

Arizona Department of Water Resources  
**GROUNDWATER USERS ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
Tucson Active Management Area  
Kenneth Seasholes, Area Director



DEE T. O'NEILL  
Chair

JOHN MAWHINNEY  
Vice-Chair

DAN OFFRET

JON POST

CHUCK SWEET

**Minutes**  
**January 23, 2008**

**Members Present:** John Mawhinney, Vice-Chair  
Dan Offret  
Jon Post  
Chuck Sweet

**Tucson Staff Present:** Kenneth Seasholes  
Mary Bauer  
Laura Grignano  
Diane Kusel  
Dawne Wilson

**Others Present:** Dave Crockett, Flowing Wells Irrigation Dist.  
Dennis Dickerson, Pima Assoc. of Governments  
Eric Holler, Bureau of Reclamation  
Aaron Lien, U of A  
Nancy Freeman, Groundwater Awareness League  
Arturo Gabaldon, Community Water Co.  
Larry Kempton, Farmers Investment Co.  
Holly Lachowicz, City of Tucson Ward 3 Aide  
Sharon Megdal, U of A  
Jim Peterson, Oro Valley Resident  
Linda Smith, Tucson Water  
Ken Taylor, Community Water Co.  
Tim Thomure, HDR Engineering  
Warren Tenney, Metro Water District  
Tracy Williams  
Alex Yiannakakis, Private Citizen  
Clarie Zucker, Pima Assoc. of Governments

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chair John Mawhinney called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Chuck Sweet made a motion to approve the minutes of November 8, 2007. John Mawhinney seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**3. Area Director's Report**

Kenneth Seasholes reported that by the end of the week the promulgation order from the Director should be received for the Third Management Plan modifications on the non-per capita conservation program.

Since the last GUAC meeting a new group in Green Valley has formed called the Upper Santa Cruz Provider and User Group. There may be an opportunity to have representatives from this group attend a future GUAC meeting to discuss ways to collaborate on processes.

The annual Xeriscape Contest promotional efforts are underway. The deadline for entering is April 1. Tucson Botanical Gardens (TBG) is the new partner for the contest this year, and the awards ceremony will be held at TBG on May 15.

#### 4. **“Evolution and Evaluation of the Active Management Area Management Plans”**

Professor Sharon Megdal, Director of the University of Arizona’s (UA) Water Resources Research Center, provided an overview on the report, “Evolution and Evaluation of the Active Management Area Management Plans.” The authors of the report are Professor Sharon Megdal; Northern Arizona University (NAU) Professor Zachary Smith; UA planning graduate student Aaron Lien, with additional assistance of NAU graduate student Carol Johnson. Funding was provided by the Arizona Water Institute (AWI) and the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). The report is available on line at [www.cals.arizona.edu/azwater/](http://www.cals.arizona.edu/azwater/)

The report resulted from a study conducted during calendar year 2007 to examine the intended functions and purposes of the Management Plans, in particular to legislative intent and to evaluate the Management Plan provisions from ADWR’s perspective and the regulated community. The effectiveness of the Plans’ goals was assessed by stakeholders and suggestions and recommendations were made on what they would like to see in the Fourth Management Plan.

Interviews with individuals involved in creating the Groundwater Management Act (GMA) and documents such as AMA Management Plans and other relevant reports (e.g. Governor’s Water Management Commission Report) were used to assist in conducting the study.

In addition, roughly 35 interviews were conducted with stakeholders and ADWR staff, which focused on each AMA and sector. Some of the questions posed focused on the strength and weaknesses of the Management Plans’ development process; satisfaction with the conservations programs; opinions about standardization of the conservation programs across the AMAs, and the content and development process of future Management Plans.

The intent of the Management Plans was viewed as the key GMA implementation tool. It seemed clear that the focus was not on conservation programs but conservation being an important component of the Management Plans’ goals. People noted that there were specific requirements for early management periods and vague requirements for later periods to allow flexibility, and conservation requirements would be ramped up over time to allow users to adjust.

Measuring effectiveness was very challenging and was concluded that it couldn’t be done based on the information in the Management Plans. According to the respondents, this was due to a lack of consistent data over time and inconsistent methodology from one Management Plan to the next.

It was impossible to determine the cause of declines in GPCD. Was it due to conservation, weather, change in water users, etc? It would take fairly sophisticated statistical analysis and data collection to determine this.

Lack of consistent trends in the municipal and agricultural sectors and essentially no data available for the industrial sector were additional factors relating to not being able to measure effectiveness. Also, it

was challenging to glean information from water budgets because of inconsistent formats between AMAs, except for the Tucson AMA, which has up-to-date water budget information.

Indirect measures of effectiveness were also looked at during the study. Many changes and options were offered to give people the tools to tailor their needs and programs. Enforcement information was sought, but it turned out that the database was not readily searchable by internal staff.

Some of the stakeholders within the municipal sector would like to move away from the GPCD program, but there was a desire to retain the GPCD option for designated providers. They would also prefer regulations that are less binding.

Concern was expressed on ADWR's ability to effectively implement regulations. This was mentioned in the context of the new Best Management Practices (BMP) program, specifically in dealing with the burden of meeting reasonable conservation measures of the non-per-capita program. It was also noted that the BMP program would be an opportunity to provide AMA specific conservation practices.

It was acknowledged that there are good reasons for ADWR to move over time to a standardized approach to conservation across the AMAs. It would be administratively easier, but there was some discomfort with not recognizing that there are differences across the AMAs, and this recognition should be considered when implementing conservation programs.

The quantification and reporting of GPCD rates also came up. It was questioned as to whether there is a metric to measure against. How ADWR collects and reports data was also an expressed concern.

There was dissatisfaction with the base conservation program for the agricultural sector. A lot of work was done to develop an alternative Historical Cropping Program; once developed there were no takers. Since then there was the adoption of the BMP Program for agriculture, which resulted in little engagement.

In the industrial sector, there are several sub-sectors and not all of them were contacted. There were no real strong opinions from those interviewed, but it was acknowledged that ADWR did work with them on BMPs. Continued expansion of industrial use of water is a significant concern for safe-yield AMAs.

Lastly, there was limited comment on the Augmentation Program as it pertains to legislative language relating to recovery being consistent with the management goal of the AMA. Although the comments that were received were based on the issues of recovery well permit drawdown criteria in the Management Plan and equity issues related to the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGRDR).

There was a lot of consistency on comments when it came to looking forward to the Fourth Management Plans (4MP). It was thought that ADWR should take what is already in place and use it, as opposed to "reinventing the wheel." Many expressed the 4MP should be focused on long-term planning and meeting statutory management goals and what can be done as a region to get there.

A lot of complaints were heard on the stakeholder process. People thought that during the TMP process ADWR had already decided what it wanted and didn't respond to input. A more meaningful and well thought out process is critical to the success of future planning efforts.

Issues with Recharge and Recovery and Assured Water Supply must be addressed and water budgets and other types of water tracking should be done on a more frequent basis.

The four recommendations resulting from the study are as follows:

**Recommendation 1:** *ADWR should provide water use data for all sectors on at least an annual basis. These data must be reported in a consistent format over time and across AMAs.*

**Recommendation 2:** *State of the AMA reports should be produced on a yearly or biennial basis.*

**Recommendation 3:** *ADWR should shift its focus to long-term water planning, but still maintain the current conservation programs.*

**Recommendation 4:** *The Augmentation and Recharge Program and the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District rules need to be reviewed and updated to ensure fairness.*

In conclusion, it was determined that the current statutory language provides significant flexibility for the Fourth and Fifth Management Plans. There is opportunity for creativity and forward thinking. The stakeholders would like to see a process focused more on collaboration planning and less regulation. Realizing the state's current budget condition, resources are an issue. The community should get together to conduct a regional plan on a reasonable time frame. Can this be done?

In response to Recommendations 1 and 2, Kenneth Seasholes reported that ADWR's Water Management Division has recently been working on creating consistent data sets for all the AMAs. These data sets contain detailed components that go into the water budgets, which will enable the department to see what's been happening within the safe-yield AMAs.

In addition, there will be an AMA volume of the Arizona Water Atlas. The Atlas is divided into seven planning areas composed of groundwater basins. Each planning area is discussed in a separate volume. The AMA volume should have the same information as the other volumes.

Also underway is an assessment to look at where ADWR is in relation to meeting its goals. The compilation of the AMA data budgets will be tied to this assessment. Once the assessment is completed, the next step will be to look at where ADWR is relative to its Management Plans in reaching safe-yield and whether legislative change would be required.

No matter what the challenges facing the region, Mr. Seasholes reminded everyone the Tucson office is operating at half the staff it had when working on the Management Plans. With current budget restrictions all vacant positions are frozen.

## **5. Date and Agenda for Next Meeting**

The GUAC members will be polled on a meeting date and time for sometime in March 2008.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.