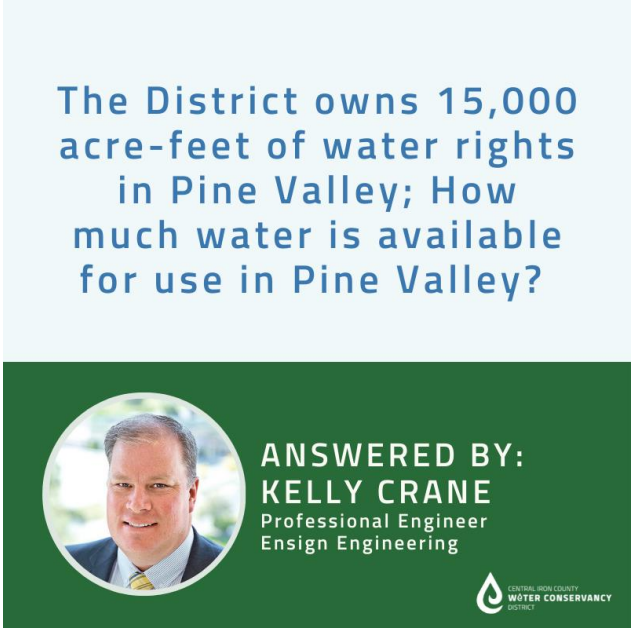

Iron County Water Stewards

Answering Community Questions

Get to Know Your H2O: Central Iron County Water Conservancy District appreciates questions submitted by community members about the Pine Valley Water Supply Project and local water needs. As part of its role as steward of water in Cedar Valley, the District is working with a group of experts, community members and elected officials to help prepare viable solutions for the future and to respond to community questions and concerns about emergent water issues.

This week's question from the community is answered by Kelly Crane, Professional Engineer for Ensign Engineering and District Engineer for the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District.

Question: The District owns 15,000 acre-feet of water rights in Pine Valley; How much water is available for use in that valley?

Answer: To secure a viable solution for Iron County's water supply issues, Larry Anderson, a consultant for the District and former Utah Division of Water Resources director, recommended filing applications for water rights in the West Desert. In 2006, the District filed for water based on hydrogeological studies conducted by the USGS from the 1970's.

The Utah State Engineer did not feel comfortable making a determination on water availability with the old report and commissioned a new USGS report which was paid for collectively between the USGS, BLM, State Engineer and the District.

In February 2019, after receiving those scientific report results and reaching a settlement agreement with Beaver County wherein the District gave Beaver County water to move forward with their mining projects in Wah Wah Valley, the court decreed that 15,000 acre-feet of water in Pine Valley belonged to the District.

The PVWS Project is designed with acute attention to possible environmental impacts. It is currently in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Hydrologic models have been created to show all possible impacts to the environment. This data has been collected by and presented using the most current and best science available. The latest report was produced by Transcon

Environmental and Formation Environmental with concurrence and review from the leading scientists from USGS and BLM.

Before the District builds this water project, it wants to make sure the source is viable and reliable for years to come. This latest report shows a net annual recharge of 17,700 AFY in Pine Valley. That is 2,700 AFY more than what the District plans to discharge from the basin. The latest and best science available leads us to believe that there is sufficient water for the District's application.

That sentiment still doesn't answer the question "what are all potential impacts?" or what if there isn't that much water, that is asked through the Environmental Impact Statement. And, as such, this process has led us to thoroughly investigate and place mitigation practices to protect sources of water throughout the basin. The District agreed within its right-of-way application with the BLM that it will install several monitoring wells around the basin to ensure that pumping will stay at a sustainable yield.

In addition to the requirement from Utah State Law, the District is committed to making sure there are no impacts to senior water right holders including spring flows. The details of the Adaptive Management and monitoring plan can be found with the EIS documents on the BLM's website. As the District uses the water in the basin, it will more accurately be able to tell how much water is available and will be held to a sustainable amount.

When considering impacts to livestock and wildlife the District is proposing a net gain because it will be providing water at the surface to allow for better range management and less stress on the few watering areas currently located in the middle of the basin.

As far as impacts to springs, those within the basin have scientifically been noted as detached from the Pine Valley basin. The only spring that may have an impact is Wah Wah springs which may or may not be perched and not related to the Pine Valley aquifer. If it is impacted, the District is committed (and required under state law) to make sure the water rights are made whole.

There have been recent concerns for a fish called the Least Chub that has been identified in regional springs at Leland Harris, Gandy Marsh and Bishop Springs in northern Snake Valley and at Fish Springs. All of the regional springs with Least Chub populations are located outside the predicted Area of Project Effects, but they are believed to be connected to the regional aquifer system and could be affected by project pumping from the

regional aquifer. Therefore, the model was used to evaluate potential spring flow depletion at the closest regional springs in Snake Valley.

Predicted flow depletion at the Snake Valley regional springs would range from approximately 0.1 percent to 0.9 percent of the total flow. This effect would not be measurable or observable. Potential project impacts to these springs would be less than significant. Impacts to springs at Leland Harris, Gandy Marsh and Bishop Springs would be expected to be less. Predicted flow depletion at Fish Springs would be approximately 0.2 percent.

Efforts to import 15,000 acre-feet from the Pine Valley are currently in the early planning stages. Ultimately, it will be up to city leaders and our community to decide when the water is needed.

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Several special interest groups have recently moved their focus to Cedar Valley water and have been spreading misinformation. The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District was created by a vote of Cedar Valley residents more than two decades ago. It has consistently been dedicated to developing and stabilizing the valley's water supply through conservation, recharge, reuse, and importing of water for the benefit of all current and future water users in the region. The District utilizes scientists, experts and professionals to understand the valley's underground aquifer and to determine responsible solutions for the community as it strives to meet local water challenges. For reliable information on the Pine Valley Water Supply Project specifically and the Cedar Valley's water situation in general, please visit https://cicwcd.org/. For more detailed information about the Pine Valley Water Supply Project and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, please visit https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1503915/570.

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CENTRAL IRON COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT