1. Welcome and Introductions
   a. ADWR Deputy Assistant Director, Gerry Walker, gave a brief overview of the Planning Area Process. The goal is to cover the 22 Planning Areas across the state to update the water demand information and to work with stakeholders to develop a solution set to address any demand and supply imbalances.
   b. ADWR Water Resource Specialist, Mandy Whatley, gave an overview of the agenda and announcements.
   c. Announcements:
      i. Ms. Whatley gave an update on the Arizona Water Initiative activities and a proposed calendar for future West Basins meetings.
      ii. ADWR will discuss Agricultural water demand at the next meeting. The data available to ADWR is outdated and does not reflect the new agricultural water use in the area. When ADWR receives groundwater withdrawal estimates from the 2016 Field Verifications of Crops from the US Geological Survey, staff will hold a meeting to discuss the data.
      iii. Land Subsidence Report No. 3 was published January 2017. The report can be found here. The West Basins Planning Area has 3 subsidence features: the McMullen Valley Land Subsidence Feature, the Ranegras Land Subsidence Feature, and Harquahala Valley Land Subsidence Feature.
      iv. The Arizona Corporation Commission Small Water Ombudsman Office was created to assist Class D and E water and wastewater utilities. Click here to access their website.

2. Initiating Procedures to Designate an Irrigation Non-Expansion Area (INA) via Petition
a. Ms. Walker discussed the initiation procedures to designate a subsequent INA via petition.
b. A stakeholder asked whether an INA favored irrigators or residents. Staff clarified that the regulatory tool simply limited the amount of irrigation, and was not meant to favor one party over another.
c. A stakeholder asked whether the stay on irrigation would remain in effect if the order went under judicial review. Staff clarified that the stay on irrigation would remain in effect and would only stop if the court overturned the Director’s order.
d. A stakeholder requested similar information regarding designation of a subsequent Active Management Area. Staff committed to providing information at the next Planning Area meeting.
e. The Initiating Procedures to Designate and Irrigation Non-Expansion Area via Petition presentation can be found [here](#).

3. Groundwater Transportation Statutes
   a. ADWR Deputy Counsel, Jennifer Heim, discussed the statutes governing the transportation of groundwater and the background of those statutes. Specifically, she discussed statutes related to Butler Valley, McMullen Valley, and Harquahala INA.
   b. A stakeholder asked for clarification on the term “wheeling agreement”. Staff clarified that to “wheel” water is to transport that water through the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal.
   c. A stakeholder stated his frustration that the presentation did not concern agricultural water use. Staff responded that there is a diverse interest among the stakeholders, and that the purpose of the presentation was to discuss groundwater transportation statutes. The goal is to present information that many stakeholders will find relevant and helpful in developing solution sets.
   d. A couple of stakeholders expressed their concern that many of the residents in the Planning Area are winter residents, and while they own property in the area they are registered to vote in another state. Staff responded that the statute is written that voters must be registered voters in the county, and ADWR must enforce the statute as written.
   e. The Transportation of Groundwater presentation can be found [here](#).

4. Groundwater Basin Water Level Measurement Survey Results Presentation
   a. ADWR Chief Hydrologist, Frank Corkhill, presented the results of the West Basins Water Level Survey that took place from October 2016 through January 2017.
   b. Field services took measurements in Ranegras Plain, McMullen Valley, Butler Valley, Harquahala INA, and Tiger Wash Groundwater Basins.
   c. Mr. Corkhill presented water level change statistics of each groundwater basin, maps of GWSI index well locations, and hydrographs for some of those wells.
   d. A stakeholder asked if water levels would rise in the aquifer if the larger farming operations used CAP water instead of groundwater. Staff responded that yes water levels would very likely recover if that were the case.
   e. A stakeholder asked why the large irrigators did not use CAP water since groundwater levels are declining. Staff responded that CAP water is already allocated, so currently additional CAP water is not available. However, some farming operations in Harquahala INA do have a CAP allotment.
f. A stakeholder asked if the water in perched aquifers would recharge the main aquifer if those perched aquifers were punctured with a well. Staff responded that it is possible that some of the water in the perched system would cascade down, but it is likely that pumping water out of the perched aquifer would likely deplete the perched aquifer before it completely cascaded.

g. A stakeholder asked if perched aquifers were a reliable source of water. Staff responded no, it is not a reliable source of water.

h. A stakeholder asked why ADWR continues to issue well permits if ADWR knows that water levels are declining in the area. Staff responded that per statute, in non-regulated areas, ADWR must issue a permit to drill a well if all the requirements are met.

i. The Water Level Measurement Survey Results presentation can be found here.

5. Arizona’s Recharge Program Presentation
   a. ADWR Hydrologist, Tracey Carpenter, presented an overview of the Arizona Recharge Program.
   b. Ms. Carpenter focused her presentation on Underground Storage Facilities because these facilities add renewable water supplies to the aquifer and can increase the “wet water” content in an area.
   c. The Recharge Program presentation can be found here.

6. General Comment Period
   a. Supervisor Holly Irwin thanked ADWR for coming out and holding the Planning Area meetings. Supervisor Irwin spoke about meetings that she had participated in with state representatives and reported that the representatives stated that it was necessary for stakeholders to continue attending the Planning Area meetings. She continued that she is not against agriculture, but would like to see conservation measures put into place so that everyone may grow together as a community. Finally, La Paz County applied to the Bureau of Reclamation to receive funding to perform a basin study and is waiting to hear if they will receive the funding.
   b. A stakeholder asked what tools does ADWR have available for residents who have run out of water. Staff responded that there are no provisions in any of the statutes that has ADWR providing any assistance financial or otherwise.
   c. A stakeholder stated that he found the presentations to be irrelevant to the West Basins Planning Area. Instead of seeing presentations on what could be done, he wants to see presentations on what is being done. He continued to express his frustration regarding the expansion of large farming operations in the area, and asked why those were allowed to expand. Staff responded that since the area is outside of an Active Management Area or Irrigation Non-Expansion Area, the farms are operating within state law.
   d. A stakeholder stated that Director Buschatzke had the power to declare the groundwater basins an Active Management Area (AMA), and that he should. Staff responded that at the next meeting information will be presented on the process to initiate procedures to designate an AMA.
   e. A stakeholder expressed his concern that if the farming is allowed to continue and the water levels continue to drop, then he will need to deepen his wells so
deep that the cost to deepen the wells will be more than his properties are worth.

f. A stakeholder commented that the McMullen Valley and La Paz County did not exist until 1982, so they were excluded from the original discussions to become an AMA in the 1980 Groundwater Management Act. She continued that since they were not given the opportunity then, they would like the opportunity to be managed now. Staff responded that information on initiating procedures to designate a subsequent AMA will be presented at the next meeting.

7. Closing Remarks
   a. Ms. Walker thanked everyone for coming.
   b. ADWR will aim to have the next meeting sometime in late March or early April.