

Wood River Water Collaborative Meeting Minutes
10/21/19

Attendees: Ryan Santo, Mark Davidson, Pat McMahon, Pete VanDerMuelen, Erika Phillips, John Wright, Justin Stevenson, Kevin Lakey, Brian Wood, Peter Anderson, Carl Pendleton, Bill Hazen, Chris Johnson, Greg Loomis, Sarah Lien, Larry Schoen, Cooper Brossy, Eric Miller. Phone: Kira Finkler, Mike Peterson, Sean Vincent

Surface Water Predictive Tool RFP – Keri York and Ryan Santo

- Ryan and Keri have been working on an RFP for a surface water prediction tool that would help members of the WRWC better predict surface water depending on snow pack and historical data
- This would build off the work with Ron Abramovich (NRCS) last year, and provide more confidence in predictions
- There were questions about whether this tool could also be developed for groundwater, for predictability and conservation
- It might be hard to model surface water in the Little Wood, so seems like more applicable to Big Wood
- RFP needs to be more descriptive and include more details
- The Big Wood groundwater model would likely be used because of the interactions with ground and surface water in Silver Creek
- Can we answer similar questions below Magic on the Big Wood side? Will that help with overflows from Magic?
- IDWR and Idaho Power are also working on snow to flow relationships, in Snake River at Murphy – Matt Anders at IDWR and Rob Van Kirk worked on
- Keri and Ryan will update RFP after comments today, will send to Rob for comments, then will set up conference call to discuss with Rob; any WRWC member is welcome to attend

Flow Measuring Device Update – Kevin Lakey

- Kevin described the first BOR grant the WRWC applied for, with Galena Groundwater District as the applicant
- The goal was to install telemetry measuring devices in the Little Wood to allow for improved water management; if Kevin knew more immediately when senior users stop using, junior users could continue to irrigate – a more efficient system
- Installed 5-7 Pivotrac measuring stations on the Little Wood where voluntary participation, but not in preferred locations
- Could possibly move locations to provide more useful information
- If there had been more voluntary participation, may have resulted in moderate snake river water savings
- Some water users didn't participate because they would have had to improve points of diversion
- Another 10 - 15 stations would be useful; \$1200 - \$1500 each; maybe some in the Bellevue triangle
- Ryan will look into the IWRB small grant program that Pete mentioned to possibly fund more stations

Cove Ranch Water Transaction – Mark Davidson and Sarah Lien

- TNC leased 388 acres of Cove Ranch that had been planted in alfalfa the previous fall; fallowed this year
- Water was approx. 1200 acre-feet, and 1/3 of all water rights on the ranch
- Intent was to have a management agreement with Board of Controls, District 45, Triangle Irrigation District, South Valley Groundwater District (SVGWD)
- Water not used on the 388 acres was ran through SVGWD; recharged until other users curtailed
- Gauges were installed at upper and lower end of the ranch; recharge ran Apr 16 – Aug 8
- Applying the groundwater model would help understand impact to the aquifer and surface water
- A more formal arrangement would involve the water supply bank; which would result in less water for recharge because would be consumptive portion only
- Discussion focused on gauging success of the project because those 388 acres were fallow; no credit for recharge; would need shepherding agreements to implement long-term
- This transaction represents an option for demand reduction, but need an agreed management plan for success
- The value in this transaction was determining the mechanisms to deliver senior water rights to recharge

Highway 93 Project Update – Peter Anderson

- Al Barker (attorney for SVWD) is interested in pursuing this project; potential 10 cfs savings
- Issues with wetland delineation, land ownership and NEPA, redesign, are there options to create wetlands further up in the basin if this wetland is affected?
- Culvert size is not the issue, gradient is an issue
- Peter to contact Vic Conrad of Simplot to discuss wetland delineation

Groundwater District Updates

- GGWD working with Kevin on BOR grant and telemetry stations
- SVGWD bought transducers, performing water quality tests
- Big Wood Little Wood Water Users hired Eric Miller (GeoEngineers) to help collect information on water rights to file a water call; need to quantify delivery shortfall and recession in streamflow over 90 years; also need to demonstrate financial injury; working with GGWD about creative solutions and discussions outside of legal action
- GGWD and SVGWD working together on management plan to deliver to IDWR; only successful groundwater management plan is in the Malad (to send with minutes)

Other comments

- Should there be a work session at the next WRWC meeting to discuss mechanisms to dry up acres?
- Should the WRWC undertake more education to individual users to encourage water conservation; maybe we could report on successes to encourage more users to conserve