

**MINUTES
of the
WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Cliff Lodge
Snowbird, Utah**

June 11, 2025

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MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT *(via zoom)*

ALASKA

ARIZONA

CALIFORNIA

Jeanine Jones

COLORADO

Jason Ullman
Lauren Ris

IDAHO

Jerry Rigby
Mat Weaver

KANSAS

Connie Owen
Earl Lewis
Tom Stiles
Matt Unruh

MONTANA

Anna Pakenham Stevenson

NEBRASKA

Justin Lavene

NEVADA

Jennifer Carr
Cathy Erskine

NEW MEXICO

Tanya Trujillo
John Rhoderick

NORTH DAKOTA

OKLAHOMA

Julie Cunningham
Sara Gibson

OREGON

SOUTH DAKOTA

Nakaila Steen

TEXAS

UTAH

Candice Hasenyager
Teresa Wilhelmsen
Mark Stratford
John Mackey
Todd Stonely

WASHINGTON

Ria Bearn
Leslie Connelly

WYOMING

Chris Brown
Jeff Cowley
Jennifer Zygmunt

GUESTS

Lacie Neill, FEMA
Sara Larsen, OpenET
Erin Urquhart, NASA
Jackie Tinetti, CSG West
Emily Fife, USDA-NRCS
Micheline Fairbank, Fennemore
Sue Lowry, Avocet Consult, LLC
Beau Uriona, NRCS Snow Survey
Tom Riley, Riley Consulting LLC
Alf Brandt, NJC Dividing the Waters
Jennifer Verleger, State of South Dakota
Christopher Estes, Instream Flow Council
John Dupnik, Texas Water Development Board
Laura Vernon, Utah Division of Water Resources
Ryan Rowland USGS Utah Water Science Center
David O'Leary, USGS Utah Water Science Center
Erica Gaddis, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Anne Cabrera, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Andrew Hadsell, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Melissa Mabruch, USGS Utah Water Science Center
Hannah Singleton, Southern Nevada Water Authority
Edward Mueller, Utah Office of the State Water Agent
Matt Manning, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
Patrick Fridgen, North Dakota Department of Water Resources
Cori Hach, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

WESTFAST

Lauren Dempsey, U.S. Air Force
Chris Carlson, U.S. Forest Service
Michael Eberle, U.S. Forest Service
Chad Abel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Paula Cutillo, Bureau of Land Management
Roger Gorke, Environmental Protection Agency
Elizabeth Ossowski, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

STAFF

Tony Willardson
Michelle Bushman
Elysse Campbell
Ryan James

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Anna Pakenham Stevenson conducted the Water Resources Committee. She called the meeting to order and welcome those in attendance. Introductions were previously made around the room during the Host State Presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Anna called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on April 24, in Lincoln, Nebraska. There was a motion, a second and the minutes were unanimously approved.

SUNSETTING POSITIONS

Anna turned the time over to Michelle Bushman to review the sunseting positions.

a. Position #482 - regarding Radio Frequencies Bandwidth

Tony mentioned that the ongoing issue with the auction of federal bandwidth for various purposes has raised past concerns about infringing on frequencies used for streamgages, Mesonet, and other emergency management purposes. While we haven't heard of recent issues, this was the origin of the resolution. We've heard that the streamgaging system, which is hardwired into their satellite, cannot change the band they use. Additionally, Tony noted that some earth observation systems also cannot change their bandwidth. Therefore, there was concern about potential interference from selling bandwidth near those frequencies, which could be a potential concern in

the future. For this reason, we've proposed and discussed with the Executive Committee continuing this resolution into the future.

Anna asked if there were any concerns with the modified language that is being proposed in Tab C in the briefing materials.

There was some discussion unrelated to radio frequency bandwidth regarding the USGS abandoning streamgages – eight in Texas, 8-10 in Montana, some in Oklahoma. This was deemed an issue with funding, inflation, and federal staffing issues. There was a question about whether the Council has a resolution on funding to maintain the USGS network.

Tony: We do have a resolution in support of the streamgaging program and other similar federal water data programs. Maybe at the end of the meeting, we could have some time for a discussion on the cuts that we're seeing to a number of federal programs.

Anna: Great. Let's mark that we need to have a discussion generally as a Council on all federal funding and the impacts to individual states. Given that Position 482 may no longer be relevant, should we consider whether this is a resolution we need to maintain? I recall some survey comments about the number of resolutions we have, and the time spent editing them. Should we keep this resolution on the books, or eliminate it and revisit it if the issue re-emerges? Are there any thoughts?

Tony: To explain the process, if we allow the position to sunset and an issue is raised, we would need to address it through an emergency process unless it's discussed at a Council meeting. This process involves a 10-day notice to the Executive Committee for a call where the issue would be considered. At that point, a resolution can be adopted, which then goes to the governors for their review before implementation. Therefore, if we don't have a resolution in place, there's a process and sometime involved in adopting one between meetings.

Ria Berns: I support reviewing each position for currency. While this isn't an issue in Washington, it might be in other states. I'd like to hear from specific states if this continues to be a relevant policy process. I also think the committee would benefit from paring down resolutions to focus on the most salient ones at each meeting.

Michelle: This position originated when Jeanine asked us to get involved in this issue. At the time, we didn't have an explicit position on it, but I insisted we needed one if we were going to write letters about it. This specific position was developed slightly after we sent a letter regarding radio frequencies. We managed to address the radio frequencies issue through our existing data policy, but we lacked a specific stance on radio frequencies themselves. This position was created to ensure that any letters we write are based on policy positions that our 18 states have had a chance to vet. While it may no longer be relevant, that's the context behind its initial development.

Earl Lewis: I've advocated for addressing whether we have too many resolutions or if they are too expansive. I believe this is a key question for our strategic planning efforts. I encourage

us to continue with the current process, even if it feels awkward, until we've had that discussion and decided whether to change course.

Anna: The recommendation is to continue with our current process. Let's see if we have a motion to approve, and then in our strategic planning, we can have a more candid conversation about the number of resolutions and how we can compress them. Does everyone support that idea? Great. I would then love to hear a motion to recommend this to the Full Council. A motion was offered, followed by a second and the motion was unanimously approved to move the position to the Full Council.

b. Position #483 - strengthening the Resiliency of Our Nation to the Impacts of Extreme Weather Events

Tony: Again, there aren't many changes recommended for this resolution. The position acknowledges extreme events we've faced, especially challenges with federal budget cuts. He recalled hearing at the S2S workshop that funding for the weather service and river forecast centers is being reduced. This resolution has been updated to reflect current situations. When it was initially adopted, there was severe flooding in Montana and other states. We've also updated the resolution to recognize current drought contingency planning efforts. A new clause has been added to address the OMB's pass-back for NOAA, which eliminates all funding for climate, weather, ocean research, and related programs, effectively eliminating the Office of Atmospheric Research and related concerns.

Anna asked if there was any further discussion on the resolution. Hearing none, she called for a motion to recommend it to the Full Council. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

c. Position #485- supports Water Research and Development Programs at the Department of Energy National Laboratories

Tony: This resolution was adopted following our interactions with National Labs and the Department of Energy and reflects our support for their water resources programs. We've specifically listed the areas they've been exploring, including geothermal development, which Teresa mentioned in relation to Utah. We have a separate resolution addressing the complex interrelationship between energy and water planning. While I don't have information on the President's budget for the National Labs, I assume there's pressure on all federal partners, and this resolution expresses our interest in the water resources work done by the Department of Energy and its labs.

Michelle: The additions to the "whereas" clauses were made after the Executive Committee meeting, following discussions about the potential discontinuation of the Energy Star program (as mentioned by Todd Stonely) and the increase in data centers for AI. These clauses are intended to be factual statements that highlight the importance of the laboratories' work due to its impact on water, including the geothermal aspect you mentioned. I hope these capture our Executive Committee discussions. Please let us know if any further changes are needed.

Anna: The substantive changes are primarily in the "whereas" clauses. Would anyone like a moment to review them, or is further discussion needed?

Connie Owen: Regarding the "further resolved" section, and not the "whereas" clauses, should we include a clear statement requesting funding support? The current language recognizes value and urges collaboration but doesn't mention funding. Given the new "whereas" clauses that cite funding reductions, I believe this is an important point to address.

Tony: Generally, our resolutions don't specify exact amounts for a few reasons. Firstly, amounts can change. Secondly, it's a matter of political balance. However, I agree this is likely an ongoing issue we'll face due to budget constraints, and we need to consider how vocal we want to be.

Connie: I was advocating for a specific value request, which is the core concept. If we don't ask for it, the typical response is, "you didn't ask," which we've seen work against us at the state level.

Anna: For the State of Montana on adding language about putting funding into this resolution, I believe this would require further discussion with my governor's office to determine our support. The current discussion revolves around changing the language to something along the lines of "adequate" or "continued" funding for these types of programs.

Candice Hasenyager: Would you still need to go back to your governor's office if it was "continued funding" or something similar? You'd be okay there, and I would support that.

Anna: Are there any other comments on adding language about continued or adequate funding to these programs? Michelle, would you mind zooming in and reading that out to us, please?

Michelle: So these are alternatives; we wouldn't include both. The resolution would then state, "Therefore, be it resolved that the WSWC urges the administration and the Congress to recognize the value of and adequately fund, or alternatively, continue to fund, Department of Energy-hosted energy water programs and research conducted at..."

Nakaila Steen: Perhaps the language "continue" might be better than "adequate," as the term "adequate" could lead to debate on what or how much is sufficient.

Anna: Are there comments or thoughts on moving towards continued?

Patrick Fridgen: From North Dakota's perspective, I would personally be more comfortable with adequately funding. I think that leaves a little bit more wiggle room for perspective just to be devil's advocate here.

Candice: In looking at it closer and hearing your comment I think Utah agrees that adequately fund is probably good.

Jennifer Carr: I'm not officially a member of this Committee, but given the drafting challenges, would it be appropriate maybe to say to recognize the value and funding of the Department of Energy, and then you get away from continuing/adequacy.

Anna: So, the proposal on the table is to recognize the value and funding of the Department of Energy. Are we all comfortable with this general theme with some wordsmithing for grammar, with full faith that Michelle will make it grammatically correct? Hearing no objections, Anna called for a motion to recommend it to the Full Council. There was a motion, a second and it was unanimously approved.

WADE/WESTDAAT/WESTCAT UPDATE

Tony mentioned that while Ryan sets up the live demo, he wanted to give a preview of WestDAAT 2.0. As many know, the Council has supported the development of WestDAAT 2.0 through two WaterSMART grants and significant philanthropic contributions. He explained that the WaDE program, established over a decade ago, includes water rights information from all member states. WestDAAT 2.0 enhances these programs by providing site-specific time series data. Specifically, it can now provide data from states that operate their own gage systems and information on dynamic reservoir levels. Additionally, WestDAAT 2.0 can now provide boundary information for regulatory and administrative purposes, such as areas closed to further appropriations, groundwater basins with specific restrictions, or the administration of the Colorado River Basin. Ryan will cover some of these points in more detail during his presentation.

Tony also mentioned the development of another tool (WestCAT) that integrates OpenET to measure consumptive use, connecting it with water rights for voluntary compensated conservation programs. This is similar to efforts in the Upper Colorado River Basin but applicable to other areas. We received a \$400,000 WaterSMART grant for this work, intended to cover a couple of years. We signed the agreement last September and have already completed the work. The accelerated development of this tool and the update of WestDAAT 2.0 have been particularly timely. As some of you know, federal grant funding was temporarily frozen in January, preventing access to our treasury account despite contractor obligations. As soon as the freeze was lifted, I drew funds from that account for our contractor and other work. We will discuss our expenditures for these two tools further in the Executive Committee. Thanks to our contractor's accelerated capabilities, we have already built the tool and utilized all available funds from our WaterSMART grant. Ryan will now provide a live demo of some of our capabilities.

Ryan James: Today, I will just give a very brief update on our new live services. Not much has changed since our last Council meeting, particularly the updates we have made to our WestDAAT, in addition to our WaDE online repository, and of course, our new live service, WestCAT.

Tony: To clarify what Ryan says, not much has changed as far as the provisions, but it is now up and operational where it was not at our last meeting.

Ryan: Just a quick review of the Water Data Exchange (WaDE) program, which has been active since 2011. WaDE is dedicated to assisting WSWC member states by sharing water rights, water supply, and water use data across the western states. WaDE is a leader in sharing water right information in the West, currently managing approximately 2 million water rights across 2.5 million water sites. Regarding updates on how WaDE is showcasing and providing access to data, we made significant updates to our API delivery service, which now incorporates all API feature standards from the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) to ensure data is more automated and easily retrievable. A notable new feature is the ability to conduct a geospatial search using simple geometry polygons. Users can now provide a polygon to the API service, and the service will return all sites, including water rights and time series information, within that specified area. This enhancement significantly improves their data delivery capabilities.

Ryan introduced the new Water Conservation Application Tool (WestCAT), which integrates both the water right data of WestDAAT in addition to Open ET data, which provides computational estimates of water usage through satellite imagery. The WestCAT tool is designed to facilitate voluntary, temporary, in-state, and compensated funding through programs focused on efficiency, such as fallowing and water switching initiatives.

Ryan proceeded with a live demo, starting with the new and improved WestDAAT. In addition to water right information, it now includes new data such as time series and overlay features. He provided an overview of some of the changes, including new filter options for searching water right data, such as site type and legal type, which tracks the legal application of water rights. He also showed updates to the analytic information, demonstrating the ability to switch between pie and bar charts to showcase collective WaDE information. He provided examples of beneficial use and how to switch to water source type, specifically differentiating between surface water and groundwater categories. He showed examples of cumulative water right information for surface water, groundwater, and a small amount of reuse data across the West.

Ryan highlighted the new time series information available in addition to existing water data. This includes three types of time series: state-sponsored and source-specific water supply information (e.g., streamgage data, reservoir releases), water use information (e.g., public information), and, if available, water use data tied to existing water right records. Users can filter and search this information by site, category (e.g., irrigation, streamflow, reservoir release), and water source type (e.g., groundwater, surface water). Finally, Ryan discussed the "overlay type" feature, which allows users to search for site information within a specific geographic boundary. The primary focus for this feature has been on administrative or regulatory areas tied to specific policy elements. For example, in areas with specific groundwater policy, all groundwater rights for that area have been linked, allowing users to search for them using various filters.

Tony mentioned that these regulatory/administrative areas could include divisions of water courts in Colorado or areas like Kansas's LEMA groundwater regulations. He noted that users could select any of these geographic areas to find all water rights within them, as well as any available state time series data related to diversions.

Ryan reviewed the new WestCAT tracking program, a live service in production that allows users to apply for conservation programs. Conservation organizations register with WSWC staff to approve certain water rights for these programs. Individual users are responsible for submitting applications. Users can find their water rights on the system. For example, an Idaho agricultural right approved for conservation application would allow the user to follow tools to an estimation tool. This tool combines water right data with OpenET estimations of conserved use. Using dummy values, Ryan demonstrated how the tool overlays satellite imagery, showing points of diversion. If an owner agrees to fallow a field, they can overlay it on the map. The tool estimates consumptive use based on OpenET information, configured by the organization (e.g., using the C.B.O.P. example model). A compensated value, estimated by the conservation organization, is also shown. Ryan input a dummy value of \$100 per acre-foot to demonstrate the estimated usage for fallowing one field. After estimating, the user would continue to the application, where much of their contact information would be pre-filled from their water right data. The user would then submit the application and await approval for conservation funding from the conservation organization. From the conservation organization's perspective, a technical reviewer would review and approve applications. Ryan showed an example of a dummy application being reviewed, with the organization checking details and approving it for funding.

Jason Ullmann: I'm just getting familiar with this application in the program. When you talk about application for conservation funding, are you generally referring to different financial assistance programs, or anything in particular?

Tony: Sara Larsen, Executive Director for OpenET, also worked for the Upper Colorado River Commission. For at least two years, they had a conservation program, funded by the Bureau of Reclamation, that paid farmers to reduce their water use through fallowing, crop switching, or other methods. Sara can confirm the numbers, but Reclamation paid \$45 million for temporary reductions. This tool would just expedite some of those applications. As part of our review and discussions, we agreed that before the Council allows someone to register to use the tool, we would seek approval from the member state and explain any state processes. The state would also be able to review any water right changes or temporary transfers. My understanding is that this didn't happen with the Upper Colorado River because it was system water and temporary.

Jason: I realize this is my first meeting, and I haven't been involved in this project or the Commission. However, after reading the background information and listening to the presentation, I have concerns about conflicting data. Colorado already has its own database of water rights and diversion records. It's not as simple as just pulling all that data because each state has its own way. While we mostly rely on the prior appropriation doctrine, we each have our own methods for allocating water rights. We already deal with enough issues from people calling us about conflicting data, and as a state, I'm concerned about putting out data through organizations we're a part of that conflicts with what people get from our own database and systems. Additionally, conservation program funding isn't consistent across the states. Sometimes our conservation projects are funded by the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), and sometimes by federal grants, either through the CWCB or otherwise. So, I guess I'm not providing a substantive comment other than it concerns me a little to have a whole new place for people to get data that is already available on Colorado's pretty substantial database system for all of these things.

Tony: I appreciate the comment, and we have discussed that. The only data we have is what we get from the states.

Anna: Tony, these issues have been raised before by other Council members. There are multiple places for data, and different data in WaDE than in our own state databases due to consolidation efforts. Regarding how these tools will be used, I think it's worth having a more robust conversation, perhaps with the Executive Committee, about these particular tools. I know we've raised these issues before, and I'd like to recommend that we set aside time to discuss this in more detail.

Jason: To reply to that comment, the data comes from our own database. When people call us about the data in our own database, it requires some interpretation because our water rights database has many different things: conditional water rights, absolute water rights, and abandoned water rights. Interpreting all the different codes in our database for all our various water rights and codes for our diversion records, which have different uses in different places, linking the uses together, is complex. Another tool isn't going to have that interpretive ability. So, we ask people to call us. We also have information on our website that helps people interpret that data. It concerns me to have this data pulled into a West-wide database and represent that comprehensive data can be obtained from that location. That's all for my comments on that.

Tony: We've had to consolidate some information to present a West-wide view. For example, regarding water rights descriptions, we found many unique ways states describe them. One control in the WaDE program is that it accesses a state's own landing page. So, if we say a water right is agricultural, but that can mean many things in Colorado, you can click on that water right, and it will take you to your database's landing page with your own description. While this still requires some interpretation, we've tried to provide a West-wide view of water use while still maintaining details. Part of this also looks at the legal definition of the right, such as whether it's a provisional or vested right. We understand the nomenclature differs among states, but by clicking on that point, users can go to the landing page that will take them to your database. We understand this doesn't resolve all questions or nuances of how a water right may be used. The tool is intended to be registered through the council and approved by the state, with the state qualifying any use to quantify consumptive use.

Teresa Wilhelmsen: I strongly echo Jason's comments from Colorado. I would like to have a much more robust discussion. My biggest fear with this tool is that I will make a decision in the State Engineer's Office in Utah on a consumptive use amount using a tool we currently have, and then end up in district court. Someone might bring this data to say it's more accurate than what we came up with in a decision, and a judge may ask, "Wait a minute, you guys paid for this. Which are you using?" The determination should really come from the State Engineer's Office.

Tony: The tool is intended to use whatever calculation you use. We are using Open ET here, and many of our states are moving to Open ET, but it does not necessarily have to be any particular tool used to calculate consumptive use.

Anna recommended an executive-level discussion, given the limited 20-minute session. She noted that states have expressed significant concerns and suggested a closed-door conversation to determine how states wish to proceed with this work. Anna also mentioned that attempts to have these conversations in previous council meetings have not been successful. This will be added as an action item.

LANDSAT NEXT

Tim Newman, Program Coordinator, National Land Imaging, USGS provided an update on Landsat Next, which includes three satellites launching together around 2031. This initiative, developed in collaboration with NASA, was designed to meet user needs, particularly within the water community. The original plan for Landsat Next included a six-day revisit period and five thermal bands (an increase from the current two). These enhancements would improve the accuracy of temperature estimates by better separating emissivity from temperature and would reduce the spatial resolution of thermal data from 100 meters to 60 meters, allowing for finer target observation. However, the President's 2026 budget proposes a restructuring of Landsat Next, and the impact of this on the user community is currently unknown. The budget language states that NASA will "study more affordable ways to maintain the continuity of Landsat imagery." While other missions were canceled under the budget, Landsat Next is only being restructured.

The definition of "continuity" is currently under review. There's a suggestion that the capabilities of Landsat 8 and 9 might be considered sufficient for the 2030s. However, the continuity of Landsat has historically involved advancements in each new mission to meet evolving priorities and national needs, rather than simply replicating previous missions. User needs, especially within the water community, are different in the 2030s compared to the 2010s when Landsat 8 and 9 were developed.

Tim's presentation illustrated the intended impacts of Landsat Next on agency needs. It showed how Landsat Next was designed to fill current gaps in data provided by Landsat 8 and 9. For example, a single Landsat satellite can make evapotranspiration measurements difficult due to cloud cover, potentially resulting in monthly gaps. While two satellites improved the revisit time, Landsat Next, with its three satellites, five thermal bands, and 60-meter spatial resolution, was designed to significantly enhance water metric data. The new restructuring of Landsat Next means the capabilities of the next mission are uncertain. For the 2030s, particularly for the water community, maintaining continuity solely with the capabilities of Landsat 8 and 9 might not be adequate.

Questions:

Tanya Trujillo: I have two questions. Are there any congressional briefings scheduled for Landsat Next? How is Landsat 9 performing?

Tim: We haven't been asked to participate in congressional briefings at our level yet. I know our director candidate Ned Mamula had his hearing on the Hill. I'm unsure of what the latest status

of those Hill briefings are in the House and Senate. We've started to receive questions from the House and Senate about what the restructuring means for the super spectral triplets by 2031, which has been the plan for the past few years. We are beginning to answer those questions, but I'm not sure when the next hearing will be. Landsat 9 is performing well. We just decommissioned Landsat 7 last week after 26 years of operation. Landsat 8 and 9 are currently operating. We expect Landsat 8 to fall below 50% availability by 2030, so we are closely monitoring its status, especially the thermal instrument.

Tony added that under Tab I in the briefing materials, there is a letter to the administration (with similar or identical letters to appropriators) expressing the WSWC's support for the Landsat program. He also mentioned that the governor's water resolution specifically mentions Landsat, and they have submitted appropriations testimony. This action would be consistent with our long-standing support for the program.

Anna asked Tony if the letter required Committee approval or was just for informational purposes.

Tony: It would be beneficial to have the Committee's approval. However, due to time constraints and the extensive nature of the letter, it might be best for members to read it beforehand and raise any questions at the Full Council meeting.

Anna confirmed that sounded great.

INSTREAM FLOW COUNCIL TRAINING CENTER

Christopher Estes provided an update on the progress of the center. He explained that four institutions (Michigan State University, University of Alabama, University of Idaho, and Oregon State University) have submitted proposals to host the center. These institutions would serve as a central "hub," teaming up with other universities across the U.S. as "affiliates" to offer supplementary interdisciplinary training and provide geographically based settings for institute activities. We plan to conduct on-site interviews with the four candidates during September and October. Following these robust in-person interviews, which build on their comprehensive proposals, we will assess our readiness to select the most qualified institution. Concurrently, we have secured legal services from a law firm to refine our draft business plan and the necessary legal instruments for the interaction between the Instream Flow Council, the American Fisheries Society, and the selected institution.

Tony added that this initiative addresses a gap in training for hydrologists in environmental applications. He reiterated Christopher's past comments that the curriculum is intended to include law and policy, as these decisions are not made in isolation. He emphasized that the center would seek support through participation from individuals who can speak to water law and water rights in the training sessions. Tony mentioned that there is also a letter in the briefing materials under Tab J, which would recognize support for this effort.

Christopher further emphasized the importance of including law and policy in the curriculum. He also expressed hope that the Council would serve on the advisory board to the center, which will be established as part of the governance. He clarified that the center aims to serve all water stakeholders, including decision-makers, end-users, and those impacted, such as farmers, ranchers, hydropower developers, Fish and Wildlife Biologists, lawyers, legislators, and the general public.

Anna mentioned that there is a letter that requires review, and she suggested that its approval take place at the Full Council meeting.

FY2025-2026 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Anna: I'm unsure about the origin or last update of the current work plan. I propose we make a motion to approve this work plan provisionally, pending the completion of our strategic planning exercises. This interim approval would allow it to serve as a foundational document for committee staff, with the understanding that it will likely be revised after our strategic planning is complete.

Candice: After a quick review of the work plan, I agree that it requires more dedicated time and attention, which would be appropriate after our strategic planning process. My only suggested edit is to include language in the 2025-2026 timeframe about having a robust discussion on WestDAAT and WestCAT, given our recent conversations. Otherwise, I support Anna's suggestion.

Anna: The recommendation is to approve the work plan as amended, with the inclusion of language about a robust discussion on its use. If there are no further comments, I'm looking for a motion to approve this work plan as amended, on an interim basis, pending the completion of our strategic planning. There was a motion, a second and it was unanimously approved.

SUNSETTING POSITIONS FOR SUMMER 2025 MEETINGS

Anna asked members to review the two sunseting positions for our Fall meeting:

Position #487 - urges the Administration and NASA to enhance focus on research for water resources applications and promote long term engagement with the WSWC

Position #488 - expressing support for implementation of the SECURE Water Act

OTHER MATTERS

Michelle: I think most of you are aware that I testified before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries. During the testimony, I was surprised by some

Western representatives who presented a dichotomy: that our water challenges are solely due to insufficient infrastructure, rather than acknowledging the reality of diminishing water supplies. As Elyse put it, the sentiment has shifted from “if you farm it, the water will come” to “if you build the infrastructure, the water will come.” This perspective is concerning, especially coming from Western representatives. While I understand the push to reduce bureaucratic red tape for infrastructure permitting, which our states care about, I’m worried that this narrative overlooks the critical issue of water scarcity in the West.

I tried to emphasize that we are experiencing intense, sporadic bursts of water and that infrastructure helps manage water through dry periods, but this conversation was not well-received. I believe it’s crucial to address this false dichotomy, particularly since these views came from representatives in Wyoming and California.

There seems to be a growing distrust of data and a reluctance to discuss climate change, which I find deeply troubling. I believe this is a non-partisan issue, and I’m seeking your guidance on how to navigate this in the current political climate. I would appreciate your collaboration in addressing this appropriately and perhaps working with your delegations to ensure they understand the nuances of water availability in the West.

Tony: Was the hearing specifically on hydropower?

Michelle: While the hearing was styled as addressing hydropower, the Committee staff memo covered nearly all topics relevant to the Committee. We also discussed water data, which I wanted to highlight. At the request of WGA, many of you provided information on how your states utilize federal water data that could be at risk, and I compiled the information into my testimony.

This is a brief overview of what we included in the testimony. I encourage you to review it, and perhaps we can discuss it further, either between our meetings or at our next one. We could explore whether we want to expand on this. Given the short turnaround time, you might have more information to contribute if given more time. What actions would you like the WSWC to take with this? Do we need a different position than our current positions on water data, as they might not specifically address this? This could be a topic of discussion for California. I’m unsure of the urgency if we need to act between meetings, but I wanted to raise that we have a lot of valuable information from our states, and it’s likely worth a closer look.

There being no other matters, the meeting was adjourned.