

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



DEE T. O'NEILL
Chair

DAVID MODEER
Vice-Chair

JOHN MAWHINNEY

JON POST

CHUCK SWEET

Minutes
March 29, 2006

Members Present: Dee O'Neill, Chair
John Mawhinney
Jon Post
Chuck Sweet

Tucson Staff Present: Kenneth Seasholes
Mary Bauer
Christina Bickelmann
John Bodenchuk
Diane Kusel
Jeff Tannler
Laura Grignano
Virginia Welford

Others: Catherine Balzono, AZ State Land Dept.
Hope Bracken, Citizen
Dave Crockett, FWID
Dennis Dickerson, PAG
Nancy Freeman, Groundwater Alliance
Arturo Gabaldon, Community Water Co. of Green Valley
Greg Hess, Clear Creek Associates
Eric Holler, Bureau of Reclamation
Ries Lindley, Tucson Water
Val Little, Water CASA
Philip Saletta, Oro valley Water Utility
Linda Smith, Tucson Water
Sydney Smith, CMID/CWUA
Warren Tenney, Metro Water District
Steven Vaughn, URS Corporation

- 1. Call to Order**
Chairperson, Dee O'Neill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made.
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
Chuck Sweet made a motion to approve the minutes of January 27, 2006. John Mawhinney seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. **Area Director's Report**

Kenneth Seasholes reported that at the last GUAC meeting, the San Xavier Allottees Association discussed proposed legislation that would provide the San Xavier District with greater protection under the current SAWRSA pumping restrictions. The Bill that would modify the protection zone isn't expected to be heard until the 2007 legislative session, which will allow interested parties more time to discuss the provisions and bring the issue back to the GUAC for consideration.

Recharge update

Mr. Seasholes asked Diane Kusel, lead recharge staff member for the Tucson office, to give an update on the recharge activities that have occurred in the Tucson AMA. Ms. Kusel stated that Recovery Well (RW), Water Storage (WS), Underground Storage Facility (USF) and Groundwater Savings Facility (GSF) are the types of permits that exist in the recharge program.

There are a total of 78 recharge permits in the Tucson AMA and two in the Sierra Vista area, with applications pending for a USF modification for the Town of Sahuarita, Avra Valley and a WS permit for the Town of Sahuarita. The total amount of water stored at recharge facilities in 2004 was approximately 174,675 acre-feet, with 71,342 acre-feet recovered. Ms. Kusel reported that there are 470,945 acre-feet of long-term storage credits available for future use. It is expected that additional permit applications will be submitted to ADWR in the near future.

GUAC members asked that future agenda items include: an overview of how the recharge program works, as well as a second look at the amount of water necessary to meet M&I firming goals. Another suggested future agenda item was a discussion on what the state is doing to manage its water resources. This discussion could assist in filling the informational gap that has been identified as existing between the public and water managers.

Update on rule packages

A public stakeholder process has been conducted to move forward on making the temporary well spacing impact rules permanent. The proposed package has the same basic framework as the existing rules. There have been extensive comments received and ADWR is expected to respond to the comments at the Governor's Regulatory Review Council's June meeting.

The Assured Water Supply (AWS) rule package is also moving forward. Most of the changes would affect how ADWR processes Certificates of AWS.

Website and electronic reporting

Kenneth Seasholes reported he has created a Tucson AMA specific web site, where many useful resources are available. The web address is: www.azwater.gov/TAMA.

Mr. Seasholes also added that last fall a joint letter was sent by many of the water providers asking if it would possible for ADWR to have electronic reporting for

submitting annual water use and withdrawal reports. He noted that online reporting has been identified as a key a strategic priority for ADWR.

Other

The Regional Groundwater Flow Model of the Tucson AMA is now available in hard copy and CD for \$30.00. This model is a major planning tool for the Tucson AMA.

Finally, Mr. Seasholes announced that in May 2005, the state legislature passed a law that requires community water systems to submit a plan that would include: 1) a water supply plan; 2) a drought preparedness plan; and 3) a conservation plan. The law also required annual water use reporting. There are several workshops scheduled throughout April and May 2006 to assist community water system managers in developing system water plans and reporting annual water use.

4. Institutional and Policy Advisory Group (IPAG)

Mr. Seasholes stated in 2004, the Arizona Water Banking Authority (AWBA) entered into an agreement to store 1.25 MAF of CAP water on behalf of the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA). Due to the concern that there will not be enough excess CAP water for the AWBA to meet that volume, a \$100 million fund was established to secure additional water supplies.

The fund is currently being used to purchase water as quickly as possible so that it can be stored to meet the obligation to Nevada, but there is concern that if the fund is not needed in the future to secure alternate supplies, it could be swept by the legislature for non-water purposes. In recognition of this concern, in March 2005, IPAG made recommendations to the AWBA to use future available funds for CAP system improvements that benefit CAP users and on-rivers users.

Based on the IPAG's recommendation, the following motion was unanimously passed:

The Tucson AMA GUAC supports the AWBA's current use of the fund to accelerate storage on behalf of the SNWA. The GUAC also urges the AWBA to support the use of future available money from the fund for CAP system improvements that directly benefit all CAP users and those on-river users that assumed the risk associated with the SNWA agreement.

5. Municipal Conservation Review Stakeholder Process

Mr. Seasholes reported on the municipal conservation program review process that is currently in progress. The base GPCD program has evolved since the First Management Period. It has had a positive track record, but through time there have been complaints and issues raised by the regulated water providers, and an increasing administrative burden for ADWR. Some components of the program went all the way to the Arizona Supreme Court, with ADWR prevailing, however, there are still unresolved issues.

The GPCD program includes both residential and non-residential users, and the calculations have become more and more complex over time. Due to the inflexibility of

the program, it is very difficult to deal with changes in the characteristics of a service area, such as increases in non-residential water use.

In an attempt to deal with the structural issues, alternative conservation programs were developed, including the non-per capita conservation program (NPCCP), which is a best management practice (BMP) approach that uses practices based on category of water use: interior, residential, exterior residential, commercial, etc. Water providers have had the ability to choose among these categories, but it's a fairly rigid structure and an administratively burdensome program for both ADWR and the providers. In addition, because of the groundwater reduction requirement of the NPCCP, only designated providers are eligible to enter, excluding non-designated providers.

The current stakeholder process has been studying fundamental changes on how ADWR regulates municipal providers. Ultimately, ADWR would like to see a single program that would work for all providers and would achieve effective conservation. The BMP approach is being explored to achieve this. The GUAC will be asked to look at proposals as the program develops further. Most changes being discussed would likely require statutory and management plan changes.

Visit ADWR's website at www.azwater.gov to review documents on what's being done in the AMAs relative to conservation and some of the perspectives regarding the GPCD program. The process is scheduled to wrap up in June.

6. Date and Agenda for Next Meeting

The GUAC members will be contacted to schedule a meeting some time in May. Future proposed agenda items include: Update on where ADWR is relative to reaching safe-yield, an overview on how the recharge program works, and GPCD program review process update.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.