

Salt Lake (8/13/2013) Breakout Session

Bob Morgan – Water Law

- Revise water law – first in time first in right.
- Beneficial use definitions. Beneficial use has to change.
- Duties need to change.
- Priority should be given to the environment.
- Stream access law. Access to water for recreation.
- Fishing brings in more money than skiing.
- Ground water transfers.
- Basin of origin.
- Gray water for gardening.

Dennis Strong – Maintenance, Infrastructure & Funding

- The Division of Drinking Water needs a fund to help small water providers. Water Resources has traditionally handled the Bear River Project and the Lake Powell Pipeline, but small water companies have needs also and few resources to help them. Funds dedicated to the need to help with required maintenance and replacement. This needs to be part of a 50-year plan.
- Education of the public is needed to convince them that funds for maintenance and replacement are necessary. Asset management has not been a key issue. We can't have large fund balances for replacement, because it is hard to convince the public to leave it alone.
- When water rates rise in small communities many complaints are voiced. We have some into our asset management. In our community during the weekend the population becomes much larger and requires more infrastructure investment.
- Bonds to create infrastructure for quickly growing areas are difficult to obtain for small municipalities. Towns cannot get a bond based on future growth and revenue. Also, impact fees do not qualify a town for a bond either. The only solution is to raise rates on the existing population.
- If you have a bond and one year do not have the income to make your payment, it would be good to have insurance for that.
- What happens when everyone saves water? It reduces income to water providers. There is little incentive for water providers to promote conservation.

Todd Adams & Eric Millis for Tage Flint – Delivery and Water Efficiency

- Our member city and district managers would like to assure that the aquifer storage and recovery permitting process be streamlined to preserve the ability to recharge water. The permitting process should be based on the protection of water quality. This will allow us the opportunity to store water without building surface reservoirs. Some of our member districts would like to recharge water on the western side of the Salt Lake Valley and they fear that the Division of Water Quality's permitting guidelines are too restrictive.

- What we find in our delivery systems is that the summer time demand is five times as high as the winter demand. Outdoor water conservation therefore is the best area to impact infrastructure needs. We have found that our water conservation efforts have helped reduce these peak demands and reduce the capital costs that our peak water delivery systems demand.
- Get the state agencies to be a better example of water conservation. If the state wants us to conserve water, they need to lead by example. The state facilities near Redwood Road and North Temple are not being a good example. The landscape near the Department of Agriculture and Department of Health have been watering 3 hours each evening, 7-days a week. The State is a significant user of water. If they were to Xeriscape their own landscapes it would go a long way in helping to use our water more efficiently.
- What issues do you see with water delivery?
- Is there anything we can do to help new developments be more efficient...to plan ahead and build more water conscious landscapes?
- What about eliminating large reservoir surfaces that are subject to evaporation, is the state doing anything to reduce evaporation from these reservoirs?
- These reservoirs also get silted over time and are not able to deliver the water they were designed for.
- Some of our customers have let their lawns die by being too conservative with their watering and when they try to revive their landscapes they end up overwatering to get them going again.
- We have found that tiered rates don't seem to impact water use in our system much. The high water users don't seem to care, they will just pay for it. The low water users seem to be much better and using water efficiently.
- Education of the end user is key in many respects. They simply need to know more about what we expect them to do. We can help them by letting them know how much water they use and by utilizing the latest technology to communicate these things to them. Real-time water use information and customized reports will help.
- We have a lot of increasing block rate structures in the valley. The upper tiers probably need to be a little higher. This will help provide incentives to cut back and use water more efficiently.
- Is water reuse part of the state's policy to use water efficiently?
- We are doing a good job with conservation. We need to educate the people about where our water comes from. I think we need to do this through the local churches. I think if we approach it correctly, we could ask the local churches to help educate the public about water.

Alan Matheson for Tim Hawks – Water and the Environment

- Continued/improved streamflow to maintain our aquatic environment. This will help the fisheries and wildlife. Access to the streams in Utah is also important. Our water law has to change to allow beneficial use to include recreation use and instream flow.
- 13 states that are involved in planning and risk assessment that use climate/global warming in there planning. In this state, we don't discuss it and it is a taboo subject. What is the process in the state that excludes this topic in our planning?
- There is a process at the Universities called IUtah. This process is looking at the water future, water in urban areas, and the effects of climate change. The state climatologist will be involved.

- If we let the Great Salt Lake dry up, the fine particulates will blow into town. These particulates contain heavy metals which are toxic. The pollution from the waste water from fossil fuel development in eastern Utah and get the refineries out of the Salt Lake Valley. The billions of dollars that it would cost to remove the oil refineries are already being lost anyway (health care cost, etc.). It is a small price to pay. Moving the refineries out of Mexico City a decade ago is a primary reason to the improved air quality today
- The Governor should be evaluating the cost of all these things on the population. There is a cost associated to people being off work because they are sick which relates to the water used for extreme energy projects. Energy development of the Uinta basin has impacts on the water quality and human health. There is a tradeoff of people's lives being lost to cancer and birth defects. The Dept. of Environmental Quality is doing a crappy job of monitoring these energy companies. For example, US oil sands dump water without a water discharge permit. Water pollution by tar sands, oil shale, and fracking is a real concern that the governor should take serious. Nobody is calculating the cost if my grandmother dies of cancer. I don't care how many jobs it makes if people are dying. That is not a fair trade off.

Warren Peterson – Water for Agriculture

- There is a lot of Opportunity for innovation of how water is transferred between agriculture and M&I use. One example is a farmer has X amount of water and a Municipality need X amount of water. The Farmer can lease it to the Municipality but retains the water right. So that if the Municipality needs it, it is available but the farmer doesn't lose the right to it.
- As the west grows in population and we move water from agriculture to M&I use let's not get sucked into a greedy kind of a political or public debate. Let's move that water in a willing seller and willing buyer environment. Let the farmer sell out as opposed to an eminent domain approach. Agriculture currently serves as a bank, preserving our water supply. Technology serves all uses of water. In agriculture we are certainly more efficient today producing a hay field than we were in the pioneer times, and that is due to technology. Let's continue to be innovative and research technology.
- Researching and developing the nation's first sea water green house. Developing growing systems that use teraculture, a combination of Earth building, aquaponics, hydroponics, and permaculture. So that we can create a completely sustainable environment, recycle oil of the water, create its own nutrients. We are going to be launching the first one over in Scull Valley probably in about three months. Idea to grow all the food we need in the State of Utah.
- Water Reuse Company that propose to increase water reuse with innovative treatment methods.
- Primary concern is that agriculture gets its share of the water.
- We need to do a better job modeling water supplies. In particular we need to get a better handle on groundwater and recharge rates. And prioritize the use based upon cost/benefit: Is Utah's agriculture as conservation oriented as it should be? Yes. Have we made significant improvements? Yes. Is there still room for improvement? Yes. Is there opportunity to lease out ag water but keep it long term in the ag arena? Yes. Those are all avenues that we need to pursue.
- If a farmer is not using all of his water there should be opportunity to lease out his unused water.

Voneene Jorgensen – Competition for Water

- Down scaling of climate change models to more of a regional scale. A climate change model for the entire state is not accurate for small subareas. The state should have funding to generate small scale climate change models.
- Stream access. Public access to rivers would restore river access to historic laws. Make sure that the law is enforced as stated, floating allowed. People should not be allowed to put fences across the river or kick people off the river if they are floating the river. Use Idaho law to alter Utah's law.
- Protect water for wildlife. What would happen if the Great Salt Lake were to dry up?
- More appropriate water use for our water supply. Better estimates of water needs and use. Whose statistics are correct?