

Western Regional Water Commission

STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 12, 2020
TO: Chairman and Commission Members
FROM: Dave Solaro, Arch, P.E., Assistant County Manager
SUBJECT: Discussion and possible action, including interviews for the vacant Water Resources Program Manager position from the following list of applicants: Silas Adams and Chris Wessel; and direct Washoe County staff to finalize terms of employment with the selected candidate pursuant to Washoe County Code 5.091 – 5.093.

SUMMARY

At the January 15, 2020, regularly scheduled meeting of the Western Regional Water Commission (WRWC), Water Resources Program Manager, Jim Smitherman, submitted his intent to retire with recommendations to replace his position. The Commission accepted Mr. Smitherman's recommendation that Washoe County conduct an open recruitment to replace his position, and that Mr. Chris Wessel, Water Management Planner, be appointed Interim Manager to carry out the duties of the Program Manager until a replacement could be interviewed and appointed.

Mr. Smitherman retired on July 17, 2020, and shortly thereafter, the recruitment process began. Per Washoe County Code 5.091, appointments in the classified service must be made according to merit and fitness from eligible lists prepared upon the basis of examination, which must be open and competitive, except as otherwise provided in the Merit Personnel Ordinance.

Article 3 - Assigned Employees and Scope of Services of the Cooperative Agreement for Contractual Professional and Administrative Staff Services outlines the interaction between Washoe County and the WRWC in relation to this professional staff position. As this is the first time we have had employee changes since the Cooperative Agreement was executed in 2008, Washoe County is requesting that this position be filled as an appointed position of the Community Services Department which will allow flexibility necessary to meet the wishes of the WRWC in relation to the assigned professional staff.

Article 3 reads in part "...In the event WRWC wishes to replace these employees, or in the event such employees leave County employment or are otherwise terminated by the County, County and WRWC shall confer to determine a replacement/recruitment schedule and process. County shall use its best efforts to replace such employees, subject to the consent of the WRWC, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld."

BACKGROUND

Mr. Smitherman retired on July 17, 2020 and on September 3, 2020, the open competitive recruitment for the Western Regional Water Commission Program Manager was posted by the Washoe County Human Resources Department and duly advertised through multiple advertising

venues including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The job closed on September 30, 2020, netting five candidates who were referred by Human Resources in mid-October as qualified to interview for the vacant position.

On October 29, 2020, in consultation with the Human Resources Department, Dave Solaro, Arch., P.E., Assistant County Manager, facilitated a panel assessment of the candidates along with regional partners of the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (NNWPC) who included John Flansberg, P.E., Public Works Director, City of Reno, John Martini, P.E., Assistant City Manager, City of Sparks, and John Enloe, P.E., Director, Natural Resources, TMWA. The assessment panel recommended two candidates for the Western Regional Water Commission's consideration.

As Washoe County is the hiring authority, it is recommended that the WRWC meet with each candidate for a 5-minute introduction by the candidates followed by a 15-minute discussion/interview by the Trustees.

Once the discussions/interviews have been conducted with each recommended candidate the Board will proceed to a nomination process to identify their top candidate for the WRWC Program Manager position as follows (the nomination process is adapted from that used by the Board of County Commissioners for the Washoe County Manager position):

Nomination: Each Trustee will nominate 1 applicant; nomination will be conducted by e-mail tally. Emails to be directed to legal counsel with the top choice of the trustee then legal counsel will read aloud nominations, tally, and record.

If there is a clear top candidate (minimum of 5 nominations for a single applicant), the Chair will entertain a motion to proceed with that applicant.

Following Commission vote to proceed with an individual, the Chair and Washoe County Assistant County Manager Solaro will meet and confer with the selected candidate to be retained by Washoe County.

PREVIOUS ACTION

There is no previous action.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Western Regional Water Commission conduct interviews for the vacant Water Resources Program Manager position from the following list of applicants: Silas Adams and Chris Wessel; and direct Washoe County staff to finalize terms of employment with the selected candidate pursuant to Washoe County Code 5.091 – 5.093.

POSSIBLE MOTION

“Move to select _____ as the Water Resources Program Manager supporting the Western Regional Water Commission; and direct Washoe County staff to finalize terms of employment with the selected candidate pursuant to Washoe County Code 5.091 – 5.093.”

Silas L. Adams

Objective: To maximize efficient utilization of water resources through experience in hydrological sciences, environmental policy, and water management.

Education

Texas A&M University	College Station, TX	
MWM in Water Management and Hydrological Science	2011-2013	GPA: 3.26
B.S. double major in Bioenvironmental Sciences and Environmental Studies	2007-2011	GPA: 3.46

Work Experience

<i>Water Programs Manager</i>	40 hours/week	07/10/17 – Present
Walker Basin Conservancy		Reno, NV

Water Management

- Developing and implementing the water monitoring/tracking plans.
- Conducting field measurements/observations.
- Tracking water use information from lease and stewardship programs.
- Coordinating with river and ditch riders for Conservancy water use and management.
- Assisting in the development and management of water use plans on an annual basis (i.e., tracking water rights, leasing and transfer of water rights, etc.).
- Manager for the stewardship team when needs arise regarding water use or water supply.

Outreach and Development

- Developing and expanding existing relationships with key partners and water users in the Walker Basin
- Attending and/or organizing and moderating monthly/weekly meetings as representative of WBC with a variety of stakeholders.
- Clearly speak for the WBC, representing the WBC in these forums and pursuing WBC objectives.

Management of Acquisition Databases

- Managing the existing databases set up for tracking water assets and informing water management decisions.
- Organizing staff on the water management use in field and the administrative tracking of water rights and other assets.
- The lead point for WBC in acquiring water rights for the purpose of the Conservancy goals.

Project Management

- Managing specific water management projects; developing next steps; management of contractors/consultants; providing guidance and recommendation for senior leadership.
- Authoring technical reports and memos for senior leadership and Board of Directors.

<i>Environmental Scientist</i>	40 hours/week	03/01/16 – 7/7/17
Gresham, Smith and Partners		Dallas, TX

- Authored Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Spill Prevention Countermeasure and Control (SPCC) documents for clients to maintain compliance with state (TX & OK) and federal statutes.
- Performed SWPPP and SPCC site inspections to ensure and recommend actions of compliance.
- Conducted Air Quality Assessment based on current regulations set by state and federal agencies (EPA, TCEQ)
- Authored Air Permit by Rule (PBR) memos to comply with state regulations.
- Performed water quality testing (visual, TSS, BOD, etc.).
- Performed hydrographic surveys to determine hydrologic movement through small, industrialized sites.
- Compiled environmental data using geographic information systems (GIS).
- Provided water conservation and protection education to clients (large and small groups).

<i>Water Resource Specialist</i>	40 hours/week	01/03/15 – 11/27/15
Select Energy Services		College Station, TX

- Performed regional supply and demand analysis with resulting Region Strategic Plan for water sourcing.
- Identified/negotiated/procured water rights based on the Region Strategic Plan.
- Developed and executed regional commercial models to support water sourcing.
- Performed hydrographic surveys with remote controlled survey equipment that utilizes real-time data collection and GNSS technologies to determine storage capacity of frac water ponds.
- Compiled water resource data using geographic information systems (GIS) and/or global position systems (GPS) software.
- Water Permitting (local, state, and federal) and Right-of-Way Permitting (state and local).
- Maintained existing permits and comply with TCEQ and BRA regulations.
- Applied knowledge of commercial and contractual understanding for negotiations.

Silas L. Adams

Natural Resource Associate Consultant

40 hours/week

06/01/14 – 12/31/14

Natural Resource Group

Houston, TX

- Conducted post-construction monitoring along pipelines to evaluate effectiveness of storm water management mitigation efforts.
- Calculated Ordinary High Water Marks (OHWM) along non-tidal water bodies to meet section 404 CWA jurisdictions.
- Evaluated regulatory requirements and prepared permit applications that are required by federal, state or local environmental regulatory authorities for energy facility development, expansion, maintenance, or decommissioning.
- Prepared and coauthored technical project documents (e.g., Resource Reports), including research, writing, word processing, building tables and spreadsheets, tabulating, and manipulating data.
- Compiled data in support of technical project documents obtained through web-based research, aerial photos, and survey reports.
- Participated in agency consultations, client contacts, site visits, and field reconnaissance.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technician Intern

30 hours/week

05/01/13 – 08/14/13

City of College Station, Public Works Department

College Station, TX

- Helped update and maintain street, drainage, mowing, and irrigation databases and associated cartographic products.
- Located and recorded existing street, drainage, and irrigation infrastructure in the field with aerial/satellite imagery using GIS tools and principles. .
- Developed and maintained presentation-grade maps for upper management.
- Developed, revised, and updated standard operating procedures.
- Provided computer technical support and cartographic assistance to staff, field crews, and customers.

Air Enforcement Internship

40 hours/week

06/01/10 – 08/31/10

Environmental Protection Agency

Dallas, TX

- Analyzed emission data to correctly enforce regulations on Texas refineries.
- Applied knowledge of the CAA and air permits to complete self disclosures for the EPA.

University Leadership Experience

Texas A&M University Men's Soccer Team Captain/Coach

2011 – 2017

- Selected to be coach and captain of the Varsity Team that competes locally and nationally in collegiate games and tournaments. Coached the team to win "Elite 8" for National Championship while still a player.
- Responsible for organizing sponsors of soccer-related fundraisers. Manager of two 25-player teams which include practices, games, tournaments, fund-raising events, and management of \$30,000 budget.
- Selected as Texas A&M's Women's Club Soccer Team's Assistant coach.
- Selected as Texas A&M Men's Club Soccer Team's Head Coach.

Skills

Management

- Numerous projects managed with the Walker Basin Conservancy with water right acquisitions, monitoring, and income generation.
- Managing several client accounts with responsibilities of contractual negotiations, customer service, and forecasting potential financial growth.
- Structure and perform experiments for cotton genetic research.

Computer

- Microsoft Excel, Power Point, Word, File Maker (EPA Self Disclosure).
- Knowledge of ArcMap (GIS) systems and STELLA. Trimble GEO 7 . GNSS receiver with SurvCE.. SWAT & MODFLOW

Sampling

- Air, water, and soil sampling. Knowledge of Bioremediation
- Visual water sampling, TSS, BOD, pH, HEM Oil and Grease.
- Knowledge and experience implementing SWPPP, SPCC, and Air PBR.
- Use of pressure transducer for stream flow measurements.

CHRIS WESSEL

PROFESSIONAL
EXPERTISE

Water Management Planning
Hydrogeologic Assessment
Project Management
Water Resource Development

Geothermal Resource Development
Hazardous Contamination Assessment
Soil and Groundwater Remediation
Certified Environmental Manager

EXPERIENCE
2006 – Present

WESTERN REGIONAL WATER COMMISSION

Water Management Planner

- Appointed the Western Regional Water Commissions Interim Program Manager.
- Responsible for facilitating regularly scheduled meetings of the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission and the Western Regional Water Commission Board of Trustees.
- Actively participate with regional partners including the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the Public Works departments of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County and The Truckee Meadows Flood Management Authority.
- Acted as liaison between local regional partners and the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Nevada State Legislature as well as other State entities.
- Currently managing the development of the 2021-2040 Comprehensive Regional Water Management Plan.
- Instrumental in the development of the 2011-2030 and 2016-2035 Comprehensive Regional Water Management Plans.
- Responsible for developing the commission’s annual budget.
- Develop and negotiate bids and contracts and supervised projects funded by the Regional Water Management Fund.
- Responsible for reviewing major facility plans for conformance with the regional water management plan.
- Introduced protocols for project tracking and billing verification to ensure compliance with annual financial audits.
- Participate on multiple regional planning groups in support of furthering regional water management planning goals.

2004 - 2006

CRW SERVICES, LLC

Principal/Owner:

- Provided contract services related to groundwater development and assessment for Fish Springs Ranch production wells and Sempra power project.
- Conducted environmental site assessments, investigations and remediation for various listed and non-listed RCRA hazardous waste constituents including perchloroethylene.
- Supervised project construction of geothermal production and injection wells for resource extraction.
- Conducted terminal lake research and succeeded in securing mine closure permit for end of mine life.

1992 - 2004

AMEC

Senior Project Manager/Hydrogeologist:

- Managed professional, technical and administrative staff along with contract employees as part of various project teams.
- Developed regional three-dimensional groundwater models for water resource planning and investigation of contaminant transport.
- Designed, implemented and operated dewatering, water supply, and injection well fields.
- Conducted/managed environmental site assessments, investigations and remediation projects.
- Successfully closed numerous Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste sites in the State of Nevada.
- Implemented and designed programs for hazardous waste remediation for both RCRA listed and non-listed contaminants including Perchloroethylene.
- In-depth knowledge of well development techniques and the following drilling methods: reverse circulation, mud rotary, air rotary, dual-tube reverse, hollow stem auger, sonic and cable tool.
- Extensive involvement with aquifer testing, data analysis and evaluation using various computer software packages.
- Assessment of surface water hydrology for mine feasibility studies.
- Completed various permitting programs for underground injection wells, water well and monitoring well drilling, and water appropriations.
- Managed numerous (NPDES) National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems permits.
- Provided Litigation support for various water resource and environmental soil and groundwater contamination projects.
- Instrumental in development of Final Permanent Closure Plans for mining projects.
- Extensive experience in mine, industrial and commercial permits and regulatory documents including Water Pollution Control Permits, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans, Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plans, monitoring plans, Emergency response plans and Health and Safety Plans.

1987 - 1992

WILLIAM E. NORK, INC.

Staff Hydrogeologist

- Conducted hydrogeologic field investigations for regional and local groundwater resource development projects.
- Provided support for the development of regional groundwater modeling.
- Supervised numerous drilling operations of municipal, commercial and private production and injection wells.
- Performed pumping and injection testing and analysis.
- Logged borehole cuttings and ran downhole electric and temperature logs.
- Conducted downhole camera surveys.
- Performed geothermal resource evaluation studies, supervised the installation of shallow and deep geothermal production and injection wells.

Water Resource Intern:

- Conducted land and water uses planning studies in north and central California agricultural areas.
- Conducted riparian vegetation study along the Sacramento River basin.
- Developed and implemented a groundwater monitoring program for Butte County
- Conducted surface and groundwater interaction studies.

EDUCATIONCalifornia State University, Chico

Post Graduate Studies: Hydrogeology/Hydrogeochemistry, 1987

Bachelor of Science: Geology/Hydrogeology; Minor: Chemistry, 1986

Bachelor of Arts: Geography, 1985

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Nevada Water Resource Association

National Ground Water Association

Nevada Rural Water Association

Key Qualifications and Experience:*Water Resource Planning*

- Interim Program Manager/Supervisor.
- Managing Western Regional Water Commission and Northern Nevada Water Commission.
- Instrumental in the development and updating of regional water management plans.
- Facilitation of regional stakeholder groups.
- Liaison between local, regional and State agencies.
- Responsible for developing the annual budgets.
- Developed and negotiated bids and contracts and supervised projects funded by the water management fund.
- Introduced protocols for project tracking and billing verification to ensure compliance with annual financial audit.

Hydrogeologic Studies, Modeling and Groundwater Resource Assessments

- Groundwater resource planning, assessment and development for municipal, commercial, industrial and mining sector clients.
- Assessment and implementation of Aquifer Storage and Recovery.
- Well head protection studies for municipalities.
- Hydrogeologic assessments for Landfill feasibility studies.
- Design, operation, permitting and monitoring of construction dewatering systems.
- Surface water hydrology and watershed management.
- Groundwater Modeling of local and regional groundwater systems.
- Design of dewatering wells, water supply wells, injection wells, and containment recovery wells.
- Design, supervision, and evaluation of pumping/injection tests and other aquifer testing programs.
- Developing water balance models and hydrologic databases.
- Installation and monitoring of remote weather stations and groundwater monitoring dataloggers.

Environmental Assessments and Remediation

- Hazardous waste, soil and groundwater evaluation, and assessment.
- Contaminant transport evaluation and attenuation modeling.
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments.
- Phase II Environmental Site Investigations.
- Phase III Remediation of soil and groundwater systems contaminated with hazardous wastes

Mining

- Mine feasibility studies for open pit mining operations.
- Water resource assessment for operational feasibility.
- Water resource development.
- Development of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans and associated educational programs.
- Assessment of Surface and groundwater interaction and flow regimes.
- Final Permanent Closure Plan Development.
- Development of Monitoring plans.
- Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan.
- Emergency Response Plan Development.

Permitting

- Water Pollution Control Permitting for mine operations.
- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permitting for Mining Municipal and commercial applications.
- Underground Injection Control Permitting for remediation system effluent, geothermal brine and dewatering system discharges.
- Permitting for water rights, water supply/dewatering wells, well abandonment and related drilling activities.

Geothermal Resource Evaluations

- Geothermal resource evaluation.
- Well Field planning and design.
- Geothermal production and injection well design, installation, testing and analysis.

Litigation Support

- Expert witness testimony related to municipal groundwater resource modeling and contaminate transport.
- Litigation support for soil and groundwater contaminated sites and groundwater flow regimes.

Professional Registrations, and Certifications:

- Certified Environmental Manager, Nevada.
- 40-hour OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) Training.
- 24-hour Surface Miner Training MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration).
- PADI Instructor/divemaster.

Languages

	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>
English	Native Language		
French	Fair	Fair	Fair