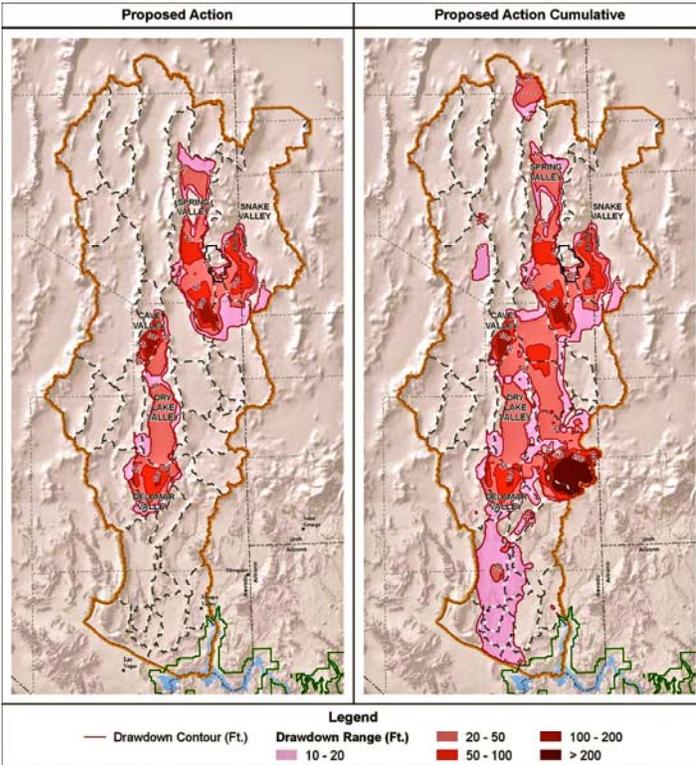




BLM Issues Final EIS on Pipeline Project Opponents Urge Protest Letters to Salazar, Sandoval and SNWA



The Bureau of Land Management released its “Final” Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the SNWA Pipeline project to pump and pipe water from White Pine and Lincoln Counties to Las Vegas. The FEIS adds a new Alternative F as BLM’s “preferred alternative,” which extracts 31,000 AF more than the amount of water currently granted by the State Engineer, and on the surface avoids Snake Valley but only for now. SNWA’s Proposed Action (figure at left) is still on the table and Alternative F leaves the door open to Snake Valley. Despite 460+ sets of comments and 20,000+ form letters and emails to BLM, the FEIS remains substantially the same.

“**Final**”? This EIS is just the beginning of a cascade of environmental documents that SNWA and BLM will use to expand and change the proposal. Make no mistake, BLM’s preferred Alternative F is part of a shell game to fool the public into assuming that Snake Valley and Great Basin National Park are safe from the pipeline pumping. Not so. The interbasin flow between Spring and Snake Valleys is underplayed. **The Proposed Action, in all valleys, for maximum amounts of water, is the real project.**

COM or Con? The FEIS lumps together construction and operation with monitoring, management and mitigation, calling it a “COM” plan and promising a “cease and desist”

SNWA Proposed Action drawdown and subsidence of full project impacts after 200 years, FEIS page ES-70

order if impacts become unacceptable to BLM. This sleight of hand gives the impression that BLM is really being a steward of its lands, and can prevent the ravages of the Water Grab through monitoring and mitigation. In fact, by the time the effects are clear enough to warrant a cease and desist order (if BLM can stand up to SNWA), the damage will be done and will take centuries to recover. BLM’s own FEIS shows how damaging this project is to the resources it is legally bound to protect. There is no plan that can manage and mitigate away the widespread destruction foretold in the FEIS. **The only alternative that protects the lands under BLM’s stewardship is the No Action Alternative.**•



Finger Pointing All the Way to the Fiscal Cliff



Seems to us that the SNWA Pipeline Project—aka Water Grab— generates as much finger pointing as controversy. How so? BLM says they have to pick an alternative because Congress told them to in the Lincoln County Lands Act. And besides, says BLM, we don’t control the water, that’s the Nevada State Engineer. The State has jurisdiction over the water, but not the pipe or the land under it. Wildlife and agriculture are caught in the middle. Ask the Congressional delegation to speak against a project which is now documented to destroy most of two (rural) counties? No, they say water is a state matter (even though a pipeline on federal land enables the project.) An audible silence from Governor Sandoval on this bankrupting \$15+ billion boondoggle. Clark County and SNWA are heading toward Nevada’s fiscal cliff, in the style of Thelma and Louise. Now is the time to call on Nevada’s leaders and the Clark County Commission and SNWA Board to end the costly, destructive, pride-cometh-before-a-fall pipedream. Now. —Editor

Water Grab

PROPOSED ACTION FACTS

306 miles of pipeline
+ 177-434 miles of
laterals to wells

At least 144-174
groundwater
production wells,
each connected to
power lines

176,656 acre feet/
year OR 57.6 BILLION
gallons per year

Water table drops 10-
200 + feet in 200 yrs

Land surface will
open & drop more
than 5 feet over 525
square miles

34,742 TONS of
windblown dust per
YEAR

AT RISK:

- 305 springs
- 112 miles of streams
- 8,000 acres of wetlands
- 191,506 acres of shrubland wildlife habitat for sage grouse, mule deer, elk & antelope

Proposed Action? Preferred Alternative?

The Pipeline FEIS presents an analysis of the Proposed Action, and several alternatives for the project. SNWA's Proposed Action affects all valleys directly with maximum impacts from 176,655 acre feet of pumping per year. BLM's Preferred Alternative F excludes (for now) Snake Valley, and supposes 114,129 AF— 31,000 AF more than amounts currently approved by the Nevada State Engineer for SNWA in Spring, Cave, Dry Lake and Delamar Valleys. Until BLM issues the Record of Decision, the public will not know what the approved project is. However, since the Proposed Action includes all valleys at rates of pumping to match the size of the gargantuan pipeline, it is fair to assume that the statistics shown at the left are the extent of likely disclosed impacts.●

What's Wrong with Alternative ?

Alternative F is a Failure and a Farce. Why Failure? BLM is OK with massive destruction in eastern Nevada. Alt. F avoids Snake Valley (for now) and defers the messy issue of interstate struggle over a common resource, water. Why Farce? Alt. F is short sighted sleight of hand that enables SNWA to get its foot in the door by approving an unaffordable pipeline now and postponing the real decisions and destruction to a later time. And, Alt. F does nothing to protect Utah from the Water Grab.

-  **Selecting Alt. F fails to allow for public comment** on this alternative, as it was created after the close of the public comment period on the Draft EIS.
-  **The water applications for Snake Valley** are still active, and SNWA already says it will pursue a ROW into Snake Valley in the future.
-  **The need to fill the pipeline** to its full capacity will drive SNWA to pursue Snake Valley applications (and applications in other Nevada basins). If they build it, they will fill it! Where's the rest of the water coming from?
-  **SNWA's own documents**, submitted to the NSE hearing in autumn 2011, reveal they intend to pump between 251,035 and 313,914 AF of groundwater annually at full build-out. To reach those totals, SNWA must obtain ROWs in Snake Valley and other valleys.
-  **Alt. F allows for more pumping in Spring Valley** than the other DEIS alternatives (D and E) that deny a ROW into Snake Valley. This additional pumping will cause even greater impacts in Snake Valley by withdrawing even more interbasin flow from Spring into Snake Valley.
-  **The additional pumping allowed under Alt F** may accelerate impacts on seeps and springs in north Snake Valley and in Deep Creek Valley in Tooele County.
-  **Deferring the ROW into Snake Valley** does not eliminate the negative impacts on air quality or the environment.
-  **Alt. F harms tribal sacred, cultural sites** and largely ignores tribal water rights issues.
-  **Alt. F will adversely affect Great Basin National Park**, and will threaten sensitive and endangered species.
-  **Alt. F does not address, let alone fix, the most important deficiencies of the Draft EIS**, and therefore and is a de facto admission of a failed process.
-  **Alt. F is deceptive**, sets a bad precedent by enabling environmentally destructive and illegal groundwater mining, and is contrary to multiple use principles of the BLM lands in the four valleys.

ALTERNATIVE "F" IS FOR FAILURE.●

Action Alert: Speak Up for the Future of Nevada

Letters to Sec. Salazar, Gov. Sandoval, Congressional Delegation, SNWA Board & Clark County Commission Needed Now—Do It in September!

Yes, it's that time AGAIN now that the FEIS is out. Rally family, friends, and neighbors to write to Sec. Of Interior Salazar, BLM State Director Amy Lueders, the SNWA Board, Clark County Commission, Gov. Sandoval and our Congressional delegations to tell them the Pipeline project is an economic and environmental disaster of vast proportion. Letters to the editor are a must. And P.S. there's already drought in Water Grab country.

Let decision makers know: **only the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE is acceptable.** BLM proposes to OK a pipeline that would drain rural Nevada at severe economic cost to Clark County ratepayers and ultimately Nevada taxpayers, and severe environmental cost to Nevada and Utah. We need to hold decision makers accountable for supporting this destructive boondoggle. **NOW is the time to STOP THE WATER GRAB.**

Please write to the following decision makers using the information in this newsletter, the sample insert letter and your personal information and views. Focus comments on the decisions being made, project costs and folly, the science in the EIS which documents the impending destruction of an area larger than Vermont, loss of public rangeland for livestock and wildlife. For rural Nevada, it is economic and environmental survival. For Clark County it is an economic justice issue to burden ratepayers with a costly project tapping an uncertain water supply rather than support meaningful water conservation.

Send letters or emails to the decision makers

DOI: Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar: feedback@ios.doi.gov

BLM: Nevada Director Amy Lueders: nvgwprojects@blm.gov or fax 775/861-6689 or 1340 Financial Blvd. Reno 89502

Clark County Commission: Chair Susan Brager ccdistf@clarkcountynv.gov, 500 S. Grand Central Blvd. LV 89155*

Southern Nevada Water Authority Board has 7 members, 3 of whom are on the Clark Co. Commission

Chair Shari Buck, Mayor of N. Las Vegas, 2250 Las Vegas BLVD No., N. Las Vegas NV 89030 fax 702/649-1302

Mary Beth Scow ccdistG@clarkcountynv.gov fax 702/383-6041*

Tom Collins ccdistB@clarkcountynv.gov fax 702/383-6041*

Steve Sisolak ccdistA@clarkcountynv.gov fax 702/383-6041*

Sam Bateman, City of Henderson fax 702/267-2081

Bob Coffin, City of Las Vegas, 495 S. Main St, 7th Fl., Las Vegas NV 89101 fax 702/382-8558

Duncan McCoy, Boulder City, 401 California Ave, Boulder City NV 89005 fax 702/293-9245

Governor Brian Sandoval 101 N. Carson St., Carson City NV 89701 fax 775/684-5683

Nevada Congressional delegation: Sens. Reid, Heller; Rep. Amodei, Berkley, Heck email or fax local or DC offices

Utah Congressional delegation: Sens. Hatch, Lee; Rep. Bishop, Chaffetz, Matheson, email or fax local or DC offices

**BLM FEIS
Comment
Deadline is
October 1**

*Address and fax for Clark County Commissioners

Send Letters to the Editor

Las Vegas Review Journal: use webform or fax 702/383-4676 or PO Box 70, Las Vegas NV 89125

Las Vegas Sun: use webform or fax 702/383-7264

Salt Lake Tribune: letters@sltrib.com; fax 801/257-8950

Millard County Chronicle Progress: fax 775/514-2913

Deseret News: webform

High Desert Advocate: PO Box 2805, W. Wendover NV 89883

Elko Free Press: editor@elkodaily.com or webform

Ely Times: elytimes.lukas@gmail.com

Pahrump Valley Times: mward@pvtimes.com or fax 775/727-5309

Lincoln County Record: contact.lcrecord@gmail.com or fax 775/726-3331

Reno Gazette-Journal: webform or fax 775/788-6458 or LTE, PO Box 22000, Reno NV 89520

Nevada Appeal: editor@nevadaappeal.com or LTE Nevada Appeal, 580 Mallory Way, Carson City NV 89701

**Check GBWN Website
for more Email Blast
Links**

SEND AN EMAIL BLAST: To Ken Salazar via Center for Biological Diversity: http://action.biologicaldiversity.org/o/2167/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=11352.

To the Clark County Commission to Cancel the Las Vegas Water Grab: [http://signon.org/sign/cancel-the-las-vegas?](http://signon.org/sign/cancel-the-las-vegas?source=c.em.cp&r_by=5295247)



Water Gab

News from the Great Basin Water Network Heartland

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Great Basin Water Network on the Web
www.greatbasinwaternet.org
Get involved

Your contribution to GBWN is MORE than a drop in the bucket.



Snake Valley Festival Celebrates Summer Fun'Raising

The Snake Valley Festival 2012, June 15-17: three hot days of fun'raising to celebrate life in rural Nevada, come hell or low water.

Ice cream, wine, and the excitement of carnival rides kicked off the festival. This year's parade included fear-some farm equipment, water themes, and a cooling drench from a fire truck. The community yard sale, silent and live auctions and BBQ, and food venues helped to raise awareness and funds. Sunday's Snake Valley Slither ran out the weekend's non-stop activities. The Festival raises money for Great Basin Water Network's water grab fight to make sure that Snake Valley is here to stay. Next year, the Snake Valley Festival is June 14-16, 2013. See you there! ●



Great Basin Water Network needs your support in its efforts to protect the water resources of the Great Basin for current and future residents—human, animal, and plant. Join GBWN's list of supporters through our website greatbasinwater.net or call 775/786-9955. Join the Email Action Alert Network: info@greatbasinwaternet.org.

Water Gab is a periodic newsletter of Great Basin Water Network to keep in touch with friends and neighbors about what's happening with the water grab fight. To learn more, check our website for news updates: www.greatbasinwaternet.org.

Join the Friends of Great Basin Water Network group on Facebook and follow current news and posts. Mail your tax deductible donation to: Great Basin Water Network, 1755 E. Plumb Lane #170, Reno, NV 89502 775/786-9955. THANK YOU! ●

Water Gab editor: Abby Johnson; Contributors: Steve Erickson, Rob Mrowka, Susan Lynn, Launce Rake, Rose Strickland, Dennis Ghiglieri, Delaine and Rick Spilsbury, Simeon Herskovits, Ann Brauer, Abby Johnson. Photo credits: Dennis Ghiglieri, Gretchen Baker.

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