Mar 5, 2025

PRWC Stakeholder Meeting

Invited Christopher Clements Doug Smith gordonb@jvwcd.org Gardberg, Jodi Joe Crawford Jon Hilbert Rachel Winder sjones@provo.utah.gov Eric Sorensen Sandy Wingert Shane Jones Addison Hicken arianna.disser@swca.com Chris Wright Chris Crockett CS daniel.jauregui@usda.gov devin@cuwcd.com Daniel Gunnell Dallen J. Webster dwf@prwua.org Ed Clyde Ethan Hallows Fritz P. Doster Friends of Heber Valley hfranco@heberut.gov jasong@utahcounty.gov Jeff Budge jenny.cox@usda.gov Justin Hooper Jason Allen Jonathan Hunt Kerry Gee kcrittenden@wasatch.utah.gov larry.ellertson@mail.house.gov Maness, Lee - FS, UT Lewis Hastings Lisa Hoffman Heidi Hortin Anderson, Mark Max Covey Ed Sabey Michael Slater Mike Kohler Mike Rau nancy OToole pabate@usbr.gov Nelson, Patrick Paul Dremann Trater, Paula publicworks@hideoututah.gov Russell Funk rprobst@wasatch.utah.gov Ryan Taylor Scott Catton Heidi Wasatch Conservation District Sierra Schaefer-Funsch Shazelle Terry Steve Cain Lorin Smart Shane Owens Stephen Studebaker sterling.rees@ut.usda.gov Steve Bullock Anthony Kohler Richardson, Tracy Trudy Simmons Ann Zimmerman Shane Owens Kayleigh Mullen ~~Janice Gardner~~ ~~Jason Whittaker~~ ~~Pj Abraham~~ ~~Steve Jackson~~ ~~tkohler@heberut.gov~~

Attachments PRWC Stakeholder Meeting

Meeting records Transcript

Summary

The PRWC Stakeholder Meeting covered updates on water quality, snowpack, and reservoir levels. Glenn Merrill from the National Weather Service reported a warm winter with 94% of normal snowpack in the Provo River Basin, but noted significant soil moisture loss due to dry September and October. Steve Van de Graaff shared water quality trends from last year's data. Jeff Budge and Scott Briggenorf provided updates on Deer Creek Reservoir and Provo River Commissioner roles, respectively. The meeting

emphasized the importance of upcoming storms for maintaining water levels, with forecasts predicting above-normal precipitation in the next two weeks.

Details

- **Snowpack Report - Glen Merrell (NWS)**
    - **October Warmth and Current Conditions:** Glen Merrell presented data showing October 2024 was the warmest on record, with temperatures impacting snowpack and soil moisture. While northern Utah's Provo River watershed shows near-normal precipitation and 94% of average snow water equivalent, southern Utah experienced record lows. Soil moisture is significantly lower than previous years due to the dry September and October, potentially contributing to continued wildfire activity.
    - **Short-Term Weather Forecast:** Models predict a very positive two-week forecast with multiple strong storm systems expected, bringing 1.5-2.5 inches of snow water equivalent, exceeding normal levels. This is expected to boost snowpack and soil moisture, although concerns remain about a potential shift to warmer, drier conditions later in March and into April/May.
    - **Water Supply Forecast and Drought Conditions:** The current water supply forecast for Provo at Woodland is 85% of average, with the potential to increase due to the incoming storms. While northern Utah is in relatively good shape, southern Utah is facing severe to exceptional drought conditions, with potential for moderate drought to develop locally after snowmelt.
    - **Federal Funding and Impacts:** Glen briefly mentioned disruptions due to federal funding cuts, but could not provide details due to the Hatch Act.
- **Water Quality Trends - Stephen Van De Graaff (CUWCD)**
    - Stephen shared water quality data he collected, showing trends in nitrogen and phosphorus levels in Deer Creek and Jordanelle Reservoirs and the Provo River. Higher levels were observed near dam release points during spring runoff and after thermal stratification.
- **Deer Creek Dam Update - Jeff Budge (PRWUA)**

- Jeff provided an update on Project 2024, stating that construction is progressing well and the structural concrete exterior is almost complete. He shared a Youtube video detailing the dam construction work completed up through 2024. Funding is mostly secured, with the final piece expected to be completed this month. The new valves have been tested and are ready for installation.

- **Provo River Water Commission's Report -** Scott Bergenorf
    - Scott explained that as the Provo River Commissioner, explained their role in managing water quantity, including determining natural flow, prioritizing water rights, and strategizing with water users. They highlighted the complexity of managing water distribution, particularly during irrigation season, and the impact of imports and court decrees on their jurisdiction.
    - **Water Rights Distribution:** Scott explained the process of distributing water rights, prioritizing those with earlier filing dates. They described scenarios with differing priority dates and water availability, detailing proportional distribution when multiple users share a priority date. The system also accounts for storage and import water, which have separate rules from natural flow rights.
    - **Water Rights Classification:** In the Provo River, water rights are categorized into classes (1-17 in the upper Provo, A-J in the lower Provo) instead of solely using filing dates. The speaker explained how classes are prioritized, with higher classes having precedence. Even in high-water years, allocation often drops to the most senior classes by mid-summer.
    - **Water Allocation Percentages:** The percentages for water allocation are determined by comparing available natural flow to the total amount requested by users with class A rights. If the available flow is less than the total request, a percentage is calculated to ensure fair distribution.
    - **Enforcement of Water Rights:** Scott detailed their role in enforcing water rights. They begin with informing users if they exceed their allocation. If the excess comes from storage, it's treated as a charge against storage water; if not from storage, they issue warnings, potentially leading to restrictions or state enforcement with fines.
    - **Instream Flows:** Instream flows are primarily managed through contracts, rather than water rights, though new laws allow for instream flow water

rights. Existing instream flows are often stipulated in environmental impact statements. He notes that contracts, rather than water rights, govern instream flow, making enforcement different from typical water rights issues.

- **Winter and Summer Allocation in Lower Provo:** Scott described the winter and summer water allocation in the lower Provo River. Winter allocation is simpler, with the first 429 CFS going to the Olmstead power plant, and any excess going to Deer Creek and Jordanelle Reservoirs. Summer allocation is more complex, involving different classes of water rights and the use of storage and other water sources.
- **Water Tracking and Reporting:** He emphasized their role in tracking water usage and reporting to water users. They maintain monthly and annual reports detailing water use, the different types of water rights utilized, and storage balances. This helps maintain transparency and ensures accountability among water users.
- **Data Management and Responsibilities:** The speaker uses the Provo River decree and change applications to keep track of water rights, using spreadsheets and other tools. While other operators are on 24/7 call, their role involves more post-facto monitoring and occasional field checks. They also use drones to monitor water usage, especially when suspicions arise.

- Joe Crawford closed the meeting by asking stakeholders for updates and sharing his eagerness for the Council's upcoming quarterly meeting.

Attendees: