



Kanab Creek/Virgin River Watershed Council Meeting

Tuesday May 20, 2025

Washington County Water Conservancy District

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Attendees:

Dave Jessop – Virgin River Commissioner

Carly Payne - DWRe

Mindy Mees – WCWCD

Candace Schaible – DWRe

Mike Noel – Kane County Water District

Karen Goodfellow – Conserve Southwest Utah

Scott Taylor – St. George City (Water Services Director)

Mac Hall – Hurricane Canal Company

Leslie Fonger – Washington County

Elaine York – The Nature Conservancy

Ed Bowler - WCWCD

Brock Belnap - WCWCD

Brie Thompson - WCWCD

Welcome

Tour of Washington Field Diversion Dam

The council took a tour to the Washington Field Diversion dam and the Virgin River.

Discussion on State Water Plan – Stephanie McGinnis

Stephanie McGinnis introduced herself as the newly appointed State Water Plan Manager at the Division of Water Resources, having joined in January. She highlighted the exciting development that the division now has dedicated staff focused solely on the State Water Plan.

Ms. McGinnis explained the goal of this presentation is to share updates on the evolution of the State Water Plan, how it now engages with watershed councils, and how the public is involved in the process.

The most recent legislative session emphasized the need for greater collaboration in plan development, requiring engagement from both state-level agencies (e.g., Office of Energy Development, divisions within the Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality) and local partners (e.g., water conservancy districts, watershed councils).

The importance of coordination between watershed councils and conservancy districts, particularly in identifying regional water needs and challenges. She welcomed feedback and encouraged councils to help shape the plan from the ground up.

The new State Water Plan will be approximately 150 pages and structured to include Utah's future uncertainty, water administration constraints and support for communities, agriculture, and the environment.

Ms. McGinnis emphasized that her role is not to determine basin-specific challenges from Salt Lake City, but rather to rely on local input. A survey will be distributed soon to gather feedback. The survey should take 10–20 minutes, and respondents can choose to allow follow-up for clarification.

Ms. McGinnis shared examples such as declining groundwater levels, aging infrastructure, and species at risk to illustrate how challenges might be framed within the plan. Challenges should be categorized under vibrant Communities, productive agriculture and healthy environment.

Ms. McGinnis explained the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan and said although the current project submission deadline has passed, UWIP will reopen annually. All state-funded projects must be submitted through this process.

Ms. McGinnis encourages anyone with concern about project submissions or confirmations to reach out to her or Carly Payne. Projects listed in the UWIP will be referenced in the new State Water Plan where relevant.

Ms. McGinnis went over the timeline for public engagement.

- May–June:** Meetings with watershed councils
- Late Summer/Fall:** Public scoping meetings in each basin
- Fall–Spring:** Drafting phase using council and public input
- Summer 2026:** Final plan published, as required by state law

Ms. McGinnis would like the council members to complete the survey, join a subcommittee to assist in plan development and review, review survey results, attend and promote public scoping meetings, provide feedback on the draft plan and share information within your networks.

Ms. McGinnis stressed that council input is essential to the development of a useful and representative plan.

Ms. McGinnis confirmed that she will be sending out the survey and additional information regarding the State Water Plan subcommittees. Council members are encouraged to contact her directly if they are interested in participating on a subcommittee. The survey will remain open for approximately 1.5 weeks. If responses are not received within that timeframe, there will be follow-up with reminders. The survey should take about 20 minutes.

Consider Karen Goodfellow with Conserve Southwest Utah to replace Jane Whalen who retired

Dave Jessop explained that Jane Wahlen has retired from Southwest Utah Conservancy and its recommended that Karen Goodfellow replace her.

Brock Belnap made a motion to appoint Karen Goodfellow who will replace Jane Waylen, the motion was seconded by Scott Taylor and they all voted aye, except Mike Noel opposed.

Consider approval of January 30, 2025 minutes

Scott Taylor made a motion to approve January 30, 2025 minutes, the motion was seconded by Mac Hall and all voted aye.

Next meeting

The council discussed the next meeting and would like to see Chief Toquer Reservoir. Dave Jessop said that he will coordinate with the Project Manager, George Elliott, and make the necessary arrangements

The meeting was adjourned upon motion.

Mindy Mees

Secretary