



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: John Enloe, Director, Natural Resources
DATE: February 8, 2016
SUBJECT: **Informational Status Report on the Public Outreach Regarding the Special Use Permit for the Mt. Rose Water Treatment Plant**

BACKGROUND

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is continuing to work on enhancing the groundwater resources in the Mt. Rose and Galena Fan area. Due to the dependence on groundwater and the continued decline in water levels — aggravated by the ongoing drought — it is necessary to provide supplemental sources of supply for the water systems located on the upper Mt. Rose and Galena fan areas. These areas currently rely on groundwater wells (both municipal and domestic) for 100 percent of their water supply, and the drought situation has severely limited the amount of natural recharge to local aquifers.

In order to provide for the long-term sustainability of the local groundwater aquifer, TMWA is planning to construct a small (8,800 square foot) water treatment plant (WTP) off of Whites and Thomas Creeks. When adequate creek flows are available, a portion of the flow will be diverted to the WTP, with sufficient flows remaining in both creeks to maintain wildlife and habitat needs, as well as meet downstream irrigation requirements. By expanding our Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Program (which pipes treated surface water into existing wells), and supplementing the limited water supplies from the Truckee River with creek water, TMWA's goal is to pump less groundwater from the Mt. Rose and Galena fan aquifer than we do today.

DISCUSSION

Following is a summary of the public outreach effort for the proposed Mt. Rose Fan WTP, including required public participation for the Washoe County special use permit (SUP). The goal of the outreach effort was to ensure that customers and citizens interested in this project had an opportunity to provide input and comment. The primary target audience included nearby affected residents; TMWA customers and Truckee Meadows residents were included as a secondary audience. TMWA also used this effort as an educational opportunity for the community.

Communication Efforts

- Public meetings
 - TMWA Board of Directors: Rule Change 1st Reading on April 15, 2015
 - TMWA Board of Directors: Rule Change 2nd Reading on May 21, 2015

- TMWA Board of Directors: Parcel Purchase Agreement on November 18, 2015
- Monte Vista Home Owners Association Meeting on November 18, 2015
- TMWA Standing Advisory Committee on January 5, 2016
- TMWA Open House (South Valleys Library) on January 11, 2016 – 1,600 +/- invitees, with approximately 75 attendees
- Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) meeting on January 14, 2016*
- Commissioner Bob Lucey District Forum meeting on January 21, 2016
- TMWA Standing Advisory Committee on February 2, 2016
- Washoe County Board of Adjustment public hearing on February 4, 2016*

- Website
 - Featured meeting dates on front page via Latest News
 - Direct link on tmwa.com homepage to the project description page via Latest News
 - Tell the Board online comment function on project description page

- Social Media
 - Facebook and Twitter Posts

- Public notices
 - Sparks Tribune and Reno Gazette Journal
 - Washoe County Website

- Direct Communications
 - Letter on groundwater sustainability and projects (4 pages) to 8,000 addresses in the area mailed in July, 2015
 - Follow-up letter on status of projects to same mailing list as above and notifying them of CAB and Board of Adjustment meetings mailed on January 6, 2016
 - Open House invitation to 1,600 nearby residents mailed on December 31, 2015
 - Post card notification to approximately 40 residents on the County designated mailing list

- Monte Vista Homeowner's Association Newsletter
 - Article in the December issue

- Save the Mt. Rose Corridor E-mail Newsletter
 - Invited interested parties to TMWA Open House

- Project Review with The Nature Conservancy
 - One-on-one meeting with TNC staff to review project, resulting in letter of support (*See Attachment*)

- Customer Communication
 - Project updates in January 2016 bill insert mailed approximately 112,000 customers, including those on the Mt. Rose fan
 - E-newsletter to TMWA customers with direct link to provide comment (delivered to approximately 70,000 customers)

SUMMARY

The Mt. Rose WTP Project was presented at a Washoe County Board of Adjustment public hearing. Four members from the public were present and provided input on the project. The Special Use Permit was approved on Thursday, February 4, 2016.



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January 7, 2016

John Enloe, P.E.
Manager, Operational Strategies
Truckee Meadows Water Authority
1355 Capital Blvd
Reno, NV 89502

Subject: *White's and Thomas Creeks Instream Flow Review – DRAFT*

Dear Mr. Enloe,

The Nature Conservancy (Conservancy) has reviewed the Draft White's and Thomas Creek Instream Flow Review developed by Stantec, under contract with Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), as part of the Siting Analysis for the Mt. Rose/Galena Fan Water Treatment Plant (WTP). It is the opinion of the Conservancy that TMWA and Stantec have conducted an appropriate level of analysis using the best available science to address wildlife habitat needs and balance those with human needs in the development of this project.

TMWA and Stantec have gone above and beyond what is required by federal and state regulatory guidelines in assessing instream flow needs to support the existing instream and riparian habitat and the wildlife that depend on those habitats. In conducting the instream flow analysis, Stantec used sound science in their historical flow approach, assuming that maintaining the historical flows that created and support the existing habitat and geomorphic processes would continue to adequately support that habitat into the future. Based on this historical flow analysis, Stantec recommended that in order to maintain adequate habitat flows, TMWA should allow some of the water it has rights to to remain instream below the proposed diversions for the WTP. Stantec recommended TMWA apply the Tennant Method to assess and determine flow required to maintain the streams in good condition (also known as the Montana Method). Results from their analysis were used to identify diversion schedules for stream conditions that meet habitat needs and maintain critical geomorphic processes. It is our understanding that, based on that recommendation, TMWA has committed to withdrawing less water than allowed by law in order to protect existing wildlife habitat and proper stream morphologic function. The flow of water allowed to pass the WTP has yet to be finalized and will be addressed under future permitting efforts with the Nevada State Engineer. TMWA's proposed use of the Tenant Method to maintain good stream condition is a reasonable approach to address the downstream wildlife habitat needs while balancing the human needs and regulatory requirements for the project.

In proposing the location for the WTP, TMWA and Stantec also conducted on-the-ground habitat assessments and concluded that upstream locations would negatively impact mostly undisturbed high-quality habitats. For this reason, the location TMWA has proposed for the WTP is in an area that is already impacted, to some degree, by development and where further development is already planned. From a business standpoint, TMWA would have benefited from an upstream location for the WTP, because it would allow them to gravity feed water to existing infrastructure. The proposed location will reduce impacts to wildlife habitat relative to other, possibly less costly, alternatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mickey Hazelwood".

Mickey Hazelwood
Truckee River Project Director
The Nature Conservancy