

## Uintah Watershed Council Meeting

### Attendees:

Brett Prevedel	Jordan Dimick – Trout Unlimited
Cheyenne Reid – USU	Peggy Killian – Rancher
Jesse Hyde – CUWCD	Christine Osborne – DEQ
Gawain Snow	Adam Clark – DWRe
Randan Vincent - Rancher	Carly Payne – DWRe
Steve Hanberg – Irrigation Company	Hollie Wood – The Langdon Group
Cody Wilkins – Farm Bureau	Andy Rasmussen – The Langdon Group
Tracy Killian – Duchesne County Commissioner	Holly Mitchell – BLM
Scott Chew – State Representative	Nathan Hall – Uintah Basin District
Dex Winterton – Moon Lake Water Users	Jeff Crozier – Javelin Energy
Darrell Gillman – UDAF	Jack Lytle – Daggett County Commissioner
Clyde Watkins – Duchesne County Water Conservancy District	

### **Discussion About the Vision of the Legislature that Created the Watershed Councils – Scott Chew**

- Ran bill that added to the state water bill – worked with Warren Peterson
- Warren Peterson is the main writer of the bill that created the watershed councils
- Have been a little lost in finding the direction that we want the watershed councils to go to
- Most people don't need another meeting to attend, so we are still working on making these meaningful and not just another meeting to attend
- Main driving factor behind watershed councils – there is too much discussion that happens after laws are passed
- Try to get more local opinion and feedback earlier on in the process
- Tim Hawkes was one of the main original legislatures and they brought Warren in because of his water attorney background
- This is set up in the same format as other state groups
  - State watersheds councils make the decision, but receive information from local council representatives
  - Are we a hands-on group that does project work? Or are we a recommendation group?
    - Tim's intent was to help identify needs areas, but not as much to be the boots on the ground group
- Water companies are getting questioned about supporting water projects, but we don't know where to turn to for answers or direction
  - CRAU has had similar conversations in their recent meetings that discussed such frustrations from water companies
- There is a lot of good work going on around the watershed, but nobody knows about what others are working on – different groups aren't aware of all the different projects currently going on
- Some of these projects may be band-aid type projects to quickly help solve problems in the interim, but some should also be long term-based solution focused projects
- Produced water

- State engineer is supposed to be in charge of all water rights within the state
- Produced water from oil and gas fields – should there be water rights for this?
  - As long as that produced water stays within the oil and gas industry, then it can be used without the need for an approved state engineer water right
    - If it was to be reintroduced as natural water, that would be a different scenario
  - Cuts down the need for freshwater use
  - Javelin pumps out of the Duchesne River, then to ponds, then to fracking operations
    - Trying to use more produced water
    - No one else in water wants to use this water due to the chemicals in the wells, so we are trying to figure out what the threshold for clean water (PPM level) to get that water back out to agriculture uses
      - Effort to reduce use of fresh water
    - Questions about changing of produced water from one company to another and whether or not a water right will be needed for that
- Oil and gas is going to be a big part of the discussion for this watershed council – may be unique to our local council, but we can provide valuable input to state and legislature regarding these issues
  - Do we want to create a subcommittee for oil and gas considerations?
    - Council discussed that it may be more beneficial to keep these discussions council wide
    - Instead of creating a subcommittee, we will continue to have these discussions with all council members. Holly Mitchell, Steve Hanberg, and Jeff Crozier can help lead these efforts, since they have the data and numbers.
      - They will keep their ears to the ground and bring data and information to the rest of the council members to help educate other council members and facilitate council-wide discussion
- Would like to continue to have groups who are working on projects come and present on what they are doing during these watershed council meetings so we can be educated on all that is happening within the watershed

**Update and Discussion from the Uintah Basin Watershed Stakeholder Group – Christine Osborne**

- Previous “Uintah Basin watershed council” was created in the early 2010’s but petered out over the years. Some individuals were interested in getting this group back together to learn from one another and collaborate and this became the Uintah Basin Watershed Stakeholder Group
  - Mostly made up of agency individuals but this group was missing the voice of landowners and boots-on-the-ground workers
- Would like to find a way to pool our resources and not duplicate efforts but work together as best as possible
- Christine is also a part of the Weber River Watershed Council and gave examples of what they have done in that area

- Brought in some local landowners to discuss what their needs and priorities were and how to work together to create proposals to receive funds for projects that local landowners identified as important to them (Echo Creek)
- Funding came from council member organizations and council member networks
- Look to areas where we are placing band-aid solutions and determine which ones should be prioritized for longer-term solutions
- DEQ is currently working on prioritization for plans in the Basin and could use feedback from the council on what priorities are
- Would like for this group and the Watershed stakeholder group to meet together to discuss what the different needs and issues are within the watershed
- This watershed stakeholder group was mostly a sharing of knowledge group, especially between agencies, and acted as a facilitator
- Would like for the two groups to maintain their autonomy, but would like close collaboration/communication between the two so that we can both act as facilitators for getting projects done
- Christine is a liaison for our Uintah Watershed Council, so she can provide info and coordination with both DEQ and Watershed Stakeholder Group

### **Other Input from Council Members**

- Motion to include Gawain Snow as a voting member of the council
  - Randan Vincent made motion
  - Jack Lytle seconded motion
    - Motion unanimously passed
- Potential agenda items for future meetings
  - Presentation from Cody Stewart with CRAU
  - Presentation from WRI
  - Could tour Javelin during field tour in the Spring/Summer
- Other council discussion
  - Lars Christensen is a liaison to our council for the Forest Service, Brett will get in touch with him about attending future meetings
- Next Utah Watersheds Council Meeting (statewide council)
  - January 18<sup>th</sup> from 1 pm to 3 pm
  - Participants can attend either in-person or virtually, and all are welcome to view via YouTube Livestream
    - In-person: DNR Building, 1594 W North Temple St, Salt Lake City
    - Virtual: <https://meet.google.com/uwm-vegx-vsq>
    - Livestream: <https://youtube.com/live/y51ue2wxGxA>

### **Public Input**

- No public in attendance, no public comments

**Schedule for 2024**

- Next Uintah watershed council meeting: Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm
  - Virtual link: <https://jubengineers.zoom.us/j/5825820003?omn=83924331137>
- Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup> at 2pm
- Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm

**Meeting Adjourned**