



## PRINCIPLES FOR STATE WATER PLANNING (REVISED MAY 8, 2014)

### BACKGROUND

There are several states in the Western Landowner Alliance (WLA) Region that are conducting or embarking upon state Water Planning processes, including: Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Montana, and New Mexico. Meaningful participation in these processes can be time-consuming, but potentially valuable, both for the opportunity to advance progressive water-related tools, programs, and policies at the state level, as well as discourage plan elements potentially harmful to ecosystem-minded production agriculture.

These Principles were drafted by WLA staff in March, 2014, and discussed with the WLA Board at their March Board meeting. They were then sent out for WLA Advisor, member, and further Board review, and revised accordingly. WLA considers these Principles to be a work in progress and requests those members and others who participate in state water plan processes to provide feedback and suggestions to enable us to improve these principles for broad use across the WLA region (Intermountain West).

### WLA STATE WATER PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- Planning should be accomplished on a **basin basis** (e.g., 6-digit Hydrologic Unit Code), with basin stakeholders responsible for self-determination of their water supply and demand futures. Trans-basin diversions exist, but their water should be used to extinction before others are considered.
- Planning should ensure the availability of effective **landowner water conservation tools and incentives** that contribute to vibrant communities, productive agricultural sectors, sustainable aquifers, and healthy rivers. Tools should ensure landowner flexibility to leave water instream (without water right diminishment), practice adaptive management, and manage for multiple objectives and revenue streams.
- Planning should encourage prioritization and availability of **water delivery infrastructure improvement funds** where beneficial to aquifers, resources, and water supply.
- Planning processes must incorporate development of natural flow hydrographs and documentation of related **fish and wildlife species' dependence** on specific flow elements, current flow-related habitat impairments, and opportunities for restoration.
- Planning must generate policies and programs that acknowledge and **foster public and private landowner stewardship** to protect and restore stream flows, riparian areas, and watershed health, as well as foster collaborative water management and drought response.
- **Water quality** issues must be integrated with quantity issues - both must be solved.
- Planning should foster **water right transfer mechanisms** that help meet other water resource objectives, maintain consistency with the Prior Appropriation Doctrine, avoid adverse effect to other water users, and minimize incentives for water hoarding or speculation.

WLA Water Planning Principles (cont.)

- Changes in **water administration** should be evaluated before additional physical supply is planned; states must have the means to determine who owns what right to water, and take action to stem illegal use.
- Planning and related data analysis must recognize and address **hydro-geologic connections** between surface water and groundwater. Where they are lacking, laws and policies should be updated to recognize these connections and address related issues.
- Water use must capitalize on **re-use, conservation, and low-use planning** to minimize impacts to other sectors, and public investments should foster related technological innovation (e.g., desalination, process water treatment, etc.).
- Where aquifers or surface supplies are **over-allocated**, planning must develop tools and approaches to reverse shortages. Planning should recognize that over-allocating water resources is more expensive to correct than not over-allocating in the first place, and ensure the more practical course is taken.
- Any discussions of additional **storage** should include comparisons of water storage that could be accomplished through healthy watersheds and riparian areas, evaluate proposals for losses due to evaporation, ensure fish passage issues are addressed, and provide release regimes that foster channel stability, flushing flows, and needed habitat. Reoperation, maintenance, and upgrade of existing facilities should be considered prior to new supply construction.
- Modeling and projections should include various **scenarios** - high and low projected growth, climate change/variability, and other elements to illustrate the range of futures possible in the basin and to help contribute to practical approaches, reasonable likelihood of incorporating relevant technology, adaptive management opportunities, and to reduce risk of overbuilding.
- Planning should ensure that state agencies work collaboratively with landowners and federal agencies on **recovery and restoration** of at-risk water-dependent wildlife species, and that state water policies foster rather than hinder species recovery.
- Planning should be transparent, grassroots-initiated, and represent the full spectrum of interests, with effective **participation and communication** networks and mechanisms.
- Planning and its products should evidence a commitment to **data** collection, analysis, modeling and monitoring that is useful, cost-effective, long-term, understandable and accessible to stakeholders, and that fosters improved management of water resources.

SOURCES OF STATE/PROVINCIAL WATER PLANNING INFORMATION

Below are links for state/provincials water planning information in the WLA region. Please let us know if any of these links are incorrect, broken, or out of date.

Alberta	<a href="http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/">http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/</a>
Arizona	<a href="http://www.azwater.gov/AzDWR/Arizonas_Strategic_Vision/">http://www.azwater.gov/AzDWR/Arizonas_Strategic_Vision/</a>
British Columbia	<a href="http://www.livingwatersmart.ca/">http://www.livingwatersmart.ca/</a>
California	<a href="http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/index.cfm">http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/index.cfm</a>
Colorado	<a href="http://coloradowaterplan.com">http://coloradowaterplan.com</a>
Idaho	<a href="http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/waterboard/WaterPlanning/StateWaterPlanning/State_Planning.htm">http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/waterboard/WaterPlanning/StateWaterPlanning/State_Planning.htm</a>
Montana	<a href="http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_mgmt/state_water_plan/default.asp">http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_mgmt/state_water_plan/default.asp</a>
Nevada	<a href="http://water.nv.gov/programs/planning/stateplan/">http://water.nv.gov/programs/planning/stateplan/</a>
New Mexico	<a href="http://www.ose.state.nm.us/publications_state_water_plans.html">http://www.ose.state.nm.us/publications_state_water_plans.html</a>

## WLA Water Planning Principles (cont.)

Oregon	<a href="http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/Pages/law/integrated_water_supply_strategy.aspx">http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/Pages/law/integrated_water_supply_strategy.aspx</a>
Sonora	<a href="http://www.atl.org.mx/cnaint/images/stories/revistas/National_Water_Program_2007-2012.pdf">http://www.atl.org.mx/cnaint/images/stories/revistas/National_Water_Program_2007-2012.pdf</a> (national)
Utah	<a href="http://www.utahswater.org/">http://www.utahswater.org/</a>
Washington	<a href="http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/hq/fy2014-wractivity.html">http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/hq/fy2014-wractivity.html</a> (no specific state plan)
Wyoming	<a href="http://waterplan.state.wy.us/">http://waterplan.state.wy.us/</a>

### SAMPLE WATER PLANS

We invite suggestions and dialogue on state and/or basin plans that we should hold up as good examples of the implementation of the above. Please provide a link to the document, and tell us why you believe your example should be held up as a model. WLA will use contributions to refine the Principles and post those we agree should be cited as models. Thank you in advance for your contribution to this dialogue.

Location/Plan	Publication Date	Online Location
<b>Yakima River Basin (WA) Integrated Water Resource Management Plan</b>	2012	<a href="#">Link</a>
<b>Jordan Basin (UT) Water Plan</b>	2010	<a href="#">Link</a> (very large file)
<b>North Lahontan (CA) Regional Report</b>	2013 Draft	<a href="#">Link to Draft</a>
<b>Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan</b>	2007	<a href="#">Link</a>

(others to be provided as suggestions are made and reviewed)

### PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS/CONTACT US

To help WLA further develop this guidance and related resources, please contact Kathleen Williams at [k.williams@bresnan.net](mailto:k.williams@bresnan.net).