

Assign Priority Date

Calculator/processing module: Priority Date

Description: Priority date is an essential part of California water rights; however the water rights database is inconsistent with where the priority date is recorded. Identifying the priority date in one location will simplify analysis of water usage.

Examples:

- The major division in water rights is between appropriative and riparian water rights, but riparian water rights do not technically have a priority date. Added to this, both pre-1914 water rights (which are a type of appropriation) and riparian water rights are recorded under Statements of Diversion and Use, which complicates the database. A singular method for considering priority date would reduce this complication.
- There is a PRIORITY_DATE field in the database files, however due to past database entry practices this field was not consistently used and thus contains mostly null values.

What (is being flagged): Water right priority date.

Why: As the priority date is essential to the California water rights system, any demand analysis that would ultimately allocate water in times of drought is entirely dependent on knowing the priority date associated with each record.

How: The various fields where the equivalent of the priority date is located in current records will be filtered to create a singular priority date field for demand analysis. Additionally there will be date codes added for distinguishing riparian water rights and cases where the priority date is unknown.

Resolution: For water rights where there is not a clear priority date, manual review of the annual reports and/or the water right documentation would be needed to determine if there is a verifiable priority date. Future expansions could look to update pre-1914 claims where the month of first use is not listed. This would affect claims where only the year of first use is reported (the majority of pre-1914 records) and could refine analysis that involves competing claims in the same pre-1914 year or records with exactly 1914 listed, as the change between pre-1914 claims and the modern appropriative system was set as December 19, 1914.

Data Source:

- [ewrims flat file.csv](#)

Existing Fields (verify for accuracy):

- APPLICATION_NUMBER – ewrims_flat_file.csv

- WATER_RIGHT_TYPE – ewrims_flat_file.csv
- PRIORITY_DATE – ewrims_flat_file.csv
- RECEIPT_DATE – ewrims_flat_file.csv
- APPLICATION_RECDD_DATE – ewrims_flat_file.csv
- APPLICATION_ACCEPTANCE_DATE – ewrims_flat_file.csv
- SUB_TYPE – ewrims_flat_file.csv
- YEAR_DIVERSION_COMMENCED – ewrims_flat_file.csv

New Fields (include definitions):

- ASSIGNED_PRIORITY_DATE – Number representing the priority date, eight digits in the YYYYMMDD format. Unknown priorities for appropriative rights will have a default number of 99999999, and riparian rights will have a default number of 10000000. There is also a routine looking for unknown dates on pre-1914 claims that will assign a default number of 11111111.
- PRE_1914 - Assigned water right sub-type is "Pre-1914"
- RIPARIAN - Assigned water right sub-type is "Riparian"
- APPROPRIATIVE - Assigned water right sub-type is "Appropriative"
- ASSIGNED_PRIORITY_DATE_SOURCE – Records which existing field the ASSIGNED_PRIORITY_DATE is generated from or denotes that it was automatically filled through this process.

Other Related Flags (share new field, etc.): Not directly, but the priority date will be essential to the demand analysis for priority when there is a shortage of water.

Attachment A

From J. Parks-

This attachment was taken from an email written to understand the different WATER_RIGHT_TYPE values found in the records as there are many odd or uncommon types that many staff will not have encountered. The items below represent all the water right types found in the flat files and include my notes about whether they should be considered appropriate for our analysis.

(Side notes: 317 records in the master flat file have 1914 exactly as the year diversion commenced, as far as I can tell from the Water Code the exact date that is the cutoff for pre-1914 claims is December 19, 1914, therefore most records with 1914 as year of first use are likely technically pre-1914 claims. There is a "SUB_TYPE" field in the master flat file that holds more info, but it infers that some statements are both riparian and pre-1914, which is possible but not helpful for demand and priority type analysis. These would be more helpful in our records if the pre-1914 and riparian portions were filed under separate statements. The SUB_TYPE field could be used for future follow-up on specific rights.

There are 1017 statement records that do not have any data inputted for "YEAR_DIVERSION_COMMENCED", based on my knowledge of the statement program this usually means it is riparian rather than pre-1914, as someone filing a statement for a pre-1914 claim is usually well aware of the distinction, but this could be something to flag for future follow-up. It was a common field people left blank when they were filing a statement simply because we told them they had to, and it wasn't something we would reject a statement for having left blank.)

Adjudicated - (J#####) - Do not include

These filings are specific to using water code 1707 to dedicate instream flow for water rights that are already under an adjudication. These are already captured under other water rights and/or would be included as part of any quantification of adjudications as a whole in our analysis. We should note these for the future though if we ever are asked to quantify 1707 water.

Appropriate - (A#####) - Include

Appropriate (State Filing) - (A#####SF) - Do not include

These filings are held in trust for later use but are not actual appropriations. It looks like water rights staff did some analysis of these in 2019, in case we get asked to look deeper into these in the future.

Cert of Right - Power - (E#####) - Do not include

These are a weird type of water right that conveys the users ability to use the water to generate power without needing an appropriate right. In addition to these being non-consumptive, the water is likely accounted for in other water rights. Regardless they have no face value and the actual documents do not include water amounts, so these would be of no use for any analysis.

Federal Claims - (F#####S) - Treat as Statements

This program, that likely only existed between the late 1960s until the early 1980s, allowed the federal government (usually US Forest Service facilities) to make riparian claims separate from our Statement of Diversion and Use (Statements) program. As far as I can tell these are exactly the same as Statements, with a handful (~40) being pre-1914. I suggest we analyze these the same as Statements, separating out the pre-1914 claims as appropriative and having a priority date. There may be some need to separate these later as the federal government doesn't like being lumped in with state rights, but for practical analysis these should function as any other riparian claim.

Federal Stockponds - (F#####C) - Include

Similar to Federal Claims, this was a program that distinguished federal stockponds apart from our regular stockpond certificate program. For all intents these are appropriative rights, though the federal government can be touchy about being "granted" a right by a state. Further these are actively reported on each year so they are still being used. Fun fact, the filing number system seems backwards for these two federal rights, but it makes sense if you consider that the claims are akin to "S"tatements and the stockponds are akin to "C"ertificates.

Groundwater Recordation - (G#####) - Do not include

In addition to being groundwater only, which we are not analyzing right now, these only apply to four counties in southern California, so these would be of limited use for any statewide analysis. These were the state's small attempt to get a handle on groundwater usage pre-SGMA.

Non Jurisdictional - (NJ#####) - Do not include

Unfortunately, the actual documents associate with these are not available online, but based on the name, and the lack of reporting in eWRIMS, I'm assuming these should not be included. Additionally the majority have no face value or usage information associated with them, so they would be worthless to include anyways. From S. Cole - *These are used by enforcement as a placeholder to handle investigations of potential surface water diversions with an initially unknown basis of right (UN#####). The NJ would be created and linked to the UN if they are thereafter determined to be non-jurisdictional (i.e., not subject to the divisions permitting authority), like for example a groundwater well or purchased imported water.*

Not Determined - (UN#####, CMPLT-####) - Do not include

These all appear to be administrative records associate with complaints and investigations. While there are face values associated with some of these records they would likely be accounted for in other water rights, or under investigation for inclusion in a water right. From S. Cole - *These are used by enforcement as a placeholder to handle investigations of potential surface water diversions with an unknown basis of right. These would typically be created in eWRIMS during the initial investigation, prior to field inspection. Upon completion of the investigation, one of the three results may happen: 1) an NJ#### would be created if determined to be non-jurisdictional, 2) the UN## would be linked to a Statement, Application, or Registration if the investigation successfully resulted in compliance i.e. filing a water right with the Division, OR 3) A*

formal enforcement action such as an ACL, CDO, or both if determined to be jurisdictional with no compliance.

Registration Cannabis - (H#####) - Include

All the registration type water rights are just stream-lined appropriative rights for classes of uses, all should be included.

Registration Domestic - (D#####) - Include

Registration Irrigation - (H#####) - Include

Registration Livestock - (L#####) - Include

Section 12 File - (Z#####) - Do not include

These appear to be very old municipal recordations, and some of them appear to have been updated with, or at least associate with, more recent Statements. While we could flag these for follow up later, there are only 13 of them. My only hesitancy is that some of them have significant diversion rates (250-5000 AF/day), but with very little information it is hard to know what to do with these. They also do not report, so no current water usage is available. Without looking up these files in office I can't get more information. My gut tells me these should be covered by more modern water rights, but the eWRIMS data is lacking.

Statement of Diversion and Use - (S#####) - Include pre-1914 filings with filtering

Statements for pre-1914 claims should be filtered using the YEAR_DIVERSION_COMMENCED field in the eWRIMS flat files (see notes above). Anything after 1914 should not be included in the appropriations analysis as they would be riparian.

Stockpond - (C#####) - Include

The only complication with these is that there are a lot of these records that were never completed, these were the precursor to the Registration Livestock and were only accepted until the late 90s, at which point it looks like we received a bunch but never processed them (i.e. WATER_RIGHT_STATUS = "Pending"). Additionally these are not renewed like the more recent registrations programs, so there is little oversight. There would need to be some filtering here for the records that are anything but "certified" in the WATER_RIGHTS_STATUS flat file field, only the certified records have face values and reporting. From S. Cole - *For now, we'll include both "certified" and "pending", can follow up on pending later.*

Temporary Permit - (T#####) - Do not include

There is only one of these that is even permitted, and it seems to deal with groundwater storage from flood control operations. This is one of those odd rights that could be looked at in the future if we ever take a deep dive, but for the appropriations analysis this should be ignored.

Waste Water Change - (WW####) - Do not include

These are more recent and I honestly don't know anything about them, but there are not records we can see online, there are no face values or any diversion information, and there are not even PODs associated.