1. Welcome and Introductions
   a. Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) Deputy Assistant Director for Water Planning and Permitting, Gerry Walker, welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the Planning Area Process, what challenges ADWR is currently aware of, and ADWR’s authority. An overview of the information presented is provided below.
      i. The goals of the Planning Area Process are to update the water demand, identify water resources issues, and develop a stakeholder driven solution set. Many stakeholders have asked in the past why ADWR is investing a large amount of time on municipal and industrial water demand data when the largest use sector is agricultural, and Ms. Walker explained that this is a statewide initiative and each Planning Area will follow the same process. Stakeholders have also asked why ADWR presents information on topics that they may not be interested in. Ms. Walker explained that the stakeholder attendance is quite diverse and one of our goals is to provide education on a wide variety of water topics. She added that ADWR has presented information on topics that have been requested by stakeholders. Education is a key factor in moving forward with developing solutions.
      ii. Next, Ms. Walker explained that ADWR is aware of the following:
            1. Water levels in some areas are declining
            2. Wells have been reported as going dry
            3. There are concerns about decreasing property values
      iii. Ms. Walker explained ADWR’s role and authority. She stated that ADWR can work with stakeholders to update water use data and be responsive
to stakeholder request for information. For example, the presentation on initiating procedures to designate an Active Management Area via petition and election later in the agenda was in response to stakeholder request. Ms. Walker added that due to the complexities of these issues, ADWR cannot respond to rhetorical questions in a satisfactory manner.

b. ADWR West Basins Planning Area Coordinator, Mandy Whatley, gave an update on the Arizona Water Initiative and explained the new Arizona Water Initiative web pages. An overview of the information provided is available below:
   i. The Governor’s Water Augmentation Council last met on April 7, 2017. During the meeting, the Council discussed the 2017 Arizona Water Initiative draft annual report and Ms. Walker provided an update on Planning Area activities. Three West Basins stakeholders attended the meeting, two of which addressed the Council during the general comment period.
   ii. The Northwest Basins Planning Area last met on February 28, 2017. The meeting included discussion regarding municipal, industrial, and agricultural water demand. Most of the agricultural water demand presented was based on 2015 United States Geological Survey (USGS) field verification of crops. In response to stakeholder request, information was presented regarding the process of developing groundwater regulation and the components of Active Management Areas.

c. The Announcements presentation can be found here.

2. Background Information and Mitigation Strategies Discussion
   a. Ms. Whatley presented background information from the Strategic Vision that had been updated by stakeholder feedback. She also discussed some potential solution sets that had been proposed by stakeholders throughout the course of the process.
   b. Updates that have been made to the background information section for the West Basins Planning Area include the existence of land subsidence features in McMullen Valley, Harquahala INA, and Ranegras Plain; and additional information regarding seasonal population.
   c. Ms. Whatley presented the stakeholder proposed solution sets provided throughout the Planning Area meeting process. The stakeholder proposed solutions include:
      i. New regulation, whether that is an Active Management Area, Irrigation Non-Expansion Area, or an unknown third option that would require new legislation.
      ii. Mandatory metering and reporting requirements for non-exempt wells.
      iii. Mandatory well impact analysis for non-exempt wells
      iv. Mandatory conservation requirements for large water users.
      v. Augmentation, such as the McMullen Valley recharge project that is currently being developed locally.
A stakeholder asked for clarification regarding the augmentation project in McMullen Valley. Ms. Whatley explained that the project is being developed by residents of the West Basins and that Wenden resident, Larry O'Daniel, presented information on the project at the West Basins meeting on October 5, 2016.

Ms. Whatley further clarified that these proposed solutions are what ADWR has heard from stakeholders, and that ADWR is not necessarily implementing these proposed solutions.

A stakeholder asked what was considered a “large water user”. Ms. Walker explained that that is not something that had been discussed at the meetings yet, but it was open for discussion. In the Active Management Areas (AMA), large water users were considered wells that pumped greater than 35 gallons per minute, but that is something that could be open for discussion at a later West Basins meeting if stakeholders are not satisfied with that definition.

A stakeholder asked for clarification on what limited regulations were currently in place in areas outside of AMAs. Ms. Walker explained that the regulations in place are that the groundwater withdrawn must be put to a beneficial use and all water withdrawn from a well must be obtained from a legally drilled well.

A stakeholder asked who oversaw compliance throughout the state and who investigates illegal water use. Ms. Whatley explained that there is an ADWR staff member who oversees compliance within the AMAs and if someone makes a complaint outside of the AMAs, then ADWR staff will investigate.

The Background and Mitigation Strategies presentation can be found here.

3. Initiating Procedures to Designate an Active Management Area via Petition Presentation

a. ADWR Deputy Counsel, Jennifer Heim, presented information on initiating procedures to designate an Active Management Area (AMA) via petition and election. This information was specifically requested by a stakeholder at the meeting on February 16, 2017.

b. Prior to discussing the procedures for petition and election, Ms. Heim gave an overview of mandatory regulation in AMAs. She also explained that non-exempt wells are defined as wells with a pumping capacity to exceed 35 gallons per minute and exempt wells are defined as wells with a pumping capacity of 35 gallons per minute or less.

c. A stakeholder asked for clarification regarding out of town residents that own property in the groundwater basin, but are not registered to vote in that county, if they are permitted to sign the petition. Ms. Heim responded that people who are not registered to vote within the boundaries of the groundwater basin may not sign the petition or vote in the election if one is called.

d. A stakeholder commented that an AMA would not be a viable solution to the challenges in the area because of the large amount of farming that would be grandfathered into the AMA.

e. A stakeholder asked how to find out who owned the farm land in the area, and if ADWR could bring that information to the next meeting. Ms. Walker responded that ADWR could assist the stakeholder in finding that information on their own. One challenge that ADWR has run into in the past is that many
large farming operations are owned by several entities or under several different names.

i. La Paz County Supervisor Holly Irwin commented that if the stakeholder spoke with her after the meeting that she would assist in finding that information on the La Paz County website.

f. A stakeholder asked if ADWR would provide aid in creating new legislation to regulate the area. ADWR Public Information Officer, Michelle Moreno, responded that in the past ADWR has provided technical assistance to a stakeholder driven process. For example, ADWR would assist in drafting legislation.

i. Supervisor Irwin commented that La Paz County had worked with Mohave County to draft legislation for statewide mandatory metering and reporting requirements for non-exempt wells, that bill was introduced in this legislative session but the bill was not passed.

ii. For more information on HB2193 click here.

g. The Initiating Procedures to Designate an Active Management Area via Petition and Election Presentation can be found here.

4. Industrial Water Demand Projections Presentation

a. Ms. Whatley presented industrial water demand and projections updated since the meeting on October 5, 2016. The updates reflect information ADWR has received from stakeholders regarding additional industrial water users, contact information for these users, and water use data.

b. A stakeholder commented that mining should be added as a sub-sector because they are beginning mineral exploration at the Ramsey Silver Project in Ranegras Plain. Ms. Whatley responded that ADWR will research the associated water use with the project and add it into the industrial demand.

c. A stakeholder commented that Ecology Scrap Metal Recycling in Vicksburg should be added to the industrial demand. Ms. Whatley responded that ADWR will reach out to Ecology to see if they would be willing to provide their annual water use information.

d. There was additional discussion regarding dairy water use and groundwater transportation. For more information on groundwater transportation in the West Basins click here.

e. The Industrial Water Demand Projections presentation can be found here.

5. Agricultural Water Demand Presentation

a. Ms. Whatley presented the provisional 2016 United States Geological Survey (USGS) Field Verification of Crops data. The data presented included total estimated water use for irrigated agriculture in 2016 for each groundwater basin, irrigation type in each basin, and an overview of cropped acreage in each basin. The finalized 2016 data and agricultural water projections will be presented once the data becomes available.

b. Ms. Walker commented that the USGS makes estimates of irrigation withdrawals for each groundwater basin every year, but they do not perform field verifications for each groundwater basin every year.

c. A stakeholder asked if the irrigation reservoirs in McMullen Valley were lined. Ms. Whatley responded that she did not know.
d. There was discussion regarding the use of micro-drip with alfalfa.
e. Stakeholders requested that ADWR fund field verification and a well sweep in 2017 and were informed that this request would be conveyed to the Director.
f. The Agricultural Water Dater Demand presentation can be found here.

6. General Comment Period
a. Wenden resident, Larry O’Daniel, provided more information regarding his McMullen Valley recharge project. He commented that something must be done because the rate of withdrawal from the aquifer was greater than the current recharge rate. He mentioned that neither an AMA or INA were viable options because they would destroy La Paz County’s already fragile economy. Mr. O’Daniel suggested that his plan to capture flood waters from the Centennial Wash and store it in the McMullen Valley groundwater basin could help offset some of the supply and demand imbalances in McMullen.

b. A stakeholder commented that he wanted to clarify that aquifers and groundwater basins are not the same thing. The basin is the large area that composes the entire underground water storage system while there are multiple aquifers within any single groundwater basin.

c. A stakeholder expressed her frustration that throughout these Planning Area meetings she was hoping that ADWR would be able to point her in the right direction on who to go to for help regarding the declining water levels in the area. She thought that ADWR would be that entity, but now she understands that this process is for fact finding.

d. A stakeholder discussed a situation in Saudi Arabia where they ran their aquifers dry due to over-cropping. He is highly concerned that the same thing is going to happen in the West Basins. He also commented that he strongly disagreed that the recharge project in McMullen Valley is going to help the situation.

7. Closing Remarks
a. Ms. Whatley thanked everyone for coming and reminded them that if they have any additional questions or comments they may reach out to her via email at mawhatley@azwater.gov or phone at 602-771-4713.