



Facilitator's Report: Jerri Conrad  
Washoe County Department of Water Resources  
Ground Management and Domestic Well Mitigation Workshops

**Workshop Background:**

The Washoe County Department of Water Resources (WCDWR) held a community meeting on February 15 where input from the community was gathered related to proposed changes to the Mt. Rose Schedule of Fees and the Ground Water Management and Mitigation proposal. The staff proposal and community input was presented by to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners on Feb. 22 by Rosemary Menard. At the Commission meeting, Board members directed staff to hold more workshops that would allow residents to contribute additional well mitigation options. The Staff Report includes discussion and summary of resident preferences.

Consistent themes throughout the workshops are below:

1. Residents were looking for clarification as to who and/or which areas the municipal wells are impacting
2. Many residents suggested spreading costs to the largest group possible and minimizing costs to any one group should be strongly considered

**Workshop Process:**

Rosemary Menard was the main presenter at each workshop and called on DWR staff as needed. The process was underscored at each workshop with reminders that no decisions would be made at the workshops. Each workshop was facilitated by Jerri Conrad of GoodStanding Outreach.

Workshop 1

Approximately 60 attendees

April 5, 2011 – Well Mitigation Option Brainstorm

Goal:

- Develop additional options to cost out and presented at Workshop 2
- Introduce public policy framework
  - Explanation of Rosemary's thought process behind making a recommendation versus how residents may choose the option that's best for them

Workshop 2\*

Approximately 40 attendees

May 3, 2011 – Well Mitigation Private and Public Cost Options

Goals:

- Present costs of all options developed in Workshop 1
- Gather comments on costs as they related to the options
- Collect input from the attendees on their cost option preference (blue dot exercise) and which option they feel best represents public policy (yellow dot exercise)

The blue dot exercise asked attendees to indicate their Cost Option preference. One dot per resident for: Mitigation Alternatives for Domestic Well Deepening, Mitigation Alternatives for Domestic Well Conversions and Reduced Water Bill. Each option document was provided as a handout which was enlarged and used during the presentation. *Please note: many attendees left after this exercise.*

Group Preferences:

- For those who already deepened wells, Option 6 - Owner to be reimbursed per accepted program for expected deepening includes appurtenances (actual costs varies based on depth of deepened well) was preferred by 15 attendees
- For those who will be required to connect, Option 16 – Washoe County provides full reimbursement (actual cost including interest) was preferred by 12 attendees
- For a reduced water bill – Option A - Customer pays monthly base charge and receives up to 20,000 gallons of water per month without additional charge, usage over 20,000 gallons is charged at the regular rate. Option A was preferred by 9 attendees. Option B - Customer pays monthly base charge and receives up to 40,000 gallons of water per month without additional charge, usage over 40,000 gallons is charged at the regular rate. Option B was chosen by 4 attendees.

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Input following the blue dot exercise-

- Spread costs across largest rate base possible
- How will county determine the cost allocation in the future?
- Will the Commission consider spreading costs throughout customer base? Or beyond specific rate areas?
- Will the Commission consider the community's input?
- If our areas (utilities, wells, etc.) are working, don't other water utilities (TMWA) and their customers benefit? (i.e., they don't have to pump the Truckee River water up to Mt. Rose.)
- Is DWR system in area interconnected to other systems?
- Consider benefits of spreading costs system-wide.
- Could/wouldn't option 5 (expected to deepen) be viable?
- Is the 50 feet of water in option 5 standing water?
- Shouldn't options be refined to maybe 3 choices before they go to a Commission meeting – so it's not overwhelming?

The yellow dot exercise asked attendees to indicate their Public Policy preference. One dot per resident for: Mitigation Alternatives for Domestic Well Deepening, Mitigation Alternatives for Domestic Well Conversions and Reduced Water Bill. Each option document was provided as a handout which was enlarged and used during the presentation.

Preferences:

- For those who already deepened wells, Option 6 - Owner to be reimbursed per accepted program for expected deepening includes appurtenances (actual costs varies based on depth of deepened well). This option was preferred by 4 attendees
- For those who will be required to connect, Option 16 – Washoe County provides full reimbursement (actual cost including interest) was preferred by 4 attendees.
- For a reduced water bill, Option A – Customer pays monthly base charge and receives up to 20,000 gallons of water per month without additional charge. Usage over 20,000 gallons is charged at the regular rate. This option was preferred by 3 attendees. No one choose option B - Customer pays monthly base charge and receives up to 40,000 gallons of water per month without additional charge, usage over 40,000 gallons is charged at the regular rate.

Input following the yellow dot exercise-

- Wouldn't it be more fair to have a Mt. Rose + STMGID option
  - Mt. Rose option only includes STMGID on west side
  - South Truckee Meadows option includes all of STMGID and Mt. Rose
- Who should pay?
  - Anybody but us
  - The largest group that's politically feasible should pay
  - All who are in the zone of influence
  - If it's just the area of influence, they could be getting the short end of the stick later on
  - Rosemary was asked what she thought and if it was likely that Commissioners would consider an option where all pay
- Aren't we looking at merging systems anyway?
- Spanish Springs and North Valleys are not experiencing this same problem
- It seems unlikely that our comments will carry all the way to the Commission
  - Rosemary recognized all of the work residents have put in and that the Commissioners will respond to that
- If we don't get our water from the Mt. Rose fan and have to get it from the river, it's not only another use of limited water, but also expensive to pump uphill. There's a legitimate reason why other water utilities should want to help make our water system work so we don't have to have a greater impact on the main water system.
- How will the County determine cost allocation in the future?

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