



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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INTRODUCING THE HUMBOLDT RIVER BASIN NETWORK (HRBN)



The Mission of the HRBN: "A voluntary, open group looking for community-based solutions where and if needed, in the Humboldt River Basin, to foster greater ecological, economic, and social resilience".

We would like to introduce to you the Humboldt River Basin Network, (HRBN). Started in early 2017, the group is sponsored by the Nevada State Conservation Commission (SCC); the Nevada State Conservation Commission (SCC) is charged with carrying out policies on renewable natural resource programs.

HRBN Overview

The Humboldt River Basin is the largest river basin that falls entirely within the state of Nevada (16,000 square miles). Numerous Federal, State and private entities have management and/or regulatory authority within the basin, including Elko, Battle Mountain, Ely and Winnemucca BLM District offices. Due to varied ownership patterns and regulatory authorities, management within the Humboldt River Basin is subject to numerous and often competing interests.

There is a long history of human use and dependence upon the River and its resources. Natural and historic modifications to the River and tributaries continue to cause changes upstream and downstream. Conflict arises over issues such as water rights, invasive and native species, water quantity, quality, and timing, interdependent public and private land management, access/recreation, ecological degradation and opportunities/priorities for restoration or enhancement.

Since much of the river and its tributaries are fragmented across land ownership/responsibility, each of these issues has historically been addressed through fragmented social approaches that met mostly negative responses and few successes. To date, there has never been a successful attempt to discuss and potentially resolve these interacting issues in a forum with all of the stakeholders fully engaged.

In 2017 a group of stakeholders (NV Department of Wildlife, NV Department of Agriculture, NV Division of Environmental Protection, NV Association of Conservation Districts, NV Division of Water Resources, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority, BLM, USFS, University of NV Cooperative Extension, The Nature Conservancy, Intermountain West Joint Venture, Trout Unlimited, Newmont Mining, NV Farm Bureau, Humboldt Watershed Cooperative Weed Management group, State Conservation Commission, and others) decided to initiate a collaborative effort - the Humboldt River Basin Network (HRBN). The intent is to create a forum where stakeholders can come together to 'get in front' of conflicts, and efficiently/effectively coordinate and implement efforts to foster greater ecological, economic and social resilience within the basin. The State Conservation Commission agreed to sponsor this effort.

HRBN 2017-2018 Activities

The HRBN decided that a basin-wide Situation Assessment (SA) is the logical first step in designing an effort focused on bringing stakeholders together. By engaging in productive communication and collaboration we hope to reach agreement on a workable roadmap for addressing the challenges facing the Humboldt River Basin. The purpose of a SA is to meet face-to-face with individual community members and stakeholders to better understand their perspectives on the situation regarding the Humboldt River Basin. We hope to learn about concerns/challenges and potential opportunities, and get suggestions on if/how the HRBN should move forward with active engagement of stakeholders. A report will be completed and distributed to all participants summarizing the information and insights gathered during the SA, and providing recommendations regarding possible next steps.

The HRBN has requested assistance from the BLM National Riparian Service Team (NRST) to complete the SA and engage in follow-up meetings to review results. The HRBN and NRST applied for and received funding from the BLM's Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR) program to complete this endeavor. The SA will be completed over a twelve-day period projected to occur this winter at central locations in various towns within or near and relevant to the Basin (Lovelock, Winnemucca, Battle Mountain, Elko, Wells, Eureka, Austin, Fallon, Reno, and Carson City). Laura Van Riper and Mike Lunn, NRST, will meet with individuals and small groups during this time to listen and learn from involved people. Opportunities to visit with NRST by phone will also be available.

Depending on the results of the SA, the HRBN is considering sponsoring a watershed conference or similar education event(s) in 2018 to pave the way for increased understanding of the complex issues facing the watershed. Future steps may include the development of a watershed council or similar entity(ies) to develop and support locally-based efforts aimed at managing conflicts through communication, collaboration and education to arrive at agreed-upon solutions that address issues on interdependent private and public lands.

For more information or to become involved, please contact:

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