmer, AE2S
Jen Verleger, State of South Dakota
Brian Clark, U.S. Geological Survey
Charles Scaife, U.S. Department of Energy
Kevin Denn, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Lance Yohe, International Joint Commission
Dan Yates, Ground Water Protection Council
Terry Williams, US Army Corps of Engineers
Aaron Snyder, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Erica Gaddis, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Andrew Hadsell, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Hannah Singleton, Southern Nevada Water Authority
Jim Rizk, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Aubrey Bettencourt, Netafim - Orbia Precision Agriculture
Yaping Chi, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
Alexa Davis, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
Abby Ebach, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
Kathy Alexander, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Andrew Nygren, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
Aaron Carranza, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
Cammie Wright, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
Peter Wax, North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

Kathy Alexander, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
George Russell, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
Dehvyne Ashmore, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
Amy Winkelman, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
George Russell, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
Mark Mayer, South Dakota Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Trevor Watson, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Kathleen Ronning-Schimetz, North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

WESTFAST

Michael Eberle, USDA Forest Service
Heather Hofman, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Stephanie Granger, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Madeline Franklin, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (WestFAST Liaison)

STAFF

Tony Willardson
Michelle Bushman
Elysse Campbell
Ryan James

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Andrea Travnicek, Chair of the Water Resources Committee, called the meeting to order. Introductions were made around the room.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Andrea called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on March 14, 2024, in Washington, D.C. A motion was offered, seconded, and the minutes passed unanimously.

SUNSETTING POSITIONS

Andrea reviewed Position #468 regarding Rural Water Supply Project/Infrastructure Needs. The Committee recommended the position be forwarded to the Full Council for consideration.

ENERGY-WATER RESILIENCE STRATEGY

Charles Scaife, Hydropower Technology Manager and Hydrologic Systems Science Lead, Water Power Technologies Office (WPTO), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), talked about DOE's Energy-Water Resilience Program and the Regional Energy-Water Demonstrations that will be part of it.

The DOE's Energy-Water Resilience Program is working to address the interconnected challenges between energy and water systems by funding research, development, and demonstration projects focused on creating more resilient and sustainable energy-water solutions across different regions. Currently, the WPTO consists of two programs, hydropower and marine energy. However, the increasing demand on water energy has led DOE to seek a third program, Energy Water Resilience, to think about energy and water at a systems level.

The Regional Energy-Water Demonstrations are a key component of this program, where specific geographic areas are chosen to test and implement integrated solutions for managing energy and water usage, taking into account local needs and challenges to inform broader policy and technology deployment on a national scale. These demonstrations involve collaboration with local communities, utilities, water management agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the solutions address regional concerns and are effectively implemented. This program recognizes the interdependence between water and energy systems, where water is needed to generate electricity (e.g., hydropower) and energy is required for water treatment and distribution.

Examples of potential demonstration projects include implementing smart grid technologies to optimize water pumping schedules during peak energy demand periods; utilizing renewable energy sources to power water treatment facilities; and developing water conservation measures in industrial processes that are energy intensive.

DOE is interested in reaching out to states for feedback to develop a program and demonstration projects that provide meaningful benefits to the states. Charles can be reached at charles.scaife@ee.doe.gov.

CORPS WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING PROGRAM

Aaron Snyder, Director, Water Infrastructure Financing Program, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) provided an overview of the Corps Water Infrastructure Financing Program (CWIFP). It enables local investment in infrastructure projects that enhance community resilience to flooding, promote economic prosperity, and improve environmental quality. Through CWIFP, the Corps will accelerate non-Federal investments in water resources infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost loans to creditworthy borrowers.

This is a new federal financing program to provide low-cost, long-term, flexible loans for safety projects to maintain, upgrade, and repair non-federal dams. On May 22, 2023, the Assistant

Security of the Army for Civil Works signed the final CWIFP program rule, and the rule was posted on the *Federal Register*. This established the process by which the Corps will administer credit assistance. Our first notice of funding availability (NOFA) was issued in September 2023, which provided directions on the application process and what is needed to apply. The loan application period for the first round closed on December 19th.

The program interest was substantial, which highlights the need for federal financing opportunities for water infrastructure. The Corps is currently in the process of finalizing selections. To date we have received a significant amount of funding for our program: \$81 million in credit subsidy and \$15.4 for administration of the program. We are expecting to open future funding opportunities this summer using the remaining funding and any additional appropriations.

Our program focuses on dam safety projects to maintain, upgrade and repair dam(s) identified in the National Inventory of Dams (NID) owned by non-federal entities. CWIFP can provide loans for a single project or a combination of projects. The purpose of the project, or projects needs to be to either reduce flood risk, restore aquatic ecosystems, or improve navigation. For a dam safety project to be eligible for CWIFP credit assistance, the borrower must show a decrease in the hazard and/or a decrease in the potential consequences of poor performance of the existing NID listed dam structure. This improvement can be achieved from direct or indirect modifications to achieve a safety improvement. Examples of direct modifications include dam repairs, seismic retrofits, and gate replacements. As an indirect example, a sediment removal project is considered eligible for CWIFP financing when the removal of sediment contributes to the safety and structural integrity of a dam, or when sediment removal mitigates storage capacity reduction that could compromise the dam's intended safe functionality. In this context, sediment removal is not merely a routine maintenance activity; rather, it serves as a critical safety measure addressing potential hazards associated with sediment accumulation. When seeking credit assistance through the CWIFP for sediment removal purposes, an applicant should highlight the impact of sediment accumulation on dam safety. Proposed projects will need to be reviewed for eligibility based on its own specific circumstances.

To be eligible for CWIFP credit assistance, a prospective borrower must be either a local, state, tribal government, a private corporation, or a State Revolving Fund Program. Additionally multiple entities may apply for a single project under a joint application.

Any costs related to the state of good repair for a dam are eligible. This includes planning, design and construction activities, acquisition of property, issuance and financing costs during construction, as well as any work on other structures needed for safe operation of the dam, such as spillways and access roads. The universe of eligible project costs can far precede their application date. Prior planning and design work, even preliminary project costs, may be eligible and you can include those in your project budget. The Corps can provide credit assistance of up to 49% of the total project costs or, depending on budget availability, we can provide credit assistance of up to 80% of the total for projects that serve economically disadvantaged communities.

We're very excited to be nearing the point where our program will be able to open up to non-federal levee projects. In the 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Congress provided CWIFP funding for projects to construct, maintain, upgrade, and repair non-Federal levees. New levee projects and/or repairs to existing levees including levee system features such as pump stations. Standard CWIFP eligibility requirements would still apply. The expectation is that levees will be included in the next funding availability announcement which is anticipated this summer. If you're interested in program updates, including the status of the inclusion of levees, we can add you to our email distribution list.

The minimum assistance requirements are that the project must be creditworthy and have a low risk of default; the project must meet all applicable engineering, safety, and other technical standards. For technical review, we are looking to make sure it is technically feasible and that you have the capacity to deliver the project. Utilization of our program does not federalize a project and Corps standards do not need to be utilized. To be economically justified the borrower just has to inform us that the benefits exceed the costs of a project. As part of our program rule, we do have a programmatic environmental assessment that has been published that may be utilized to satisfy our environmental compliance. We plan not to be duplicative or add additional burden and will likely be able to accept whatever state and federal permitting compliance that is already required for your project to satisfy our program needs.

The total project cost minimum is \$20 million, but you will be able to bundle smaller projects together to achieve that \$20 million total. You will need to meet federal requirement such as NEPA, Davis-Bacon, American Iron and Steel. But we view these requirements as additive, as Federal Permits and FERC Licensing require NEPA, ESA, NHPA. Lastly, for a private entity to receive a CWIFP loan they must receive community sign-off.

Benefits to borrowers through the CWIFP include: low interest rates; no interest rate risk; there is no negative carry; subordination; borrowers can customize their repayment schedules; long repayment periods; deferred payments; and no prepayment penalty. As an example, CWIFP could save a typical A-rated borrower 0.5% to 1% on average compared to capital markets. For a \$100 million loan, this difference in rates could save approximately \$15 million to \$25 million in interest payments over a 30-year loan.

Given the time it takes to go through the loan approval process, we encourage folks to come in early in their project development process.

NEW MEXICO INTEGRATED WATER FINANCING PLAN

Erica Gaddis, Senior Water Resources, Director, SWCA Environmental Consultants, and former Council member, provided an overview of a year-long project aimed at leveraging federal funding for New Mexico's water needs. The project evolved through conversations with WestFAST and the WSWC, focusing on identifying state needs and aligning them with funding opportunities. The initiative involves collaboration with state and federal agencies, with the

WSWC sponsoring the effort with private funding, to develop innovative financing solutions. The project was inspired by a presentation at a recent meeting in May, which highlighted the need for funding small sewer communities. Erica acknowledged the contributions of various partners, including the State of New Mexico, WestFAST, and WSWC Members.

A database of potential water projects was created from surveys and existing state plans to identify key priorities, goals, and projects best positioned for next steps. Three demonstration projects were selected: regionalization of small community drinking water systems, comprehensive state aquifer mapping, and large restoration efforts. The projects align with the New Mexico Water Task Force's strategy and the governor's Water Action Plan, focusing on infrastructure, resources, management, health, conservation, and protection. The projects are shovel-ready and have significant funding needs, with the goal to identify obstacles and opportunities, strengthen the funding coalition, and get projects off the ground.

Regionalization of small community drinking water systems requires high initial assets and is difficult to finance solely with state loans. The aquifer mapping project aims to fill gaps in the current monitoring system, identifying new exploration wells and basins with the most acute needs. The restoration project focuses on headwater areas, critical for maintaining secure water supplies, with a goal to fund 200 miles of stream restoration. Virtual workshops were held for each demonstration project to identify strategies for funding, including leveraging existing loans, grants, and new federal programs.

Erica highlighted the importance of federal funding programs and overcoming barriers to accessing them. Federal agencies, including BLM, USGS, and EPA, have offered resources and support for the projects. The project aims to leverage the WestFAST network to support statewide demonstrations and tailor federal involvement to meet state needs.

Tanya Trujillo thanked Erica and the WSWC for their support and contributions. The project is seen as a model that other states can utilize, with New Mexico facing similar challenges of rural and drought-prone communities. The project aims to continue the momentum in the three major bucket areas and explore additional opportunities for federal engagement.

Roger Gorke emphasized the importance of identifying the right federal agency and person to build relationships and support state needs effectively.

PRECISION AGRICULTURE SOLUTIONS

Aubrey Bettencourt, Global Director of Government Relations and External Affairs, for Precision Agriculture, discussed the evolution and benefits of precision agriculture. She explained the concept of precision agriculture, also known as site-specific management (SSM), and its growing prominence in technology and adaptive farming. She highlighted the inclusion of precision agriculture in the Farm Bill and the new loan program for farmers to adopt these technologies. Aubrey provided two definitions of precision agriculture from the USDA

Agricultural Research Service and the U.N. International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), emphasizing the use of right resources, right place, and right time. She discussed the evolution of farming from broad-based to site-specific and data-driven methods and shared insights from California on the resilience and flexibility achieved through data management in farming.

Aubrey identified financial barriers and cultural resistance as the two main challenges in adopting precision agriculture. She mentioned their farm finance program and partnerships with NGOs and corporate entities, which helps farmers access cost-share assistance and corporate financing. She emphasized the importance of continuous support and training for farmers to ensure the success of precision agriculture projects. She also touched on the integration of precision agriculture with climate change mitigation and water conservation efforts.

Aubrey introduced Netafim, the oldest and largest irrigation technology company with a history dating back to the 1960s. She explained the company's origins in Israel and its global presence, including its impact on sustainable food systems and water use. She highlighted the evolution of precision irrigation technology to achieve goals like greenhouse gas emissions reduction and nutrient management. She mentioned the company's three main technologies: subsurface drip irrigation, surface drip irrigation, and fertigation. She emphasized the company's commitment to sustainability, including full recycling of products and manufacturing in the United States and the importance of cultural change in adopting new farming technologies and the company's role in providing training and assistance. The long-term nature of precision agriculture projects can last up to 20 years.

NORTH DAKOTA WATER DATA SURVEY STATUS REPORT

Andrew Nygren, Director, Water Appropriation Division, North Dakota Department of Water Resources (ND DWR) provided an overview of the North Dakota's water data survey sent out to the Western States. The purpose of the survey was to identify technology platforms being used to collect water resource data from western states. The ND DWR contracted with HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR). The survey was for water resource data including water use; water chemistry; atmospheric/soil moisture; surface water flow and stage; and groundwater.

In total, 126 individuals and 68 agencies across the western states were contacted to complete the survey. Responses were received from all western states, including 28 agencies, summarizing the total number of water use monitoring sites and whether they are automated or manually reported. Arizona is the only state not reporting water use data, while other states are increasing their data collection methods. The survey revealed that some states are expanding the use of satellite-based technologies and long-term monitoring. There is a mix of state agency responses and USGS data, indicating varying data collection methods across different states. The survey also mentioned future efforts to increase automated application and self-reporting, as well as the importance of water stage monitoring.

Andrew discussed future efforts to expand automated application and self-reporting, including more widespread deployment of long-term monitoring systems. The survey results indicate a need for additional resources to support data collection and monitoring efforts. There is a disconnection in data collection between historical agencies and current responses, highlighting the need for improved monitoring and development. The survey also references the use of AI and pharmaceutical control to improve data collection and management.

Andrea noted that they are still getting all the surveys gathered and starting to put the information together in a report.

WADE/WESTDAAT/WESTCAT UPDATE

Ryan James provided updates on the Water Data Exchange (WaDE) program, the Western States Water Data Access Analysis Tool (WestDAAT), and the development of the new WestCAT tool for water conservation.

WaDE has been operational since 2011, aiming to provide a standardized water data sharing platform for state and public agencies, ensuring data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. WestDAAT is the front-end mapping data exploration webtool for WaDE and leads in water allocation information for the Western United States. WaDE is committed to assisting member states and publicly sharing, in a standardized format, cross-regional water information to help better inform water resource planning and policy creation. Data is collected from western state agencies, formatted into the WaDE data architecture and schema, and uploaded to a cloud database hosted on a Microsoft Azure system. The information is publicly available through several different sources, one being WestDAAT, the on-line tool in addition to our WaDE API retrieval services. Anything we do is also documented and posted on our GitHub repositories, including source files, processed files, and documentation.

WestDAAT has seen 3,649 visitors from the U.S. and 160 international visitors since its soft release in September 2022. Since its public release in April 2023, it has had an average of 48 active users per week. The current WestDAAT database offers data access from 90 unique data sets, covering water right data, water supply data, and water use information. This includes the historical site-specific withdrawals related to a water right, site specific state public supply water use information, and also aggregated withdrawal records, also at a watershed scale. Currently WestDAAT only uses water right information, not water use and water supply data. Our data does come from state agencies, which have their own programs and data to manage. These programs aren't built specifically for WaDE purposes, but we do benefit from them.

Ryan discussed a survey aimed to gather information on financial resources spent on water data management programs. The survey was sent to member states, asking about the costs of collecting, storing, and managing water-related data, including questions on annual budgets for the last three years and the number of full-time equivalent employees required to run such programs.

He presented charts comparing the annual budgets and equivalent staff members, showing responses from 11 states and 13 agencies in total.

For an update on technical activities, we have been reviewing the use of well completion reports, and where this type of data fits into those three main categories – water supply, water right, and water use. Currently, well completion reports are being excluded from WaDE and WestDAAT as they don't fit the permitted allocation water right data terminology defined by WaDE. Many states do require a well drilling permit, and drillers normally submit a well log report. However, the use of water from the well may or may not actually require a water right under specific state laws. With that, we removed the uploaded California groundwater well completion reports from WaDE, as the data did not really fit into our defined terminology for water rights. WaDE will continue to use points of diversions water right information from the California Water Right Information Management System and explore how to fit well log data into the system.

What's next for us from here? We are looking to expand our front-end application tool, WestDAAT. We talked about the water right information being shared on WestDAAT, but we would also like to start sharing our water supply information, particularly the time series data that is available from the states. Ryan showed an example of non-federal western states water use and supply time series data. In addition, we also want to start using regulatory overlay information related to water rights. Overlays are the unique areas which are the specific governing and ruling bodies of a what right or a site. WestDAAT will have the ability to show the water right or time series site that belongs to a specific overlay. Overlays that we are specifically interested in are the administrative or regulatory law areas, in addition to aquifers and river basins identified to existing hydraulic unit areas, and elements like that.

In October 2023, WestDAAT entered into a two-year agreement with the Center for Geospatial Solutions for the Lincoln Institute to develop an interoperable western water data hub for the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). This project will streamline access to diverse water data sources to support USBR's mission to manage, develop and protect water related resources in an environmentally and economic manner. WaDE, particularly, will be supporting the water right information to that database of the proposed tasks listed here. Task one and most of task two have been completed, where the development team for this project has met and engaged with relevant stakeholders to develop the best use cases. The stakeholders included 250 reclamation employees with expertise in planning, hydraulic analysis, hydraulic and ecological analysis and operation uses.

Also in October 2023, the WSWC submitted a grant application to the Applied Science Grants for the WaterSMART program at the USBR to develop a new western water conservation application tool (WestCAT). Our application was accepted for funding, and USBR is drafting a financial assistance agreement. WestCAT will streamline the application process for in-state compensated and temporary water conservation measures by integrating water right data from WaDE and other information, such as evapotranspiration (ET) data through the OpenET initiative. The tool could be built and operational within six months if the required matching funds are available.

Questions/Comments:

Anna asked Ryan if he could provide a little more detail on the integration of WaDE data with OpenET data and the objectives and outcomes of the tool.

Ryan explained that the tool aims to streamline the application process for water conservation measures, allowing the public to find water rights and apply for conservation practices. OpenET will estimate water use based on satellite imagery, helping users understand the amount of water saved and the compensation they may receive. The tool is expected to benefit state agencies, environmental groups, and the public in managing water conservation efforts.

Anna raised concerns about the integration of OpenET and whether it is necessary for states at this time.

Jeanine: The data is operationalized by NASA research technology, and states like California are purchasing it for groundwater management.

The USBR has funded efforts to provide OpenET data, and there are ongoing discussions about making it more accessible. The conversation will continue during the Executive Committee meeting to decide on the non-federal match required for the data.

RED RIVER VALLEY WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

Duane DeKrey, General Manager, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District provided an overview of the history, need, user outreach and the construction process of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP).

RRVWSP will provide an emergency water supply to central and eastern North Dakota during times of water scarcity so as to protect public health, ensure ongoing economic vitality, and provide for environmental benefits in the river systems. The need for the RRVWSP arose from the drought-prone Red River in Fargo, which had zero flows over five months, underscoring the need to have some type of water supply in North Dakota going through the eastern-central part of the city. North Dakota is one of the most agricultural states in the nation, but we have to ship all of our products out of the state because we don't have enough water to process it. Those are two of the driving forces of the project.

The project is a partnership between the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, Lake Agassiz Water Authority, which represents the users of the project, which pay 25% of the total project, and the State of North Dakota, administered by the Department of Water Resources that pays 75% of the project's total cost. We all try to work together to come up with the best project possible.

Eventually, we were also able to work with the federal government. The federal government had a project in 2000 that was very similar to what this state project looks like, but we were never to get a record decision on the project from the Secretary of the Interior. The State of North Dakota knew that there was still a definite need for the water, and so Governor Burgum turned it into a state project and began the planning to provide a RRVWSP budget. Right now, in 2024, the RRVWSP is at \$1.26 billion. We are about two years into what the legislature sees as a 10-year construction schedule. The pipeline is 725 miles in length from the intake on the McClusky Canal to the discharge structure at the Sheyenne River, with a diameter of six feet and an epoxy coating to prevent corrosion. The pipeline will transport water to central and eastern North Dakota at up to 165 cubic feet per second (cfs).

The project aims to address North Dakota's reliance on the Missouri River for water, which is a tenuous supply for a large portion of the population. The project will help mitigate fluctuations in water availability, ensuring a more stable water supply for the region. The project's economic impact is significant, with the state's share of \$6 million being cost-effective for the cities involved. The project includes stewardship measures, such as hiring a soil scientist to ensure proper handling of topsoil during construction.

The project's success will depend on continued support from the state and federal governments, as well as the cooperation of local communities.

WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION AS A PRIMARY PURPOSE OF CORPS PROJECTS DISCUSSION

Representative Napolitano introduced a bill (H.R. 7065) to include water supply and water conservation as a primary mission of the Corps of Engineers in planning, designing, constructing, modifying, operating, and maintaining water resources development projects. Most of the language from this bill has made it into WRDA.

Jeanine Jones: WRDA reauthorization is going on now. Both the House and Senate bills are on the table. I would like to point out that our Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) concept is included in both bills. Although, the language is not identical. California is a big supporter of the Bureau as it helps with both the water supply and flood control options. For those of you interested in FIRO, I just wanted to let you know that it's on the table. We expect to be working on this to try to make sure we get the language that everyone in California wants.

Tony: Racquel, I think one observation, and Jerry may remember... The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) was actually running a water supply into a federal fish hatchery, and the city asked about using some of that water supply. The Corps said yeah, you can probably do that, but.... As I recall, Idaho's response to the Corps was that's not your water, it's our water. I think there may be some questions that come up as the Corps takes a bigger role in water supply. I agree with Jen. I think there is an opportunity for them to be more involved, but cost is always going to be questioned.

Michelle: I would add that we didn't comment directly on Representative Napolitano's bill because the language that we have in our own water supply position does not explicitly support that. We sent our position and expressed some important principles, and emphasized the need to defer to state primacy over water allocation, which is included in that bill. We really want to emphasize and encourage them to use that language. We may want to take a look at that position again as it comes up and see if we want to make any modifications, depending on what Congress passes.

Jen Verleger: For any new members, if you're interested in the Corps water supply, I'm on the National Water Supply Alliance Board so if you have any questions let me know.

CHALLENGES OF SMALL AND RURAL WATER SYSTEMS DISCUSSION

Andrea: Jeanine, I think this is the one that you wanted to bring up related to challenges and small and rural water systems, just to kind of see where the states are at.

Jeanine: Yes. Obviously, you know small water systems are a big problem in terms of having problems meeting drinking water standards and providing safe and affordable water, and all of those kinds of things. Since we're here in North Dakota, which is one of the states that has had great success with Bureau's rural water program. There's a great Congressional Research Service report on the subject that I would encourage interested folks to check out.¹

The main idea is that the Bureau has provided funding and construction support for building essentially small regional water supply bridges. For example, identify water source code, center treatment plant, and build distribution pipelines to these small rural communities that otherwise can't afford to have that kind of water supply.

I want to point out for folks that this is an area where the WSWC could consider seeking an expansion of the authorizing legislation that has existed to at least authorize the Bureau to study some of the due feasibility studies for some of these projects. Granted, some of them have been quite extensive. It's a funding source that could be useful given the problems of small systems, which are legion. I know Joaquin suffers with that considerably. I think we have somewhere between 400-500 in California that aren't meeting drinking water standards. I think we have about 500 systems that have only a single well for their water supply. We know that's a big risk factor whether it's from drought, contamination, etc. I think it would be a good idea for the WSWC to think about what lessons some of our northern plains states have learned from the rural water and see if that carries through to our other states.

Andrea: North Dakota has been fortunate to have the ? program. The reason that we got it in the first place was due to the flooding of the Garrison Dam and Lake Sakakawea as hundreds of thousands of acres of land were impacted. We've got the North Dakota Water Resources Act that has helped not only our rural communities, but our tribal as well. I'm happy with the program.

¹<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46308>; and <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47032>

I think we've actually used a... between our dollars, and so we'll be looking to try to make sure that this program moves forward. Jeanine, I think it's a good discussion to have and so we'd be glad to be at the table to have another one.

FY2024-2025 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Andrea mentioned the need to review the Committee's work plan. If anyone has any questions, comments or concerns, please reach out to Tony to let him know.

SUNSETTING POSITIONS FOR FALL 2024 MEETINGS

Andrea encouraged members to take a look at the sunseting Positions No. 459-464 for the Fall meeting and send any feedback to WSWC Staff.

OTHER MATTERS

There being no other matters, the meeting was adjourned.