A special meeting of the Walker River Irrigation District (WRID) Board of Directors was held on March 30, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM at the Pioneer Crossing Convention Center 11 N. Main St., Yerington, Nevada by President Jim Snyder.

**Present**

Jim SNYDER President

David GIORGI Vice President

Richard NUTI Treasurer

David LITTLE Director

Dennis ACCIARI Director

Bridget BANTA Secretary

Robert BRYAN General Manager

Gordon DEPAOLI Legal Counsel

Dale FERGUSON Legal Counsel

Jessica SMITH WRID Bookkeeper

Joanne SARISIAN Water Master

**Public Present**

Peter Fenili David Groso Nancy Groso John Evasovic

Rita Evasovic Lu Weaver Louis Scatena Donnette Huselton

Jerry Rosse Jeff Rife Tom Bobrick Todd O’Banion

Joe Tibbals Carol Tibbals Henry Moreda Craig Stevens

Kris Leinassar Marianne Leinassar Eric Bobrick Marcus Masini

Dale Borsini David Peri Bob Bryan Debbie Joyner

Andy Joyner Peter Shaw Steven Fulstone Don Giorgi

Linda Giorgi Darrell Pursel Suzanne Pursel Tom Renner

Lynne Heller Paul Sciarani Linda Sciarani Reed Cozens

Chad Walling Joy Morris Isaac Metcalf

**Public Comment**

None

**Roll Call**

All 5 board members present.

**Presentation from the Division of Water Resources regarding groundwater pumping and surface water usage during the 2017 irrigation season in the Walker River Irrigation District.**

**Nevada Water Law Fundamentals**

Reed Cozens explained the Doctrine of Prior Appropriation, aka first in time is first in right. Their basis is the beneficial use of water. The priority date is when beneficial use began or when an application was filed with the state to use the water rights.

**Walker River Surface Water Rights**

1. Walker River Decree with priorities from 1859-1921.
2. State Engineer issued Permits and Certificates with priorities from 1919-1970.

Cozens explained all surface rights, decreed and stated issued, are administered pursuant to the prior appropriation doctrine.

**Priorities of the Walker River and its Tributaries**

1. Walker River Decree C-125; priority : years 1859-1918
2. WRID Permit 5528, Certificate 8859; year 1919
3. Walker River Decree C-125; Priority dates: years 1920-1921
4. WRID permit 25017, Certificate 8860; year 1969
5. NDOW permit 25792, Cert 10860; year 1970
6. “Flood Waters”; priority date: none (pro-rated to all users at the discretion of the water master)

**Active Dates of the Walker River and its Tributaries**

1. Walker River Decree; C-125: March 1-October 31
2. WRID Permit 5528: May 1-July 31
3. WRID Permit 25017: May 1-July 31
4. NDOW Permit: Jan 1 -Dec 31
5. “Flood Waters”: March 1-october 31
6. flood waters: Jan 1 – Dec 31 (waters leaving or potentially leaving the banks of the river.) Cozens explained these flood waters are beyond the capacity of the river.

**Walker Basin Groundwater Water Rights**

State Engineer issued Permits and Certificates and the priority Range is from 1900-present.

Cozens explained all groundwater rights are limited to 4.0 acre-feet per acre and some ground water rights are permitted as supplemental water to the surface water right.

**The Issue of Duty**

Cozens explained the State Engineer issued water right, be it well, or from surface water, are limited to 4.0 acre-feet per acre from all sources. “**All Sources”** includes State Engineer issued water rights, decree water, and decree “flood” water.

**Public Health and Safety**

Reed Cozens stated any potential flood water diverted for the purpose of **Public Health and Safety,** will not count against the 4.0 acre-feet per acre duty limit.

**NWS Flood Categories**

Cozens went over NWS flood categories and severities of flooding. He explained the flood state is an established gage height for a given location at which a rise in water surface level begins to create a hazard to lives, property, or commerce. There are 3 stages of flooding; Minor Flooding, Moderate Flooding and Major Flooding. Minor Flooding is considered minimal or no property damage, but possibly some public threat. Moderate Flooding is considered with some inundation of structures and roads near stream and some evacuations of people and/or transfer or property to higher elevations. Major Flooding is extensive inundation of structures and roads, including significant evacuations of people and/or transfer of property to higher elevations.

Isaac Metcalf asked if it must hit the flood stage prior to taking flood water that does not count towards the 4.0 duty. It is possible the water could be taken now up the river to relieve flooding occurring now at the wildlife management area. He advised the head-quarters at the wildlife management area and the fields in the area are currently flooding. Cozens advised there needs to be a conversation had between he and NDOW at a different time.

Reed Cozens went over the historic crests according to the USGS Mason Gage. The highest flood stage was at 12.72 ft. in 1997. This was considered Major Flood Stage.

**Water Use Accounting: But what about channel loss?**

Cozens went over channel loss, or “shrink”. Shrink is water loss that occurs during the delivery of water through a canal or ditch. The Division of Water Resources accounts for a 30% channel loss “shrink” from the River to the Farm, in Mason and Smith Valleys. This accounting measure applies only to well users that have groundwater rights supplemental to the Decree, or from WRID. Marcus Masini inquired whether the state was going to perform a study to find out what the actual shrink is. Cozens advised they do not have the man power or time to perform these studies each year. Each year will have different numbers depending on the winter moisture acquired.

Donnette Huselton asked if the water is being diverted from the reservoirs can be called on from the farmers. She advised people need to be prepared and plan. Cozens advised this is the notice advising flooding will happen. Start planning now. He advised he does not know the exact date the flooding will begin, but people need to be prepared now. As far as the “flood” versus “Flood” waters are concerned, that is up to the water master to decide.

Director LITTLE asked if he doesn’t start his well how much water can he take. Cozens advised if you use decree only, you can use as much as you want. If you partake in WRID certificated water May 1-July 31, you will be held to the 4 acre feet per acre. He clarified that any state water is held to a 4 acre feet per acre.

Marcus Masini requested to know what is NDOW’s right and how much. Cozens advised NDOW has a right at Walker Lake and it is 795 cfs. He is requesting to know why Walker Lake is getting 1300 cfs now and if they are held to an amount. Cozens advised that is the natural flow of the river and if people do not want that much water making it to Walker Lake, flood water may be taken.

Louis Scatena requested to know if you want just decree and storage and you have no well, are you subject to 4.0 acre feet per acre. He wants to know if storage water is subject to 4.0 acre feet per acre. Cozens advised he is not sure about that and he will look into that particular question and obtain the answer.

Steven Fulstone inquired as to what kind of enforcement will the state put in place if a user is in exceedance of the 4.0 duty. Reed Cozens advised it is not a straight line answer. There are fines regarding violation at $10,000 per day + the price of water. The first step of the reprimand will be a notification the user has over pumped. Cozens advised they do not want to fine users; they want compliance. There will be a hearing.

Reed Cozens requested to know why users need more than 4 acre feet per acre. Director LITTLE advised sandy ground; Moreda advised convenience, LITTLE advised there is a longer growing season now. Cozens advised those are very good reasons and if you look at the weather trends and it is staying warmer longer. He advised the issue is managing water efficiently.

**Consideration of agenda item for April 7, 2017 Board meeting concerning next steps which might be taken, if any, and how the Walker River Irrigation District may be of assistance regarding groundwater pumping and surface water usage.**

No comments or motions made.

**Public Comment**

None

Vice President GIORGI made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer NUTI seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:01 pm.

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Jim Snyder, President David Giorgi, Vice President

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Richard Nuti, Treasurer David Little, Director

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Dennis Acciari, Director