

# Cedar Valley moves ahead with \$260M Pine Valley water pipeline as comment period opens



The [Central Iron County Water Conservancy District](#) took another step this week toward the construction of a 66-mile pipeline that would bring supplemental water to communities in Iron County from Beaver County's Pine Valley near the Wah Wah mountains.

In addition to burying the main pipeline, the [project](#) also proposes to drill 15 production wells and install a series of buried feeder pipelines as well as to develop access

roads, above-ground power distribution lines, a solar field and a large underground storage tank. Some of this construction would cut through habitat thought to be important for various threatened and endangered species, including the Utah prairie dog and the greater sage grouse.

The aim is to supplement and diversify Iron County's water supply by bringing an additional 15,000 acre-feet of water per year to Iron County to meet the growing demands of its rising population. With Cedar Valley currently withdrawing approximately 7,000 more acre-feet per year from its underground aquifer than is annually recharged, experts worry that water conservation measures won't be enough to quench the thirst of a population that has [grown](#) by nearly 20% since 2010.

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The project has been in the works since 2006 when the CICWCD filed for the water rights in Beaver County's Pine Valley, Wah Wah and Hamlin Valley. If all goes according to plan, the CICWCD expects to break ground on the pipeline in 2027 and to have water flowing to Cedar Valley in 2029.

According to district engineer Curtis Nielson, the project has an estimated price tag of about \$260 million, which will be paid through a combination of local taxpayer

contributions as well as funding from federal and state agencies like the Utah Division of Water Resources.

But first, the project must complete an evaluation of potential environmental impacts and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, as mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. NEPA, which the Trump administration has been working to weaken, affords the public the opportunity to comment on the project both during the preparation of the draft EIS and after it is released.

The [Notice of Intent](#) for the Pine Valley Water Supply project was submitted this week on July 15. This opened the 30-day public comment period, which will end on August 14, 2020. The Bureau of Land Management will review comments received during this window and consider issues raised regarding environmental conflicts and potential alternatives.

To submit a comment about the project before August 14, visit <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1503915/510>, submit an email to [pvwsproject@gmail.com](mailto:pvwsproject@gmail.com) or send a comment by mail to the Bureau of Land Management, Attn: PVWS, 176 DL Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721.

The Bureau of Land Management will also host a public

online meeting to provide an overview of the project and accept public comments on Wednesday, August 5, 2020, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (MDT). You can register to attend that meeting online at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1503915/530>.

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Paul Monroe, the general manager of the CICWCD, expects the environmental impact assessment process to go smoothly and not present any major hurdles to the project.

"Culturally, biologically, as well as hydrologically, everything is wrapping up to be a pretty favorable project," said Monroe. "From the models and what we can see preliminarily, it doesn't look like there will be many impacts."

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