



Nevada Water and Wastewater Operator's Forum

Hosted by: Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 4001, Carson City, NV 89701

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 – 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Location: NvRWA 28th Annual Training and Technical Conference, Nugget Resort & Casino, 1100 Nugget Avenue Sparks, NV 89431 – Room Redwood 5

Phone conference to: 1-800-977-8002 Code 5316947#

Agenda

1) **Call to Order and Introductions. (Bob Foerster)**

Meeting was called to order at 1:15pm

Forum Members Present: Max Sosa, BSDW/OpCert; Bob Foerster, NvRWA; Greg Reed, Gardnerville Ranchos GID; Ron Penrose, Tri-Sage; Jim Kerr, Small System Waste Water; Grant Perkins, Panaca Farmstead; Nathan Adams, Small Waste Water; Dale Johnson, City of Elko

On the phone: Rick Giltner, Southern Nevada Water

Introductions and Guests: Doyle Nicholson, State Parks; Joe Marquez, State Parks; Charlie Wells, State Parks; Scott Payne, State Parks; John Bronder, State Parks; Jason Grahmann, Lyon County; Tim Hurt, State Parks; Matthew Fretwell, State Parks; Don Geary, Baker GID; Bruce Holmgren, NDEP; Katrina Pascual, NDEP; Daniel Park, URS; Samantha Stoughtenger, Farr West Engineering; Joseph Groves, URS; John Wells, State Parks; Andrew Les, URS; Matt Elmer, NDSP; Joseph Westerlund, Tonopah Public Utilities; Clark Phillips, Elko County; Sunny Gumren, Elko County; Shawn Burt, Town of Jackpot; Michael J Murphy, IVGID; Bryan C Mortensen, Moapa Valley; Grant Perkins, PFA; David Wright, Cave Springs; Rusty Kiel, Lovelock; Brett Walsh, Newmont; Darrin Price, Sun Valley; Branden Garden, KGID; Tim Gomo, TMWA; Christopher Jim, Round Mountain; Leroy Daines, Utility Services; Tim Deturk, DCU; Kevin Baughman, RCAC; Cameron McKay, KGID; Crystel Montecinos, NDEP; Tom Gallegos, Mineral County; Tim Flanagan, TMWA; Rit Palmer, Carson City; Ernest Cecil, State Parks; Jeremy Martin, State Parks

2) **Approval of Forum/ NTC Minutes from November 29, 2017- Action Item**

Jim Kerr- Motion to Approve

Grant Perkins-Second
Unanimous

3) **Drinking Water Exam Results Review from 2017 (Max Sosa)**

Max Sosa- Thank you for your participation and for taking an interest in your Water and Wastewater Operators Forum.

Now for a brief summary of the 2017 certification exams. In March 2017, 139 applicants took the exam and the overall passing rate was 64%. For the June 2017 test, there were 104 applicants and the passing



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rate dropped to an unusually low of 54%. The September 2017 exam was more encouraging. The passing rate improved to 68 % and there were 106 operators taking the certification exam.

Regarding the upcoming test this week, there are 177 applicants scheduled for the March 2018 exam as compared to 151 in March 2017. The largest count ever. Best of luck to everyone.

4) Training Needs/ Forum Input

Bob Foerster- Mentioned that NVRWA will come out and offer trainings for anyone that would be interested. Also mentioned, that there has been discussion coming out of the Association of Boards of Certification to stop asking regulatory questions on their exams. That will leave a gap of knowledge. NVRWA has put together a PowerPoint presentation to talk about water and wastewater regulations. It will also address the ethics for water and wastewater. Wants to put together a subcommittee to finalize that training so it meets everyone's satisfaction.

Grant Perkins- Asked if that is going to be one of the requirements to be certified, suggested to do that in a PowerPoint?

Max Sosa- Answered the ABC contract runs through the end of this year. That is going to apply after this year. Still working out the details with what is going to be done.

Jim Kerr- Talked about how there will be 10 questions on the new ABC exam that will be used to build a good quality set of questions.

Bob Foerster- Requested to form a subcommittee to work out the details in the training. Asked for Volunteers, other than Bob himself to write supplemental regulatory questions for the certification exam.

Kevin Baughman- Volunteered

Max Sosa- Volunteered

Grant Perkins- Volunteered

Ron Penrose- Volunteered

Greg Reed- Volunteered

Rick Giltner- Volunteered

Leroy Daines- Volunteered

5) NDEP Updates (Max Sosa, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water)

Max Sosa- Mentioned that the last batch of renewals were mailed out the first week of January 2018. I would like to thank the Forum, the Drinking Water Operator Certification Program Review Committee and all of the Operators who participated in the review process.

Last year at this time, the first drinking water Program Review workshop was held at the Nevada Rural Water Conference March 14, 2017.



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A year later through the combined efforts of the Forum, The Program Review Committee and the Operators who participated, the majority of the items you requested for review have been approved by the State Environmental Commission. For more information and details regarding the Program Review Changes and what it means to the operators please attend The Water Operator Regulation Revision and Certification Updates here at the NVRWA conference this Thursday March 15, 2018 from 4pm to 5pm in the Cascade Room.

6) **NDEP / NWEA Updates (Katrina Pascual, Bureau of Water Pollution Control)**
a) State Environmental Commission (SEC) One year program review scheduled for early 2019

Katrina Pascual-Went over the SEC meeting on February 21st with the regulation changes. They are not in effect yet and do not know when they will go into full effect as of right now. When it does go through, the wastewater operators will be notified.

7) **Should certification be available to Operators who operate Transient non-community water systems?**

Bob Foerster-Thinks we should encourage people to certify and trained. The difference between the smallest community system and transient non-community water system is population. The equipment is the same. Examples would be Parks and Boy Scout Camps.

Leroy Daines- If they want to be certified, why not allow them to be a certified operator?

Greg Reed- There are other states too that have very small system operator. This could be an opportunity because they do not really fit the mold of a water operator and don't really meet the requirements. There are boy scout camps, 711 in Gardnerville that are other entities that are small systems and it could be just making a new classification for a small system operator.

Leroy Daines- There are quite a few of the small water systems that on a regular basis if they get in a jam with their sampling, they call in an operator to help them anyways.

Kevin Baughman- Mentioned that he works with some people that run some RV parks and I agree with getting these people into the certification training.

Nathan Adams- Mentioned that we want to be careful to not scare systems into thinking that they need to hide by requiring too much on them.

Bob Foerster- Agrees with Nathan that if we allow them to and not require them to become certified.

Crystel Montecinos- Also agrees that it is important that we do not discourage somebody that has the education, does the work and can pass the test; they should be able to be certified. That will give them career choices too.

Scott Payne-Thinks that State Parks exclusively fall right between the lines with this because they serve a couple of 100,000 people a year and yet we are not required to have certified operators.

Bryan Mortensen- He has heard the argument in the past the if the smaller systems are allowed to get an operator certification, that they will then use that to go to a system that did require and may not be



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qualified. Thinks that the problem is with the exam and not with the person necessarily. Also, if we say it is available, but not required would they be under the same NAC regulations as other operators are.

Bob Foerster- Mentioned to entertain a motion to take the consensus to the bureau.

Darrin Price- Asked if the state doesn't require these systems to be certified now? There's no regulations overseeing their operations and maintenance now?

Doyle Nicholson- Every one of their systems that they have online is required to have a PWS number. They are required to pay every year for each park. They have to do all the testing that is required by BSDW. If we do not have at least one person at each park with at least a D1, we prefer them to go to a D2. The reason why is because if there is a problem with testing, their names are on there and then we have to go there and correct the problem. BSDW is coming down on them to get all the tests clear. If we just have a D1 OIT that is not going to work because they need the education and have someone that understands that system. They need to have that certification to keep from having problems.

Max Sosa- Something that we want to address in ~~the~~ policy rather than a regulation change. I would like to have someone that is qualified. The way the reg is written, transient systems are not required to have a certified operator. It is just a classification issue and needs to be worked out.

Mike Murphy- If anyone that has a PWS number, needs to have a certified operator regardless.

Max Sosa- The regulation may need to be reviewed. Remember that is one of the concerns of making regulation changes, otherwise every time we need to do something, we can't do it because the regs are so tight.

Tim Deturk- Mentioned that the state does have primacy and they can impose rules and regulations. He fully supports the operators getting certified for these systems.

Bob Foerster- Asked if anyone disagreed with the idea of people getting certified and everyone was in favor of it. Stated that we have a motion to communicate the consensus to the bureau and see if they can address things through policy and allow systems to have their operators to be certified if they wish to.

Grant Perkins- Motion to Approve

Nathan Adams- Second
Unanimous

8) **Forum Member Elections**

Bob Foerster- Asked for the vote for Thomas Georgi to continue on the board
Unanimous

Bob Foerster- Asked for the vote for Rick Giltner to continue on the board
Unanimous

Kevin Baughman- Mentioned that he would be interested in becoming a board member. Insufficient votes.



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Bob Foerster- Asked for the vote for Greg Reed and Ron Penrose to continue on the board
Unanimous

Bob Foerster- 32 votes in favor for Ron Penrose, 36 votes in favor of Greg Reed. Greg and Ron have been reelected on the board

Ron Penrose- Self Nominated

Bob Foerster- Chairman and Vice Chairman to be rotated among the members. All in favor for Bob continuing
Unanimous

Grant Perkins- Motion for Nathan Adams to continue as Vice Chairman
Unanimous

A. Member's Open Comments

No member comments

B. Public Comments

Guest- Asked about the NVRWA trainings?

Bob Foerster- NVRWA gets funding from 3 sources. Those programs are technical assistance and training programs. The training we do under those programs are free of charge. We are also doing training under the state revolving fund and capacity development. That focuses on small systems that we do a lot by request around the state. They do board training, office staff training, onsite typically. Video conferences though are \$35 per person. That money stays in that program. They do online trainings with a business relationship they have with a provider. Operator Certification is also approved through his program. They have the conference and they charge for this conference for food, the facility and it supports the association.

Kevin Baughman- RCAC does training with AWWA and they are part of an organization that is a nonprofit company and has a lot of different funding sources. He is the part of the Environmental Branch. He has put on a few courses here and they are doing at least 3 or 4 trainings that they are putting on throughout the year. Any ideas are welcome for the trainings.

C. Agenda Items for the Next NWWOF Meeting

Logistic planning for maintaining Contact hours for operators' highest certificate(s). Specifically, current Full and OIT's with different expiration dates, and when operators receive new OIT certifications.

Addressing the removal of Regulatory questions from the new ABC exam, and BSDW's path forward

Max Sosa- Mentioned that we should add number 7 to the agenda to the next Forum.

Leroy Daines- Mentioned for contract operators, the systems that they work with to have more influence to help them with their decisions.



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D. Next Forum Meeting(s) - *Action Item*

Proposed the date June 12th

Nathan Adams-Motion to Approve

Ron Penrose-Second
Unanimous

E. Adjourn

Ron Penrose-Motion to adjourn

Greg Reed-Second
Unanimous

Adjourned at 2:15PM