

STATE WATER PLANS: WATER SUPPLIES & WATER NEEDS
Discussion at the Water Resources Committee Meeting
Sheridan, Wyoming
October 5, 2006

Phil Ward stated that the Committee will discuss the status of water supply plans in the Council member states. One purpose is also to determine if these plans are in a form that could be utilized to fulfill the Committee's responsibilities under the scope of work for the Governors' water report.

Phil noted that Oregon is one of the few states in the West that does not have an active water supply plan. Some years ago, Oregon had a very active planning section, within the Water Resources Department, that roused the ire of some of the budget writers in the state legislature. The planning section was dismantled about a decade ago. Oregon is now attempting to rectify that and reestablish a water supply planning organization within the state.

Research shows that 16 of the 18 western states have a water supply plan. There are very different approaches to this process. One is primarily a data gathering approach, where folks gather the data relative to needs and identify potential supplies. There are also a number of member states that seem to have some broad collaborative efforts underway through a public planning process.

This effort relates to items 1A and 2D under the scope of work. The Committee is required to develop a summary of water supply needs westwide and a summary of the strategies that are in place state-by-state to meet those needs. We will entertain discussion in terms of what is out there on a state-by-state basis, and determine whether we have the information that could be forwarded to Tony to be put together to paint a picture for the governors. How much water is being used? How much water do we expect to use in the future? The planning horizon may vary from state to state.

Utah

Dennis Strong reported that 20 years ago, Utah began a statewide water planning process that was patterned after the Soil Conservation Service report. Basically, in the process, they identified basins in the state and gathered data. They used a template and reported what was available, how the water was being used, and they looked at growth, agriculture, and water supplies. The efforts were mainly to gather data in the first go around. At that time, they had a twenty year planning horizon. They prepared a report for each basin in the state, and this process took nearly fifteen years.

In 1999, they began to review each basin again. They began with the basins where there was a lot of growth, and they updated the plans basically following the same template used previously. However, in 1999, they realized they were getting ready for a new century and so they summarized the whole state plan in about 70 pages. They talked more specifically about what could be done for future water supplies.

In 2000-2001, Utah put out a state water report, and it identifies more specifically the issues that are also included in the Governors' water report (1A -- how to meet future water needs). They focused on municipal needs. Also, they moved from a planning horizon of twenty years to a fifty-year horizon. Thus, right now, the planning horizon in Utah is the year 2050. When they get to 2010, the horizon will be 2060, so it will probably move in ten-year blocks, so they maintain a 40-50 year planning horizon. With respect to population, they get their numbers from the Utah Office of Planning and Budget. The state wants to set policy, and have the Department of Water Resources identify how the needs are going to be met. So if the population will be 5 million in 2050, where will the water come from? If they want

to have more water in the streams, then the legislature will explain that to the Department, which will explain what the model will look like. It is very clear that the state's Office of Planning and Budget want the Water Resources Department to react to their figures. There are consequences of less water in the stream, such as less grass, more conservation, etc.

The process includes meeting with the people, meeting with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, and then try to bring the two together and come up with a report that includes all of the issues, yet is current and changing. It has been a good process. The report is available online at <http://www.utah.water.gov>. From a Utah perspective, this report fits really well into the WSWC's effort.

Wyoming

Pat Tyrrell commented that Wyoming's plan is not quite as far along as Utah's. Wyoming had a framework plan in 1973. It was simply a paper report. In the latter 1990s, they began basin planning. They have since moved around the state and prepared plans for each of the basins. They are currently in the mode of writing another framework plan. Some of that is still evolving.

A good deal of data collection has been done on supplies, existing demands, and there are some projections. They need more detail on how to meet those demands, and in defining specific projects to meet those demands. Wyoming does have a "renewing" planning process, going back on a 5-6 year rotating schedule to revisit each basin. The agricultural use is often the largest use and oftentimes does not lend itself to a meter and a pipe. They will complete the current rotation in about another year, and will then begin the second round of revisiting each basin.

Sue Lowry reiterated that the state has done a nice job with the water supply side. The Wyoming Water Development Commission outsources work to consultants. They are currently in the process of pulling the seven basin plans together, and they are finding that although the scopes are written consistently, there are inconsistent methodologies and that is a bit of a headache. Sometimes the definitions were different. The state could have done better in identifying where there are shortages, and what they plan to do about that.

South Dakota

South Dakota's state water plan is a little bit different, according to Garland Erbele. They have been doing statewide water plans for about twenty years, but it is an annual water plan. It is geared more towards funding of water projects. They do planning to identify what a particular project might be, so they can be eligible to apply for funding for such things as wastewater projects, drinking water projects, etc.

South Dakota is not really involved in projecting the water needs of a basin or a community. That is done more on a local basis.

California

Jeanine reported that California has had a program of state water planning since the 1950s. They have a requirement to prepare and update a state water plan every five years. The most current version was done in 2005. It uses a 2030 planning horizon. This version of the plan is less quantitative in that it looks at a range of planning scenarios and includes everything from one that focuses on extreme levels of conservation to one that focuses on a high level of development. So, depending on what answer you want, you can either say you need more water in the future, or you don't need more water in the future.

Thus, that makes it harder than just taking one number and plugging it in and getting an answer as to how much water we need. The answers range from zero to a bunch, depending on which scenario you pick. This is being used as a springboard to doing some integrated regional planning on a hydrologic region basis in California, based on some bond funding that may be coming.

Texas

Weir Labatt noted that for years Texas had a top down approach to water planning, and it never worked. So, in 1997, they developed a new approach. There are now sixteen different water planning regions throughout the state. Those sixteen regions each develop a plan based on population projections that the Texas Water Development Board helps create, but then they debate those figures. Once they have a population projection, they can project what the demand will be. Each region develops a plan, and those plans are turned into the Board for compilation. The first plan was done in 2002. They are working on the second iteration. The planning horizon is 50 years, and the updates are done on a rolling five-year cycle. The Board will approve that plan in November. It is a very comprehensive plan and is similar to California's. It is very voluminous and contains lots of data based on supplies, projected needs, and alternatives to meet the needs.

Colorado

Rod Kuharich commented that Colorado based their state water plan on the work that Texas did. They began a three-year planning process done with a basin-by-basin approach. This is the first time that Colorado, as a state, has begun water planning efforts. The state demographer provided the population figures. They used the planning process that the individual water providers were developing amongst themselves. They needed to have buy in from the water users, so they accepted their plans. In doing that, it created a looming problem, because many times the plans they were presented with, the projects that were on the board for development, included the same water that the community next door was looking at also. It also included projects, large and small, that to one degree or another face significant environmental or permitting problems. The state had asked the Bureau of Reclamation and 2025 to be a partner, but Reclamation refused.

In general terms, they found that three major river basins in the state will see shortfalls by 2030. The two that were no surprise to anybody were the Platte and the Arkansas, which also hold more than 85% of the state's population. The surprising basin shortfall it appears will occur in the mainstem of the Colorado. Two trends are occurring there. One, the headwaters of the Colorado provide water not only for Colorado, but also for the Platte and the Arkansas. Secondly, the mainstem of the Colorado was seeing significantly larger growth rates than other portions of the state. Their planning has admittedly lagged behind their growth rate. Much of that was due to the mentality that, "the water is always there, and we just pull it out of the river." Significant projects are now being talked about basin-by-basin.

The state has looked at an aggressive conservation plan for all areas of the state. Even with conservation plugged into the planning process, there will be shortfalls. Thus, Colorado is looking at needed new infrastructure. Additionally, they found that some basins are heavily reliant on one or two projects. Colorado faces significant issues with the planning process. The plan is located on the internet. Rod has assigned Rick Brown on his staff to work with western states to provide any information they need.

North Dakota

Dale Frink stated that he believes North Dakota could provide all of the information being sought on the state's water supplies and needs. They have been doing a state water plan for forty years, and it is updated on a regular basis. They canvass all of the counties and the locals for their projects and water needs, and the state also has some projects and water needs. That is all put into a state water plan. One of the state's significant needs is flood control. There is a large section of the plan devoted to water supply. North Dakota's plan is similar to South Dakota's in that the majority of the plan focuses on projects and funding requirements. If they go back to the individual projects, most of them have environmental assessment or environmental impact statements that include population projections. All of our water permits, including their annual use are posted on the internet.

Kansas

Dave Pope noted that a separate entity known as the Kansas Water Office is responsible for the state water plan. The most current iteration of planning began in the 1980s. He would characterize the Kansas state water plan a little different than other states in that it is more policy and issue oriented. There is a basin plan for each of the twelve basins in the state, and there are statewide policy sections. Much of the plan is not as quantitative as perhaps some of the plans we've heard about here. This is done through a public process, in terms of advisory committees and working with stakeholder groups, and so forth.

Oklahoma

Duane Smith reported that Oklahoma has about \$13 million to update the state water plan. He specifically noted that Texas and New Mexico received federal money appropriated directly to help them fund their water planning efforts.

The Corps is trying to authorize ways in which they can enter the water planning arena. I certainly believe that we want the states to have the lead role in state water planning, but there may be something in the report we pull together that would identify federal partnerships in how to accomplish state planning efforts.

Nevada

Nevada began planning efforts in the mid-1970s, according to Roland Westergard. Some of the information may be outdated. There were general policy directions established in the plan for alternatives for future development, and many of these still apply. About ten years ago, the state legislature established a concerted state water planning effort and the process was pursued. A plan was developed and presented to the legislature for approval or adoption. The legislature found it controversial enough that they would not approve the state water plan, but would accept it.

Arizona

Herb Guenther noted that there have been many plans prepared which are updated regularly, and the information should be readily available. Tom Carr would be the contact.

Idaho

Norm Semanko commented that in Idaho, in the 1960s, they adopted a constitutional amendment that set up a separate entity, the Idaho Water Resources Board, which was charged with developing a comprehensive plan for the appropriation of the unappropriated water in Idaho. They have developed a

comprehensive plan which is updated regularly. The requirements in the statute have changed slightly over time, but it covers all of the river basins. The last few years the focus has been on the Boise area and Treasure Valley, in terms of population trends. Hal Anderson is likely the fellow to contact in this regard. The Bureau of Reclamation just completed a study of potential storage opportunities in the Boise and Payette basins, which includes many of the figures from IDWR studies and other studies.

After hearing the reports from each state with respect to their state planning efforts, it was determined that Tony will send an email asking for information on the individual state water plans, as well as a contact for each state. Before asking for the information, WSWC staff will put together a format for collecting the data. The Corps will also assist in putting together a format document for collecting this information.

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