

LAS VEGAS VALLEY WATERSHED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Southern Nevada Water Authority
100 City Parkway
Las Vegas, NV
October 10, 2017
2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Randy DeVaul, *City of North Las Vegas (CNLV)*
Mark Dunbar, *City of Las Vegas (CLV)*
Dan Fischer, *Clark County Water Reclamation District (alt. CCWRD)*
Priscilla Howell, *City of Henderson (COH)*
Dave Johnson, *Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD)*
Zane Marshall, *Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA)*
Mindy Meyers, *Clark County (alt. CC)*
Steve Parrish, *Clark County Regional Flood Control District (CCRFCD)*

Also Present: Elizabeth Bickmore
Keiba Crear
Sandra Donnelly
Adrian Edwards
Laura Guliano
Zach Hills
Ebrahim Juma
Joemel Llamado
Lisa Luptowitz
Ryan Pearson
Peggy Roefer
John Tennert
Todd Tietjen
Andrew Trelease
Xiaoping Zhou

1. Welcome/Call to Order

Zane Marshall called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Seeing no request for public comment, Zane moved forward with the meeting.

3. Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

4. Approve April 18, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the summary passed.

5. Receive an Informational Update on Items Related to the Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee (LVVWAC) that may appear on Future Regular Board Meetings of LVVWAC Members' Appointing Agencies

Zane reported that an agenda for the November SNWA board meeting was not yet drafted. However, it is expected that there will be an item for the 2017 Water Resource Plan.

Priscilla Howell noted that the board had an item in October for a cost-sharing agreement with U.S. Geological Survey for monitoring.

6. Consultant Evaluation of the Las Vegas Wash (Wash)

Ryan Pearson, SNWA, provided the presentation. SNWA has been working to stabilize and enhance the valuable environmental resources of the Wash since the late 1990's. Of the 21 planned weirs, 19 have been constructed. The last two weirs (Tropicana and Sunrise Mountain) are currently in construction.

The capital improvements program is slated for completion in mid-2019. Since the program will be transitioning from construction to operation, SNWA hired a consultant to:

- Establish current Wash geometry/conditions and review the current SNWA model for required changes or updates.
- Evaluate effects of vegetation on weir stability and hydraulic performance and recommend course of action for vegetation management.
- Ensure Wash compliance with all regulations pertaining to flood management and current permits.

The consultant selected is Louis Berger, pending SNWA board approval. The main deliverable from the consultant will be a report with recommendations.

Dan Fischer asked if the recommendations would include a maintenance schedule. Ryan responded that the report would provide recommendations on a schedule and what the maintenance level should be. Dan also asked if dredging in front of the weirs would be necessary or if it would be part of the recommendations. Ryan responded that this was an ongoing issue that staff would evaluate. Dave Johnson further explained that staff would use all of the experience gained from years of going through the environmental work to try to determine what the operative plan would look like. Dave added that staff would put all the pieces together and then come back to the LVVWAC with a recommendation.

7. Receive an Update on Regional Water Quality

Todd Tietjen, SNWA, gave the presentation. Todd indicated that there has not been any dramatic shift or change associated with the water quality in the Wash.

He added that staff had observed exactly what they expected to see at Lake Mead during this time of year. One interesting thing to note is the high pH's in surface water of the lake for most of this year. Lake Powell is experiencing the same issue. It appears that something from the runoff in last year's winter storms has slightly raised pH levels throughout the water system.

Todd reported that Lake Mead had a relatively good year; lake levels have stayed above 1,075 feet and are slowly going up. According to the Bureau of Reclamation, Lake Mead is expected to remain above 1,075 feet so there would not be a shortage at the end of calendar year 2018.

Todd noted that high flow experiments were conducted in the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. The goal of these experiments is to enhance the development of sandbars in the Grand Canyon by moving sand from the riverbed to the shoreline by increasing flow. SNWA is working on the high flow experiments from a modeling perspective. The Regional Water Quality Team has begun planning to model the impacts of turbid inflows on raw water brought into the drinking water intakes. Additionally, the team is working with Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to build a coupled model system to plan for future conditions.

Todd commented that the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has completed the Nevada Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan. The plan has been approved by the State Wildlife Commission, NDOW director and Governor Sandoval. The plan is awaiting federal review. The goals of the plan are to prevent new introductions of aquatic invasive species (AIS) to Nevada, limit the spread of AIS populations in Nevada, eradicate or control AIS populations when possible and minimize harmful ecological, economic, social and public health impacts of AIS.

Todd noted that the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) had begun informal discussions regarding the revision of water quality standards in the Wash and Lake Mead. Some of the topics include protection of aquatic life, non-contact recreation, turbidity and total suspended solids at inflow areas, temperature conditions for maintenance of trout and discussions of whether to set water quality standards specific for uses in Lake Las Vegas.

Todd reported that NDEP expects to promulgate a selenium standard rule sometime in the next year. As previously presented, the existing water column data for Lake Mead and the Wash will not meet the water column standards from NDEP. Existing, but old, fish tissue data suggest that fish tissue is unlikely to meet the standards. The Las Vegas Wash Project Coordination Team is currently attempting to sample fish from the Wash however changes in habitat have limited the effectiveness of capture gear. Staff is evaluating other fish capture options for the lake and the Wash.

Todd reported that SNWA has acquired a sampling platform and a sampling buoy to automate some data collection on Lake Mead. The bouy will be placed near the confluence with the Wash and will measure routine physical and chemical parameters, plus algal pigments, turbidity and wastewater tracers. All data will be transferred to cloud servers and imported into the Lower Colorado River Water Quality Database to ensure the data is widely available. Currently, SNWA is pursuing ordering another three platforms for placement near Hoover Dam, Sentinel Island, and CR335 (inflow to Boulder Basin from uplake).

Todd noted that his team is working to compile the LVVWAC 2016 Accomplishments Report. He asked that members please email him accomplishments related to the LVVWAC from their respective agencies to include in the report.

Dave asked if staff would use the one-year review period associated with the selenium standard rule. Todd responded that the best-case scenario would be about three years.

Dan noted that given that a number of water bodies in the area were not going to meet the water column concentration standard for selenium, staff would have to analyze fish ovaries, muscle or body. He asked if it was still the plan to collect fish. Todd responded that yes, that was still the plan. Dan asked if SNWA would be the agency collecting fish. Todd responded that there had been discussions on this but no decision had yet been made.

Dan stated that depending on where this selenium criteria issue leads, there might come a point in time where the LVVWAC would have to figure out a way to spend money and he was unsure whether the committee had spent money in the past or had the ability to do so. Zane responded that the LVVWAC has an annual budget that can contribute to these activities. Todd and Keiba Crear added that a line could be added to the annual budget for fish analysis.

An individual from the audience asked what agency would be responsible for remediation of selenium in Clark County. Dave responded that at some point, the LVVWAC must take a leadership position and bring everyone together to figure out what kind of funding mechanism was going to be appropriate for this effort. He further explained that he has been made aware of new technologies for selenium removal that look promising.

Zane asked if staff had seen what they anticipated to see in terms of impacts to Lake Mead water quality resulting from high flow experiments in the Grand Canyon. Todd responded they did not expect to see any big impacts until the lake levels go up.

8. Receive an Update on Clark County Wetlands Park (Wetlands Park)

Elizabeth Bickmore gave the presentation. The Wetlands Parks received several awards in 2017 including awards for best family hike, indoor picnic café and for the Wetlands Hands On Program.

Elizabeth indicated that the Wetlands Park continues to be a community resource, participating in Metro's National Night Out, Lake Mead's CAST for Kids and the Children's Festival, among others.

Elizabeth noted that the Wetlands Park continues to expand their programs which include adult and youth watercolor painting. Through their school programs, the park has been visited by over 36,000 students and they have added a three-hour teacher training so teachers can bring their students through the self-guided tours.

Elizabeth reported that since January 2013, the park has had 941,000 visitors in the open use visitation and over 124,000 visitors to the exhibit hall. Wetlands Park staff is currently working on marketing their donor wall and on special event permitting, as well as increasing access to their facility reservations.

Elizabeth noted that the Wetlands Park's mosquito monitoring program analyzes the mosquito population for diseases. Six species have been identified and have tested negative for diseases such as West Nile, St. Louis Encephalitis and the Zika virus, among others.

9. Receive an Update from Members and Staff Regarding Water Resources, Stormwater, Wastewater, and Water Quality, Including but Not Limited to Regulations, Permitting and Status of the Lower Las Vegas Wash

Dave noted that for some period, as staff has provided updates to the SNWA board regarding the erosion control structure project and obtaining approval for spending, staff has also had conversations about what may be done with the lower Wash. Staff has tried to petition with local politicians and make headway with federal agencies but has not gotten very far with this initiative.

Dave reported that the SNWA board had expressed significant interest on what it might look like if SNWA were to take a local funding strategy moving forward. So, SNWA has begun looking at some alternatives from a cost perspective if they were to move forward with finishing the lower Wash erosion control project with local funding.

SNWA staff has approached the National Park Service to talk about this approach. Staff is working to put together a document that talks about cost and funding options. The document will define the hazards and will look at any existing erosion control structures that need to be rehabilitated. Once the document is completed, staff will reach out to the members of the LVVWAC to discuss what each agency's participation level might look like.

Priscilla noted that she was excited to see this process as it had been about four to five years since staff issued the first letter inquiring to elected officials about funding for the lower Wash erosion control project.

Randy DeVaul commented that it appeared that as time passed, the existing weirs would be more in danger of failing. Dave added that there were also issues that transferred back towards Lake Las Vegas. He said that it was time to take a hard look at this issue and see if this was something that the community wanted to support from a financial perspective.

Mark Dunbar commented that this was his first meeting as the LVVWAC representative from CLV. He added that he was happy to be at the meeting. Dan commented that Mark took Dave Mendenhall's position following Dave's retirement.

Steve Parrish stated that the audit had wrapped up. Staff had submitted everything to the state. The next step will be to renew the permit. The annual report is complete and has been submitted.

Mandy Meyers noted that she was the new alternate member representing CC. Jane Pike was the alternate member and she has since retired.

Zane indicated that Keiba would be reaching out to the different agencies regarding budget items either at the end of November or early December.

10. Set Next Meeting Date and Propose Items for the Next Meeting's Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2018. Items for that agenda include election of a chair and vice chair.

11. Public Comment

There were no comments. Meeting adjourned.