

Water Rights Distribution Information

History of Distribution Systems

- In Territorial days and early on in statehood, water was distributed by county selectmen elected to office
- Distribution oversight shifted to the courts for a short time and by the 1920's oversight by the state engineer was implemented. This was also when general adjudication work was being done on large systems such as the Weber River, Sevier River, and Virgin River.
- Distribution systems have been implemented over the years on various other rivers, as well, such as the Bear, Logan, Provo, Duchesne, Jordan, Spanish Fork, Price, and Santa Clara Rivers, and on numerous smaller tributaries.

Setting up a Distribution Systems (R655-15)

- Public notice and public meeting
- Input from water users
- Establish a committee representative of water users on the system
- State engineer appoints water commissioner based on committee's recommendation

Current Distribution Systems

- 32 Surface Water Systems administered by the state engineer
- 3 Underground (Mapped) Systems administered by the state engineer (all located in Southern Utah where groundwater levels are declining)
- 2 Surface Water Systems administered by a district court (Uinta-Lakefork Rivers and Whiterocks River)

Water Commissioners (§73-5-1)

- 39 water commissioners (Little Cottonwood Creek and Sevier River have co-commissioners)
- 22 deputy commissioners (most systems don't have a deputy, but some have as many as five deputies)
- Appointed by the state engineer to a 4-year term
- Can be removed by state engineer for cause

Funding water commissioners (§73-5-1.5)

- 2300 distribution accounts assessed statewide
- \$1.6 Million statewide annual budget paid through assessments to water users
- Assessments pay for commissioner salary and other distribution expenses
- Assessments are based on pro rata share of costs consistent with the established rights of each user

State Engineer Oversight

- Ensure commissioner is distributing water rights by priority
- Ensure accurate measurement and accounting of water
- Administer annual assessments and distribution system accounting
- Provide distribution data and information to the public on the division's website