

# MINUTES

# County of Inyo WATER COMMISSION

February 9, 2026

Commissioner Red Owl called the Water Commission meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. at the Clint Quilter Consolidated Office Building in Bishop, CA. Water Commissioners in attendance were Teri Red Owl, Randy Keller, Paul Huette, Vikki Glinskii, and Matt Kingsley. Present from the Water Department were Holly Alpert, Laura Piper, Larry Freilich, and Tim Moore.

## Welcome and Introduction

The Commissioners introduced themselves.

## Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Red Owl led the pledge of allegiance

## Public Comment

The Chairperson opened public comment.

Nancy Masters stated the ORWT stewardship group is looking for people to join. Contact Mike Prather via email at [owenslake46@gmail.com](mailto:owenslake46@gmail.com).

## Approval of minutes From April 28, 2025 & November 3, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Keller to approve the April 28, 2025, minutes, seconded by Commissioner Glinskii. Motion passed. Commissioner Kingsley thanked Laura Piper for the newly formatted minutes. Motion by Commissioner Kingsley to approve the November 3, 2025, minutes, seconded by Commissioner Huette, motion passed, one abstention, Commissioner Keller.

## Selection of Chair and Vice Chair for 2026

Commissioner Red Owl made a motion to nominate Commissioner Huette for Chairperson, seconded by Commissioner Glinskii. Motion passed. Commissioner Keller made a motion to nominate Teri Red Owl for Vice Chairperson, seconded by Commissioner Glinskii. Motion passed.

## Commissioner's Report

**Commissioner Kingsley** stated he toured the ORWT project with staff and Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

**Commissioner Keller** stated he was reappointed to the Water Commission for a new term, he is supportive of the LTWA and how much better the valley is because of it.

**Commissioner Red Owl** stated the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission is continuing the monthly virtual Great Basin Water Justice Summit sessions which can be found on the OVIWC social media page.

**Commissioner Glinskii** stated she wanted the Water Commission to meet again in March; she met with a representative of Friends of the Inyo, staff of the Water Dept, and encouraged ORWT stewardship.

**Commissioner Huette** stated he was pleased to be elected Chairperson and is committed to the valley.

## Director's Report

### a. Winter saltcedar activities

Dr. Alpert provided an update, stated we had four seasonals this year, they have treated 234 acres this winter, discussed the various areas they have treated with 167 acres retreated, thanked Tyler Starbard for his hard work and working well with LADWP.

**Commissioner Red Owl** inquired about the retreated areas

**Commissioner Huette** asked if there is a certain time of year this is done

### b. OVGA WY2024 annual report

Dr. Alpert stated the draft report will go before the OVGA Board for review in March, there is a public comment period and then back to the Board to approve the final.

**Commissioner Red Owl** inquired when the public comment period will begin

**Commissioner Huette** asked who was writing the report

**c. Refreshed ICWD website**

Dr. Alpert stated a refresh was done on the ICWD website, a citizen science page was added for the public to report change to vegetation or any observations on mitigation projects.

**Commissioner Huette** stated the form on the citizen science page is easy and quick

**Commissioner Glinskii** asked if the form has the types of data the Water Dept is looking for

Dr. Alpert stated Crystal Geyser is proposing a new bottling plant south of the current one, the County is starting environmental impact reports and there will be two public workshops this week.

**Owens River Water  
Trail Environmental  
Impact Report**

**Action Item: Possible recommendation to Inyo County Board of Supervisors to certify CEQA**

Dr. Alpert stated the Water Commission is requested to review the final ORWT EIR. The Water Dept is asking for a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to certify the CEQA. Larry Freilich provided a brief overview of the project, stated we are applying for grants, and are currently waiting on a lease from LADWP. He provided a Powerpoint presentation, explained the process and the Water Commission's role. He stated LADWP paid for the EIR and supports the project.

**Commissioner Kingsley** inquired if we mitigated the issues LADWP raised and asked about certifying CEQA without a lease.

**Commissioner Glinskii** asked about putting a deadline in the resolution for certification so additional grant funding isn't lost in the fall.

**Commissioner Red Owl** stated certification is needed for the additional grant the County is applying for and is time sensitive.

**Commissioner Huette** stated he was not clear on the hydrology part Larry had discussed and asked for clarification

**Public Comment**

**Heidi Hayner** stated she was not pleased with encouraging additional visitation to Lone Pine and stated they are already dealing with the destruction in the Alabama Hills area.

**Jon Klusmire** stated he remembers LADWP's initial concerns were emergency access. Was more access included besides just the put ins

**Randy Short** thanked Larry Freilich, Bob Harrington, and Holly Alpert for the work on this project, provided provided a history on the project and that it is unique in California

**Lynn Boulton** asked what happens when we have a 2023 winter, do you prevent people from utilizing the ORWT

**Santina** stated LADWP doesn't want water going to Owens Lake so they control flows; the river is hard to clear because it doesn't want to be cleared, and this is a lot of work to mitigate and not rejuvenate.

**Nancy Masters** stated the river is a restoration project resulting from the 1991 EIR allowing water to be released, it was dry for many decades, the OVC was involved before the EIR was signed, this will set set groundwork for mitigation of the tules, future activities in the LORP, and bring it back from the canal it's been for many years.

**Emily Ontiveros** stated this should get this area properly flowing.

**Commissioner Kingsley** stated he understands Heidi's comments but there is a lot of support for this unique project.

**Commissioner Huette** called for a motion to approve the resolution certifying the final EIR for the ORWT project, motion made by Commissioner Kingsley, seconded by Commissioner Glinskii. Motion passed.

**Commissioner Red Owl** stated Santina made a good point about getting reawakened to some of the cultural uses of tules so when they are picking them out, maybe talk to the tribes about their use.

**2025 vegetation  
Conditions**

Dr. Alpert provided a brief PowerPoint presentation on the 2025 vegetation conditions in the valley. The Board and staff discussed this item in detail. Tim Moore provided an overview of the 2025/2026 runoff year pumping totals.

**Commissioner Red Owl** asked if this was an average for all the parcels, and stated the parcels are different so this doesn't provide a true picture. She asked what the percentage would be for a significant change to cover, stated choosing the parcels and disputing is a lot of work, and asked what staffing levels are needed to complete projects the public is asking for, with additional funding or grants.

**Commissioner Glinskii** asked Dr. Alpert to explain what "cover" means and how controls are determined.

**Commissioner Huette** inquired about baseline on the graph and asked if something could be brought forward to explain this a little better.

**Commissioner Keller** inquired if there is a means to bring forward the troubled parcels by percentages when determining significant change to prioritize which ones are in the worst condition.

**Commissioner Kingsley** stated this commission does not direct the Water Dept staff, their work is directed by the Inyo County Board of Supervisors, if you request a dispute, that is to be directed to the Inyo Board, not the Water Dept staff. He stated we are not their boss.

#### Public Comment

**Emily Ontiveros** stated is my understanding correct that you must show statistical significance for LADWP to consider mitigation measures.

**Sally Manning** stated this is a terrible way to present vegetation data, and we are being told its significant change, what about measurability and attributability, that analysis should be done every year.

**Lynn Boulton** provided her review of the vegetation parcels stating 22 were consistently below baseline and we are losing alkali meadow and to get it back, the water table needs to be raised.

**Jon Klusmire** stated it would be helpful for the public to see a list of the parcels and the reason why they have been decades below baseline, not just a chart saying they are

**Santina** stated what you're saying is this conversation has been going on for forty years, so it sounds like the LTWA is broken, the process is too long, you're doing all this work, and nothing is coming of it.

#### Process for 2026-27 LADWP annual Operations plan

Dr Alpert provided a brief timeline on the process of the upcoming LADWP annual operations plan. She stated it's Received April 20, the County has ten days to respond, within ten days after that a Technical Group meeting must Must be held and ten days after the Technical Group meeting, the operations plan is finalized.

#### Future meeting Schedule

The next Water Commission meeting was scheduled for March 16, 2026, in Independence and April 23, 2026, in Bishop to review the pumping plan.

**Commissioner Red Owl** stated she recalled last year they discussed a proactive approach to have an estimate prepared prior to the pumping plan by doing an early analysis so it's not pushed into the ten days.

**Commissioner Huette** stated maybe a procedure could be established to hold more meetings to come up with this information prior to LADWP's pumping plan and focus on the parcels historically below baseline.

**Commissioner Keller** stated he doesn't think the County should be proposing numbers prior to LADWP's annual report, it's great to be prepared but he doesn't like that concept. He stated we have an agreement and LADWP has a right to pump, and we have a right to raise issues.

**Commissioner Kingsley** stated if we thought about what parcels are impacted and how pumping affects those, staying focused and asking LADWP for less pumping in those areas prior to the pumping plan.

**Dr. Alpert** stated our water level runs are done on March 15 and those data are needed to understand what the conditions are.

#### Public Comment

**Santina** stated why not tell LADWP they can't pump anything. She thanked the commission for the opportunity for public comment.

**Wendy Schneider** stated she supports having a meeting in March, for the public to have input on what they would like addressed regarding the below baseline parcels, maybe a working group.

**Sally Manning** stated the goal of the Water Agreement is to manage pumping to avoid significant vegetation changes and she thinks that's what needs to be discussed.

**Emily Ontiveros** stated they are holding another virtual series starting Feb 19 and every other week and it will be discussing the LTWA in more detail which you can find at ourwaterstory.org.

**Nancy Masters** stated the LTWA is not one document, it is a settlement of a court case. In 1970, the valley dried up from 100's of thousands of acre feet of exported water by LADWP. The county sued under CEQA, the 1991 EIR came about because of the Water Dept., their staff was instrumental in creating the document that the City of LA failed to do, the OVC participated in the development of the MOU, that helped with LORP and other mitigation. They are a framework that took 25 years to develop.

She stated there are different rights and interests which don't always align so we use these frameworks to guide us. If we discarded or took apart the water agreement, we would open the door to a power structure we could not compete with.

**Lauren Rose** thanked the Commission for the discussion and asked for the possibility of having an action item with this discussion, specific asks and goals to put in front of LADWP before the annual operations plan, a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to direct the Water Dept to give the list to LADWP.

#### Adjourn

The Vice Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

