The fourth meeting of the Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission (Commission) was held at the Loews Coronado Bay, 4000 Coronado Bay Road, Coronado, California, on November 21 & 22, 1996. The Commission met informally on November 21 and from 8:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. on November 22, to hear reports of researchers regarding the status of water and water-related resources in the western states.

The following reports were presented the morning of Thursday, November 21:

“Climate Change” -- Dr. Kathy Miller - National Center for Atmospheric Research
“Drought” -- Dr. Don Wilhite - Director, National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska
“Demographics, Economics, Social Values” -- Dr. Pam Case, Dr. Greg Alward - US Forest Service

During the afternoon of Thursday the Commission met jointly with the Western States Water Council (Council). Jeff Fassett, President of the Council and Wyoming State Engineer, moderated a discussion of the Council’s report to the Commission on a range of water issues. Discussion focused on the types of problems faced by the States and the coordination between States and Federal agencies.

The following reports were presented the morning of Friday, November 22:

“Water Use” -- Dr. Wayne Solley - US Geological Survey
“Water Quality” -- Dr. Gene Reetz - Environmental Protection Agency

Copies of handouts for these draft reports were provided to the Commission members and made available to all attending the meetings. Copies of the council report, and those of the other researchers, will be available from the Commission Office when completed.

The Commission was formally called to order by Commission Chair Denise Fort at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, November 22. The roll was called and the following members and member representatives were in attendance:

**PRESIDENTIALLY APPOINTED MEMBERS/REPRESENTATIVES**

Denise Fort, Chair
Huali Chai
David Cottingham, representing Patty Beneke, newly designated representative of Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior.
John H. Davidson
John Echowhawk
Janet Neuman
Patrick O'Toole
Kenneth L. Salazar
Jack Robertson

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS/REPRESENTATIVES**

David Brooks, for Honorable J. Bennett Johnston
United States Senate

Mike Poling, for Honorable Frank Murkowski
United States Senate

Benjamin H. Grumbles, for Honorable Bud Shuster
U.S. House of Representatives

Nils W. Johnson, for Honorable Larry E. Craig
United States Senate

Kenneth J. Kopocis, for Honorable James L. Oberstar
U.S. House of Representatives
Minutes of Meeting 11/21-22/1996

John Zirschky

Steve Lanich, for
Honorable George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives

Valerie West, for
Honorable Don Young
U.S. House of Representatives

The Designated Federal Official, David Cottingharn, was present. Commission staff in attendance were Don Glaser, Curt Brown, Charlene Dougherty, Ruth Gunnarson, and Larry Schulz.

The minutes of the previous two meetings held on May 16 & 17, 1996, and September 12, 1996, were unanimously approved.

The purpose of this meeting was to consider the draft outline of the Commission's final report (copy available), as prepared by the staff, and to discuss the Commission's approach to development of the final report.

Staff reported on the status of The West Today studies, particularly the contracts for six river basin reports and the deliverables, including the draft and final reports which are due in March and June, respectively. Also, a contract has been awarded to the Natural Resource Law Center at the University of Colorado to study local watershed initiatives in the West and provide a report by June 30, 1997. Arrangements by the Arizona State University to hold an Aquatic Ecology Symposium in Tempe, Arizona, February 17 and 18, 1997, are nearing completion. Work is proceeding on arrangements for a conference on Tribal water issues to be held in March, 1997.

The Commission discussed the concept for the Tribal Water Conference, including the subjects to be addressed. It was concluded that the staff will contract for a report on Tribal water needs and a conference for the Indian community to address the Commission and provide a paper for publication expressing their concerns. Staff will also pursue developing a scholarly analysis of Indian water rights specifically as they relate to Federal water policy. It was suggested and agreed that staff will prepare a draft statement of work for these projects and share it with the Commission for comment.

Several members had questions about public involvement and peer review for the basin studies. Following discussion, consensus was reached that public involvement is important to the accuracy and credibility of the basin studies. Staff was asked to develop a process for ensuring wide review of the basin reports.

The Commission discussed a proposed outline for its report. Commissioners made and discussed the following suggested changes on the outline:

- An “Executive Summary” should be added at the beginning of the report.
- Funding and financing are fundamental issues which deserve considerable attention in the report and should be elevated to an overall theme.
- The “historical context” section should address the historic development of water as a resource, describing the growth of agencies in response to laws and programs, highlighting the functions and interrelationships of Federal agencies with each other and with state and tribal governments.
- The West Today chapters should feature the demographic trends in the West and the dramatic impacts that growth will have on water use and water-related resources.

The Commission discussed the concept of the “Federal role” historically and today in water infrastructure development, institutions, and sustaining quality water supplies and food production. Water was identified as a natural resource of national importance. Members agreed that it would be desirable to work toward a consensus statement of the contemporary national interests related to water and the resulting Federal roles, whether greater or lesser than found today.
The discussion of challenges for western water managers should specifically address needs for additional storage, sustainability of agriculture and provision of food, and financing of projects.

The outline should include water pricing and water contracts, support for basic research, data collection programs, data sharing, desalination, wastewater reclamation and reuse, and Federal reserved water rights.

The meeting closed with direction to the staff to revise the report outline using the meeting transcript, distribute it to the members, and begin using the outline to guide development of the report and any further research that is required.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m..

Respectfully Submitted,

Larry Schulz, Administrative Officer

Date: 11/3/97