



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

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 – 1:00p.m. to 3:00p.m.

Location: *Richard H. Bryan Building,
Tahoe Hearing Room on the 2nd Floor
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89701*

Videoconference to: NDEP Las Vegas Office- Red Rock Conference Room
2030 E. Flamingo Rd., Suite 230
Las Vegas, NV

Note: Elko-Great Basin College
1500 College Parkway
High Tech Center Bldg Room 123
Elko, NV

Phone conference to: 1-888-363-4734, access code 1515199

Agenda

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

Meeting was called to order at 1:05pm

Forum Members Present- Max Sosa, BSDW/OpCert; Bob Foerster, NvRWA; Greg Reed, Gardnerville Ranchos GID (arrived a few minutes late);

On the Phone- Ashley Jacobson, NWEA; Board Member Grant Perkins, Panaca Farmstead; Gina Hawkins, Coeur Rochester; Jennifer Ellis, Marigold Mine; Rod Lewis, State Parks; John Solvie, City of LV

Videoconference with Elko- Board Member Dale Johnson, City of Elko; Board Member Jim Kerr, Elko County; Morgan Dingman, City of Elko; Brent Johnson, City of Elko

Introductions and Guests: James A Agnew, City of Lodi; Michael Boney, NVRWA; Dan Kistler, Town of Minden; Mark Gonzales, Gardnerville Water; Brandon Garden, KGID; Kevin Ryan, US EPA; Katrina Pascual, NDEP; Cameron McKay, KGID; Edwin Mopas, AUECC-Reno; Mike Workman; Brian Green, NDWR; Paul Rose, Rose Water; Mark Jackson, NVRWA; My-Linh Nguyen, NDEP; Jennifer Carr, NDEP; Linh Kieu, NDEP

2) Approval of Forum/NTC Minutes from June 12, 2018- Action Item

Jim Kerr-Motion to Approve

Dale Johnson- Second
Unanimous

3) Drinking Water Exam Results Review from June 2018. (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 June 2018 exam. 164 applicants applied to take the June 2018 test and 151 applicants took the exam. The overall passing rate was 60%, much better than June 2017 which was unusually low at 54% and 104 applicants. (March 2018, 177 @ 68%).



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- The **Distribution** areas needing improvement are:
 - **All grades:** Install equipment, operate equipment and perform maintenance,
 - **Grades 1,2 & 3:** Monitor evaluate and adjust disinfection, perform security safety and administration.
 - **Grades 2, 3 & 4:** System information/components and laboratory analysis

- The **Treatment** areas needing improvement are:
 - **All grades:** *laboratory analysis, monitor evaluate and adjust treatment,* perform security safety and administration.
 - **Grades 1,3 & 4:** Evaluate characteristics of source water, operate and maintain equipment
 - **Grade 2 Treatment: best test results overall.**

Regarding the upcoming September 13, 2018 exam, there were 139 applicants scheduled to test. Exam results should be available by no later than October 13, 2018. Comparing the September 2017 certification exams: 106 applicants took the exam and the overall passing rate was 68%.

4) Training Needs/ Forum Input

Jennifer Carr- Mentioned thinking back to the regulation meeting with SEC, at some point we are supposed to respond back to them regarding NWEA availability and contact hours on the wastewater side. The question about whether or not it is accessible to this particularly relevant to that people on the wastewater side have trouble getting contact hours we have to respond some time in February.

Bob Foerster- Stated that NVRWA would do a survey.

Kevin Ryan- Asked if it would be a good idea to also send that survey to drinking water operators to see if they are getting their training needs met?

Bob Foerster- Answered that they could put a box to check on which category they are in, if not both. After further discussion it was decided to carry out a survey of wastewater operators first, and then conduct a separate survey of water operators.

Linh Kieu- Mentioned that when he was in Tri-State during Max and Ashley's update on behalf of NDEP, they asked the general question how many people knew about the forum or heard of it? Out of about 30 to 40 people, only 3 people raised their hands. Maybe we can send the message down south and be more prevalent in that area. Thinks that it would help the forum and some input from the operators in the future.

Bob Foerster- Stated that we should all think about what we can all do to improve our profile down south.



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Ashley Jacobson- Mentioned that they could put some information that they can send out to the operators or put on their website to trainings and the forum could get more participation.

5) **NWEA Updates: Ashley Jacobson**

Guest speaker: John Solvie to Discuss of Wastewater Lagoon certification and the ABC Small Wastewater System exam.

Bob Foerster -introduced guest speaker John Solvie to discuss *Wastewater Lagoon certification and the ABC Small Wastewater System exam* carrying over from the last meeting

John Solvie- Discussed exam comparison, wastewater certification board and ABC perspectives, NDEP regulatory small system and D1 exams considering lagoon certification and small system certification exam about 10 years ago and decided against it. A study was done throughout the country comparing a small system and a D1 exam and the results were almost the same. The subject that people struggle the most with is math and basic algebra all across the country. Another issue is trainings. The funding with trainings lacks a lot in Nevada as compared to other states. The trainings need to focus on the ABC need to know criteria. To implement a lagoon certification NDEP needs to consider revising NAC certification regs from 4 grades to 5 grades. NDEP would need to revise those permits to certain facilities to move forward in order to be able to implement a lagoon certification or a small system certification and ABC would have to develop a legally defensible exam. It would take about five years and be very expensive, somewhere around \$100,000 to develop a lagoon exam.

Jim Kerr from Elko asked when the next Wastewater board meeting is taking place. Bob asked Ashley to notify him as to when the next meeting is going to occur.

6) **NDEP Updates:**

Max Sosa / Linh Kieu, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
Drinking Water Operator Certification Program changes effective July 1, 2018
OIT and Full Expiration dates
New Applications
Computerized exams
EPA Updates-Kevin Ryan

Max Sosa- Discussed the new regulatory changes to the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) governing the Drinking Water Operator Certification Program approved by the Nevada Legislative Commission are now in effect.

Nevada Regulation and program review for Wastewater and Water Certification Programs were presented at the Tri State Seminar in Las Vegas, NV on Thursday September 27, 2018.

Linh Kieu- Discussed the new certification and renewal application. You can do multiple certifications on one application now. We are waiting to send out the new test applications because we are at the end process for



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the online applications. You will be able to do an online exam through NDEP very shortly. One of the changes on the applications is that you will need a supervisor signature now.

Kevin Ryan- Discussed that he is very excited with all the changes with the Safe Drinking Water Certification Program. When the reauthorization of the Safe Drinking Water Act, that is when the EPA got involved in the Operator Certification Program. The drinking water certification programs need to be approved by EPA in order to not withhold 20% of a drinking water SRF fund. There is also a wastewater SRF fund. With that, we put out regulations and in 2001 is when states needed a certification program. Last July, EPA put together a desk guide to review operator certification annual reports. The purpose of this document is to provide the regional office program personnel with the tools to consistently review state operator certification reports. He would like to let everyone know in the past we used the state of NV format and contents as a template. However, we will be having some minor changes this time. It is just to ensure consistency nationwide that each state certification program is going to be reviewed by the regional officer coordinators. Very happy to report everything is very well documented and very impressed and proud with the operators here in NV as well as the certification program. NV has one of highest compliance rates for staffing for drinking water systems in the country.

7) **New ABC 2017 exams, development of drinking water regulatory exam questions: (Linh Kieu)**

Linh Kieu- Discussed that we are still implementing the 2012 ABC exams until the end of the year and we foresee it going into 2019. It was mentioned last meeting that we were interested in seeing what ITCA is developing in their regulatory piece on how they are going to cover the regulatory questions. That is how we are progressing at this time and there is no other official updates on what we are going to yet.

8) **Contract Operators: (Linh Kieu)**

Linh Kieu- Discussed that it has come to our attention that there has been several instances in the past year that some contract operators haven't been meeting our requirements of regulation 445A.6275. Therefore, what we are trying to do is set up some sort of policies to help establish and have the expectation between us, the contract water operator and the water system.

A. **Member's Open Comments**

No comments

B. **Public Comments**

No Comments

C. **Agenda Items for the Next NWWOF Meeting**



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Bob Foerster- There has been ongoing issues that we will hear again, but if anyone has any agenda items in the future, they can contact Rachel or Max.

Grant Perkins- Mentioned that he would like to talk more about the contract operators' next meeting.

D. Next Forum Meeting(s) - Action Item

Proposed December 5, 2018

Jim Kerr-Motion to Approve

Greg Reed- Second

Unanimous

E. Adjourn

Adjourned at 2:00pm