

Water Rights Self-Assessment in Water System Planning

Most Water Rights Self-Assessments in water system plans only go so far as to identify sufficient water rights for the immediate uses. They very often ignore the historic evolution of water rights that the community has relied upon and short change the planning entity on the quantities available to serve the system. Many water systems that have experienced substantial growth over the last several decades have expanded into areas that already had water rights. Such expansion likely represents an unauthorized change in the existing water rights within the expansion area since water use continues, but from a different source. This is something that should be fixed to avoid relinquishing valuable community water resource authority.

Even if this has not happened it is worth the few paragraphs it takes to describe other water rights within your service area, the uses being made of them and how they relate to your system's water rights. If these other water resources relinquish, your system will be required by its duty to serve to pick up the slack. Embrace this opportunity within water plan water rights assessments. Document defacto uses, particularly for municipal clients. Municipal clients do not lose water through relinquishment. They fail to gain water by failing to recognize, account for and change the other water rights within their service area that are likely being purveyed in whole or in part through their water systems.