

LAS VEGAS VALLEY WATERSHED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Southern Nevada Water SNWA
100 City Parkway
Las Vegas, NV
October 8, 2019
2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Keiba Crear, *Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD, alt.)*
Mark Dunbar, *City of Las Vegas (CLV)*
Dan Fischer, *Clark County Water Reclamation District (CCWRD)*
Priscilla Howell, *City of Henderson (COH)*
Zane Marshall, *Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA)*
Steve Parrish, *Clark County Regional Flood Control District (CCRFCD)*

Also Present:

Elizabeth Bickmore	Peggy Roefler
Adrian Edwards	John Solvie
John Hiatt	John Tennert
Zach Hills	Todd Tietjen
Ryan Pearson	Andrew Trelease
Mary Reece	

- 1. Welcome/Call to Order**
Steve Parrish called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
- 2. Public Comment**
Seeing no request for public comment, Steve moved forward with the meeting.
- 3. Introductions**
Participants introduced themselves.
- 4. Approve April 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes**
Motion to approve the minutes 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**
There were no items to report.
- 6. Approve 2018 LVVWAC Accomplishments Document**
Steve Parrish noted that the 2018 LVVWAC Accomplishments Document had been reviewed by all agencies and was ready for approval. Mark Dunbar made a motion to approve the document. The item was passed.
- 7. Receive an Update on Proposed NDEP Standards for Las Vegas Wash**
John Tennert, CCRFCD, presented the proposed Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) standards for the Las Vegas Wash (Wash). The NDEP Bureau of Water Quality Planning provided notice of intent to revise water quality standards for the Wash and Lake Mead

in May 2019 and held public workshops in June 2019. From the proposed NDEP standards for the Wash, CCRFCD took issue with the following four:

- Designating the inner Las Vegas Bay for contact recreation
- Setting *E. coli* criteria for the inner Las Vegas Bay
- Applying *E. coli* criteria to wet weather in the Las Vegas Wash
- Setting a state-wide standard for Selenium

John stated that there are high levels of bacteria in the inner bay. Birds in the Las Vegas Wash and inner bay contribute bacteria. Stormwater flows also contribute significantly during storm events. He also noted that inner bay levels routinely exceed the proposed standard and that the inner bay is not safe for swimming. The proposed *E. coli* criteria is for a 30-day geometric mean of 126 cfu/100 mL and a single value maximum of 410 cfu/100 mL.

John noted that one of the concerns of the stormwater permittees is that NDEP was going to propose criteria that could not be met. He showed a map of the Las Vegas Bay, and the area being tested by NDEP was a distance from the confluence of the Wash and Lake Mead. The concern is that being so far away from the Wash, it underrepresented the values and the actual values could exceed the standard.

In their written response to NDEP, stormwater permittees argued that birds are an important part of the environment, that there is no reasonable way to implement the standard, that the Clean Water Act requires achievement and a total maximum daily load, if necessary. Furthermore, the new criteria will not protect anything if it cannot be achieved. The criteria communicates to the public that the inner bay is safe for swimming. Lastly, once a new standard is established, it is very hard to remove.

NDEP also proposed designating the Wash for contact recreation. The concern from stormwater permittees is that the Wash is unsafe for recreation during wet weather. Permittees asked for a footnote to be added that specifically excluded the standard from applying during wet weather events. NDEP argued that a footnote was unnecessary, citing Nevada Administrative Code 445A.121 which recognizes that water quality standards may be exceeded during extreme flow events.

Regarding setting a state-wide standard for selenium, permittees argued that there are high levels of selenium in Las Vegas Valley soils. Selenium dissolves in groundwater and surfacing groundwater enters tributaries.

John reported that the State Environmental Commission (SEC) held a hearing on NDEP's proposed water quality standards on October 2. Stormwater permittees submitted written comments opposing the mentioned elements of the proposed standards. NDEP requested that the item for selenium be tabled until the next SEC meeting in December. NDEP will work with the local jurisdictions over the next three years to establish site-specific standards for the Wash and tributaries.

8. Receive an Update on Regional Water Quality

Todd Tietjen, SNWA, gave the presentation. Todd indicated that water quality in both Lake Mead and the Wash has been relatively good, overall water quality is stable and, in some cases, has gotten better. No significant algal blooms or chlorophyll accumulations have been observed.

Todd reported that the intakes BMI and LMI1 and LMI2 remain susceptible to changes during the year, moving them from the hypolimnion very early in the year to the epilimnion late in the year.

Todd said that Lake Mead had a relatively good year; lake levels have stayed above 1,075 feet above sea level. There are actions being taken to keep lake levels higher than they would be otherwise, and with the third intake, there will be access to high quality water deep in the lake.

Todd added that regarding Lake Mead water temperature, staff is seeing the usual temperature observed during this time of year. Each year surface waters are very warm during this period. The third intake gets into the 10-12-degree water year-round. Todd added that he does not expect these water temperature patterns to change in the long-term. Regarding dissolved oxygen in Lake Mead, surface water has remained very well oxygenated year-round.

Todd stated that the Wash carries organic matter from the valley into the lake, most of which is naturally occurring. As the organic matter settles out, the bacteria decompose it.

The five sampling platforms and sampling buoy that are automated for data collection on Lake Mead are currently in place. Some of the platforms are set up to collect surrogate measures for algae and for wastewater influence. The data collected by these devices will be available online, staff is using the data for monitoring and is currently taking steps to make this data available to the public in real time.

Regarding algal blooms, this year was uneventful. Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LMNRA) has had at least two reports of dogs becoming sick or dying after swimming in Lake Mead/Mojave. SNWA and LMNRA sampled the most recent event and no toxin was detected in any of the samples and there was no sign of an algal bloom in the surface waters. Anecdotal information from Lake Havasu suggests that they have had less Microcystis and did not detect toxins this year.

Regarding the 2019 water quality sampling schedule, all of the programs continued on a monthly or quarterly basis. Staff is working to obtain a major software upgrade that will allow the migration of program databases into the Lower Colorado River Water Quality Database. The upgrade would make the database platform more user-friendly and more accessible to the public. In 2018, there was sediment quality monitoring in the Wash to update previous work. Looking at a graph of metal concentrations from sediment samples collected at Pabco Road in the Wash between 2003 and 2018, Todd reported that none degraded over this time period. In fact, for some of the metals, the concentrations have gotten better.

Dan Fischer stated that the sampling that SNWA does in Lake Mead through the sampling platforms is very impressive and combined with the wastewater monitoring done by the wastewater team, the watershed is very well looked after in terms of water quality.

9. Receive an Update on the Clark County Wetlands Park

Elizabeth Bickmore gave the presentation. Currently, Clark County Wetlands Park (CCWP) has several contracts and partnerships in the areas of landscape maintenance, weed management and fuel reduction and restoration projects.

Elizabeth mentioned that during the last legislative session, \$10 million was authorized to CCWP for redevelopment of the final two miles of the Loop Trail, and they also received additional funds for grants. CCWP held a Spring Break media event on April 11, 2019. Elizabeth mentioned that their Southern Nevada Public Land Management Round 15 project is for a total of \$1.6 million and will go out to bid in the winter of 2019-2020. Staff estimate that the project will reach completion in early 2021.

Elizabeth reported that since 2013, the park has had 196,360 visitors in open use visitation and 34,314 visitors to the exhibit hall. Since 2001, the park has hosted 44,968 students.

CCWP's current revenue sources come from the newly opened Nature Store, facility reservations, program fees and private programs and donations. The Nature Store is now open from Wednesday through Sunday and its items focus on educational and programmatic themes. Currently, the park offers a guided nature walking tour, a nature craft program and golf cart tours.

CCWP has 128 volunteers that contributed 10,619 hours in 2018. They added 33 trained volunteers in 2019. The park received the Best Hike to Clear your Head and Best Off-Traffic Place to Cycle awards from Desert Companion's Best in the City and was also recognized as the park with the best hiking trails in Las Vegas.

Elizabeth showed a short film on the CCWP that was created by college students.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2020.

11. Public Comment

There were no comments. Meeting adjourned.