

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**SAN JUAN WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**  
**JULY 19, 2021 WORK SESSION**

**Attendance**

The work session was held in person at the SJWCD office at 46 Eaton Drive, Suite #5.

The following Directors were present: Al Pfister, Bill Hudson, Doug Secrist, John Porco, and Joe Tedder.

Also present was: Sally High

**Call to Order**

The Work Session for the San Juan Water Conservancy District (SJWCD) was called to order by Chairman Al Pfister at 1 p.m.

**Revisions to Agenda**

The Board considered Revisions to Agenda. No revisions were requested.

**Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

The Board considered Declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No conflicts were declared.

**Public Comment**

Chairman Pfister opened the meeting to public comment. No comments were offered.

**Discussion of Progress in 2021 Strategic Plan**

The board agreed to concentrate on Strategic Objectives 1 and 2. The Goal Management and Tracking Spreadsheet (copy attached) was used to review progress and to assign action tasks toward goals.

Director Tedder reported that the Growing Water Smart (GWS) goals dovetail with SJWCD's strategic objectives, especially the first three. GWS considers all water needs, not just municipal, as expressed in SJWCD's goal #1.

Directors discussed the imminent draw-down of Blue Mesa Reservoir, Navajo Reservoir in October or November, and then Flaming Gorge Reservoir. These releases of water are to keep Lake Powell at a level sufficient to generate electricity. These actions by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation may impact Colorado's reservoir levels in Spring 2022.

Directors briefly mentioned the historic sites lost to reservoir construction, especially the 2 towns flooded by Navajo.

Topics to be examined today: (1) determining all Archuleta community water needs, (2) educating the community about water, and (3) the draft 2021 budget. Directors acknowledged that their duty to advance the Dry Gulch/Headwaters Project is of paramount importance. Finding partners for the Project remains a main responsibility.

**Strategic Objective 1: Determine the water needs (agricultural, municipal, environmental, and recreational) of the District, and how the San Juan River Headwaters Project and other projects might meet those needs.**

Wilson Water Group's and Watershed Enhancement Partnership's identification of needs is a good start. Growing Water Smart is putting together a summary document describing water status. Director Pfister is doing this work for GWS which fulfills the Headwaters Project's goal #1, to identify needs. Justin Ramsey (PAWSD) is collaborating in collecting measurements and analyzing supply and demand. Director Pfister and Justin are synthesizing data into one record to take to the community.

GWS representatives are Warren Brown (Archuleta County Commissioner), Pamela Flowers (County Planning), Matt DeGraff (ToPS Council), James Dickoff (ToPS Planning), Joe Tedder and Al Pfister (SJWCD), Robin Young (CSU Extension), Justin Ramsey (PAWSD), and Mary Jo Coulehan (PS Chamber of Commerce). GWS is to act as a catalyst to coalesce information and data. Meetings are public. Their objectives include:

1. To choose medium (water) need projections after state demographer predicts population growth
2. To recognize changing climate and fluctuations in river
3. To develop goal that coincide with SJWCD objectives

**Growing Water Smart Vision Statement:**

*"Our livelihoods and recreation have always been linked to our healthy forests and flowing waters AND our natural beauty attracts us all, BUT our watershed faces a crisis due to lower snowfalls and quicker seasonal melting that impacts our water supply and risks our future growth and sustainability, THEREFORE, our individual actions to protect our precious water resources are critical for community success."*

GWS meets with Water Enhancement Partnership on Wednesday, August 4. Other directors on the SJWCD board may attend, but cautioned each other not to appear to dominate. The purpose of the August 4 meeting is to identify how GWS and WEP work together without duplication of efforts. WEP is to report about status of water supply and demand, plus environmental, recreational, and agricultural needs.

Lotic Hydrological and Wilson Water Group have analyzed PAWSD data, sufficient for valid consideration of municipal water use. A meeting with stakeholders (Audubon, ag users, and others) is necessary but the date is yet to be determined.

Agricultural representation is lacking in the collaborative conversation so far. Missing are the San Juan Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and San Juan Conservation District, and ag users. Agriculture uses 94% of available water and must be included for valid analysis and future actions in conservation. Ag users' relationships with the community, CO water law, and water rights is complicated. To foster productive dialogue, they must be included now.

Water conservation and improving efficiency in ag use is possible, but a difficult conversation. Ag users may be resistant to change, lack time, and lack desire to participate. It is suggested by the Sonoran Institute (funder/sponsor of GWS) that when ag users get involved, town and county officials *must* be at the table. They wield governmental influence that can result in real change.

Directors briefly discussed directing SJWCD money to support ag users by improving ditches and diversion structures, and installing more efficient irrigation methods, thereby conserving water and protecting ag users' water rights. Water banking is still a legitimate and necessary consideration. Demand management is a topic that must be faced now. WEP suggests \$8 million is necessary for improvements in ag use. Only further study can determine how much water saved by ag improvement will be available for community use.

***Strategic Objective 2: Education of the community at large regarding critical water issues that face the District, the Southwest Basin in Colorado, and the Colorado River Basin and its tributaries.***

Directors agreed that community education is next for SJWCD and clear messages must be defined before information can be taken to the public.

Website traffic was briefly discussed. Posting relevant articles and current water news may be helpful. Brochures, flyers, handouts may be more effective in reaching community members at public gatherings. A consistent coherent message must precede multimedia dispersal of one solid message. **Further consideration is to be placed on a future agenda.**

Directors favored the planning of (eventual) public events featuring all collaborative water interests. A collaborative sequencing of actions to achieve objectives of water groups will be helpful. SJWCD is proceeding by prioritizing Objectives 1 (needs) and 2 (education). SJWCD will step up and lead efforts to coordinate progress among all water groups, taking ownership of consolidating and communicating the community's water future. **Further consideration is to be placed on a future agenda.**

Directors used the Goal Management and Tracking spreadsheet to assign and agree to action steps. (Refer to copy attached.)

Goal 1.a. lists 5 actions.

- Collect and analyze data – GWS and Director Pfister
- Assess impact of climate change – CSU, Lotic Hydrological, Director Porco, others. Postpone any conclusions.
- Identify and prioritize options for Running Iron Ranch - Director Secrist
- Gather community and partner feedback re: Project – Director Hudson
- Identify potential financial partners re: Project – Director Secrist

Goal 1.b. lists 2 actions. Both have been completed.

Goal 1.c. lists 3 actions.

- Research water banking opportunities. – See 1.a. - financial partners.
- Support WEP on Phases 2 and 3 – MSI to report in August. Place on August 16 agenda.
- Support Forest Headwaters Restoration programs - possible report by Dana Hayward in future.

Goal 1.d. lists 5 actions.

- Drive stream monitoring program – Director Hudson to report in August. Place on August agenda.
- Research locations for additional stream gauges – Director Hudson
- Research costs...stream gauges – Director Hudson
- Gather feedback...stream monitoring – postponed
- Identify financial partners...stream gauges – Pagosa Wetland Partners (offshoot of Audubon) and others

Goal 2.a. lists 4 actions.

- Funding – Possible spending of SJWCD contingency funds for education about water and stream monitoring. No decision made or Director assigned
- Work with teachers – Director Tedder assigned. Resources discussed include Forests to Faucets teacher training, book *My Water Comes from the San Juan Mountains*, Elaine at FLC, Project WET, Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, CO River Watch, others.
- Provide small grants – Director Porco, WEP representative
- Participate in Chamber of Commerce educational programs – Chamber of Commerce resources to be determined

Goal 2.b. lists 5 actions.

- Create presentation template – Director Porco
- Host Business After Hours – Board to research
- Submit articles – No decision made, no Director assigned
- Chamber KWUF radio interview – No decision made, no Director assigned
- Earth Day and July 4 parade – Earth Day accomplished by Directors Pfister and Porco, July 4 not undertaken this year.

Goal 2.c. lists 3 goals.

- Balanced Scorecard – Director Tedder

- Maintain and promote website – Director Hudson maintains but does not promote.
- Define sharing Balanced Scorecard with community – postponed

Video promoting Dry Gulch proposal can't be found on DVD or office computer.

### **Discussion of 2021 DRAFT Budget**

Draft 2021 Budget distributed by Director Hudson, SJWCD Treasurer. (copy attached)  
Draft 2022 Budget due to be published by October 15, 2021.

Available resources total approximately \$300,000. Revenue this year is ~\$90,000. The beginning balance of \$230,934 is held in Colorado Trust.

Engineering and due diligence expenditures budgeted for West Fork work were ~\$64,000, but won't be spent. Wilson Water's work was mostly paid for in 2020. For these reasons, the ending balance will be ~\$50,000 more than projected. Property taxes increased significantly, perhaps 15-20% higher next year.

Attorney Kane is researching and writing a resolution to move ~\$16,000 from the Impact Fees account to the main account, in order to reimburse SJWCD for expenses paid to Wilson Water Group. **Place on August 16 agenda.**

Discussion ensued regarding spending versus saving funds in the CO Trust Investment account. Projects to serve water users were suggested. The balance in the Trust account is needed for development of the Headwaters Project. New projects should be limited to ~\$90,000 annual revenue. One stream gauge is ~\$20,000, but a modest expenditure may be a wise show of good faith and result in positive public relations.

To move forward on the Headwaters Project (Dry Gulch), the Conservancy District will have to go back to the voters for a mill levy increase, an expensive step. In January 2023, the property reverts to SJWCD and management expenses will result: weed control, fencing, road maintenance, erosion mitigation, recreational access. Natural Resources Conservation Service and Southwest Conservation District regularly do this work. Director Pfister will confer about their services and costs. The original Colorado Water Conservation District application documents a fencing plan and other relevant costs and will be reviewed by Directors.

An external 3<sup>rd</sup> party audit was performed in 2019. An exemption to a full audit was received in 2020 and 2021.

Given Objective #2, education, publications, and website expenses must be increased in 2022. Expenditures will be held within annual revenue.

Attorney Kane is researching diligence regarding water rights involved with Dry Gulch before 2023. Directors expect a report on expenditures in 2021 and a schedule of steps working toward the Project. **Place on August 16 agenda.**

Board members encourage each other to resume traveling to relevant water events, trainings, and conferences to represent SJWCD.

The next regular in-person SJWCD Board meeting is August 16 at 4 p.m. at the office.

A joint Growing Water Smart and Water Enhancement Project meeting is 10 am to noon on Wednesday, August 4, at the Archuleta Extension Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally High  
Executive Assistant  
For the Board of Directors

FINAL