



## Our Water. Our Future. Our Choice.

The purposes of the District include planning for and facilitating the long-term conservation, development, protection, distribution, management, and stabilization of water rights and water supplies for domestic, irrigation, power, manufacturing, municipal, recreational, and other beneficial uses, including the natural stream environment, in a cost-effective way to meet the needs of the residents and growing population of Cache County.  
[www.cachewaterdistrict.com](http://www.cachewaterdistrict.com)

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### CACHE WATER DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES USU Water Research Lab April 15, 2024

#### CWD PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purposes of the District include planning for and facilitating the long-term conservation, development, protection, distribution, management, and stabilization of water rights and water supplies for domestic, irrigation, power, manufacturing, municipal, recreation, and other beneficial uses, including the natural stream environment, in a cost-effective way to meet the needs of the residents and growing population of Cache County; In furtherance of protecting and preserving water supplies that are necessary for Cache County's future, the District will assist in water conservation education and programs; and assist local municipalities and Cache County as they establish and implement water management policies and ordinances while maintaining the autonomy of existing water suppliers; undertake environmental and other studies to provide information necessary to make proper, timely water use decisions; obtain grants and low-cost loans to upgrade and construct needed water infrastructure; and adopt the current version of the Cache County Water Master Plan as adopted by the Cache County Council ("Master Plan") until the Cache Water District adopts its water master plan.

#### LAST YEAR WORKSHOP NOTES

##### Manager

- ✓ political advocacy
- ✓ conferences
- ✓ state/local meetings
- ✓ grant oversight
- ✓ grant writing
- ✓ other staff management
- ✓ visions by Nate

##### Accounting/Administrative help

- ✓ Finances/Accounting (signatures, mail, etc.)
- ✓ Reports/Forms Tracking
- ✓ Grant tracking/identification
- ✓ Tracking legislation and providing reports to the board

## Outreach

- ✓ Website/Media
- ✓ Phone calls/redirecting
- ✓ Workshops/Event organization
- ✓ Communication with the public about events
- ✓ Scheduling of meetings (e.g., canal company outreach, etc.)

## Education

- ✓ Conservation classes (coordinate with various other organizations to provide these)
- ✓ Coordinate with other state outreach programs (SCS, NRCS, etc.)

Other service needs mentioned (perhaps connect to Burdette Barker USU Extension for parts of this):

- ✓ Help manage canal companies
- ✓ Telemetry needs
- ✓ Seepage studies
- ✓ Flow gaging tests

## **REVIEW 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & 2024 1<sup>ST</sup> QTR. TIME BREAKDOWN**

2023 District Accomplishments:

### 1.0 Sustain and improve district operations

1.1 Hold monthly water district meetings. This has been done every month except for July and September when no meetings were held.

1.2 Develop and approve the annual water district budget. The 2023 has been reviewed and a public hearing held, it was approved at the December meeting. We remained under budget for the 2023 year.

1.3 Improve online water district presence. We continue to try and improve our website and the services we can provide there.

1.4 Ensure water district minutes and agenda are available one week in advance of the Meeting. This continues to happen thanks to Debbie.

1.5 Schedule and publish all water district meeting dates at the start of the year. This will continue, and dates will be published on the public notice website.

1.3 Schedule and meet with individual cities and communities to determine ways the District can work together with them. Nate continues to meet with various cities. He and Regan attended meetings with Richmond, Lewiston, Trenton, Newton, and Max and attended the Cornish City Council meeting last winter to see if there are opportunities to partner with the District on water projects. We continue to have follow-up meetings with them. Continue to coordinate with Logan, North Logan, Hyde Park, Mendon, and Wellsville on the PL-566 watershed plans that are being developed in those communities.

1.7 Update county water master plan. The master plan was completed early in 2020. We will continue to follow it and update it as needed. Where we were not able to

increase our budget as much as desired some items in the master plan will be moved back a couple of years pending funding. Having the annual planning workshop can help prioritize areas of the plan.

#### 1.4 Develop 2022 APO.

The Master Plan is used to focus our efforts. Monthly APO meetings are held where In-depth discussions can occur on each subject. We have added a Politics section to the APO list.

### 2.0 Water Conservation and Public Education

2.1 Hold annual water conference. The 2023 water conference was held in mid-March and had close to 150 attendees. We continue to look for new ways to improve the scope of residents we can reach with this conference.

2.2 Provide financial assistance to hire employees to conduct sprinkler system audits. We once again partnered with USU extension on hiring summer interns to conduct water checks. We are continuing efforts to expand our conservation outreach. This year the demand for water checks dropped substantially. In part due to a wet year. The recommendation from USU was to discontinue the program in 2024 and look for other ways to do conservation outreach.

2.3 Reserve and staff lawn and garden show booth. After the 2022 lawn and garden show the board decided to no longer do the booth, and look for other ways to do outreach.

### 3.0 Aquifer storage and recovery

3.1 Educate CWD and explore opportunities to study possible ASR sites in Cache County. We continue to look at any possibilities of ASR in the county.

3.2 Study possible ASR sites in Cache County.

Currently, the discussions with North Logan on a possible project have stalled, as they don't have any surface water rights that could be dedicated to a project.

### 4.0 Environmental water demands prioritization.

4.1 Support ongoing efforts to study environmental water demands.

4.1.1 We have partnered with USU on their Logan River monitoring sites so that we have long-term river data on one of the biggest tributaries to the Bear River Development water. We provide \$5,000 annually to USU for the Logan River Observatory. Part of the Logan River watershed project is looking at restoring a base flow in the river below the diversion point.

### 5.0 Storage and development of Bear River allocation 60,000 ac/ft.

5.1 Support ongoing efforts to study possible storage and development options. We continue to be involved with all aspects of Bear River development. This will remain one of our primary focus areas. We regularly meet with the State and the other three districts that are part of the Bear River Development project. There is no set timeline for when things will move forward.

5.2 Develop evaluation criteria for determining the best possible options for storage and Delivery. We are trying to get some funding from the Bear River Development project to do further evaluation of possible small reservoir sites around Cache County.

Bank Water Rights - 5.3 Support ongoing study by USU to explore water banking opportunities. The statewide water banking study has been completed and with the focus on Ag water optimization and water shepherding taking center stage right now with the GSL, the water banking push has slowed. We will continue to look for places that could benefit from a water bank in the future.

5.4 Support legislative efforts to encourage water banking. Wellsville Mendon Water Conservancy District and Hyrum Irrigation have started the first version of a water bank in Cache County. With the exceptional water year in 2023, this bank was not used this year.

5.5 Develop a valley-wide water exchange website. Still in the process, we are trying to get the website to be the go-to place for the water needs of the valley whether that's irrigation company contact info or you need to buy water. This will most likely take a few years to fully develop and get water users to buy in to be comfortable with using the district in this manner. Most water rights or water shares that come up for sale are sold without ever being offered to the public.

6.0 Encourage the development of secondary water systems

6.1 Support ongoing efforts to explore secondary water system opportunities for Crockett Avenue Irrigation. The two PL-566 projects that are being completed on the Logan River watershed and the Wellsville Canyon watershed were both approved for more funding to move them from an EA to an EIS. We are still in the process of waiting for the NOI to be posted to make this official.

6.2 Identify additional secondary water system opportunities. The Porcupine/Hyrum PL-566 project had a PIFR completed in December. If selected to move to the next stage this project could provide secondary irrigation to a larger portion of the cities served under those irrigation companies. We hope to hear about funding by late spring. There have been ongoing meetings with Millville and Providence about getting a watershed project in their watershed to look at secondary irrigation along with flooding issues along the Blacksmith Fork River. An application was submitted but no determination has been made.

7.0 Canal Rehabilitation

7.1 Work with existing irrigation companies to identify and prioritize key canal rehabilitation projects. Nate continues to meet with canal companies around the valley to see if there are projects the CWD could partner on or assist them in improving their canal systems. As this trust and knowledge base is built, we will gain the trust of the irrigation companies to be the go-to source for information on water issues, especially when it comes to new legislation that could affect them. CWD received a \$1.5 million WaterSmart grant to work with the Logan River Blacksmith Fork Irrigation Company, Logan City, and Willow Lakes Development on a project west of Logan that will improve flood conveyance, stream bank stability, and install a new irrigation diversion and pipe just under a mile of canal.

8.0/8.1 Cloud seeding. Complete necessary agreements and contracts to continue cloud seeding services to the county. An intent to continue letter has been sent to the state as well as to North American Weather Consultants Inc. for the 2023-20234 cloud seeding year. The legislature this year approved significant additional funding for the cloud seeding program. They will be deploying new remote generators that can be installed at higher more strategic locations. There will also be three new aerial seeding locations this year. The Bear River range is one of the three areas.

Another big project completed this year was the economic study on the Bear River. This study will be a valuable resource as we work to protect water rights and uses in Cache County and work with others to ensure a resilient water supply for the watershed.

Nate continues to represent the district on the state's Slow the Flow program where we continue to try and find ways to meet the Governor's water conservation goal for our region. This group continues to meet regularly to discuss ongoing water conservation messaging. He also represents the district on the Utah Water Users board, to plan the annual water user's convention in St. George as well as the fall water summit in Provo. CWD is now a member of the Utah Association of Special Districts as well as the Rural Water User's Association where we have access to valuable resources for the district. The Bear River Watershed Council was formed this year and Nate and Jeannie are both on that council. Nate was selected to represent CWD on the state watershed council. These councils allow us to work with others in our watershed to coordinate water projects and water policy and relay ideas or concerns we have to the state council. Representative Snider appointed Nate to the Legislative Water Development Commission, this group meets throughout the year to hear upcoming bills and discuss various issues related to water in the state. This gives the District a great opportunity to be at the forefront of new legislation and work on the bills. We will continue to track new legislation and work with legislators to try and avoid negative impacts to Cache Valley water users Nate has been attending the study group that is looking at property taxes being used for district funding. The final study is due to the legislature in the fall of 2024. We will continue to stay involved in any new committees or studies tied to new legislation to make sure our voices are represented.

Other groups Nate is involved in to represent the district are State Ag Water Optimization Task Force, Secondary Metering Task Force, Split Season Leasing Group, State Water Task Force, State Water Quality Task Force, Legislative Water Development Commission, NRCS State Technical Group, Cache Summit Planning Group, Cache County Chamber of Commerce Legislative Affairs Committee.

### **PLAN NEXT STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD**

Nate would like to see more education, and coordination with cities and the county on outreach; possibly work more with USU Extension on landscaping and conservation programs.

Jeannie asked Nate what he felt the most important thing for the next year needs to be. He said it is very important to build relationships with state-level communities for water policy. The Board has come a long way over the past several years and is involved in many more committees and groups but there are always more than can be accessed. T

One of the biggest questions to consider is “who our customer is” and how to effectively get information out to them. The general public needs to learn more about CWD and its mission and goals. Beth agreed that outreach is an extremely important objective and public perception matters. The role of CWD needs to be explained more. Max said there are times when social media puts out incorrect information and the Board can be better about putting out factual data. One of the difficult challenges is how to get people engaged. There is quite a need for a public information position that can keep the website updated, post on social media, set up and conduct meetings, marketing, provide presentations, and interface with the public and other entities, committees, and agencies.

Max asked about past experiences with the Home & Garden Show and the Annual Cache County Fair. Most members felt, of the two, the fair had more engagement, although it was limited. They are opportunities that can still be considered to help educate people on the role of the CWD and other important issues. Mark said radio ads can be quite effective. The overall feeling of the Board was the need to be more engaged with the community. Different forms of media/presentation will need to vary depending on the demographic. The need to seriously consider an outreach coordinator is a top priority. It should be someone who has web development skills, a technical background with good communication. An intern might be a possibility to serve in this capacity but the trouble with that is they can be seasonal. It would be ideal to hire someone full-time who would be willing to stay in the position. The need to educate the public is paramount. The positions could help make the website more interactive and several metrics could be used to measure success. Coordination with extension groups is a great benefit. The Executive Committee will look at the budget at their next meeting to discuss moving forward. The pay will have to be competitive to attract the right person, yet affordable for the CWD.

Jeannie said the budget will have to be reviewed if this is something that is going to be seriously considered. Beth said a person for outreach is important. Jeannie noted that CWD does not get any funds for running the administrative PL-566 grants. Jeff said the difficulty is the Board cannot meet all its needs without hiring someone to help. Beth agreed that something must be tried. Max said there would be growing pains and he is confident there would be plenty for a person to do but is concerned with how it will work out logistically. Nate said much of his time could be freed up to work on other things.

Bret Randall asked if the Board had any appetite to raise taxes. Beth thinks at some point there will be a need to. Brett Roper said he did not think so right now. Beth said if more people are not hired, it will be impossible to meet the Board’s objectives. Jeff said it is a problem to want to raise taxes unless we can meet our needs, and they cannot be met with more employees.

Nate said in theory next year would be the first year we could go above and what we are currently collecting. Max said at last year’s workshop meeting, the Board agreed, on principle – that taxes would be increased. Brett Roper said he does not think he agreed, but Max said the majority was in favor of an increase. Nate said that the decision should be made by May of this year (paperwork completed in August). Brett Roper would like to have a firm job description with metrics. He would like to see something in writing. Nate said if the desire is to wait for a year on the taxes to get this position in place, there could be other areas in the budget that could be adjusted to get someone on board for now. More discussion can be had at the May 6 regular board meeting. Max said if they are hired in late summer, they can help with next year’s pre-

legislation. Jeff asked if there would be a potential to do some job-sharing with the Utah Water Way; Nate said he will breach out to Tage Flint, the Executive Director.

Bret Randall suggested working on the job description written and approved. The Executive Committee will work on that next week at their meeting so it will be ready to be reviewed at the Board meeting on May 6.

Beth asked if there was a comprehensive study facilitated on quantifying water availability in Cache Valley. The Board's charge is to ensure that we have the water we need for the future. If not, how should the Board be involved in that and how will that message be conveyed. Nate said the first part of this process is the groundwater study that is being done by Beth; when that is completed the next step can be discussed and started. Brett Roper also asked how to protect and maintain aquatic resources in the County and better how much water and where. The individual cities have plans, but the Water District takes a comprehensive view. Max said this will all tie into adjudication. There will be a lot of questions that will need to be answered as to where will that water go. Jeannie said this would be a great part of outreach and education. Cities cannot sell to individuals but they can to a political entity (such as CWD). Max said there has to be a 40-year plan in place.

A conversation about the future purchasing of water was discussed.