

## **Wood River Water Collaborative Meeting Minutes 2/14/19**

**Attendees:** John Wright, Claire Casey, Bob Simpson, Carl Pendleton, Bill Hazen, Chris Johnson, Greg Loomis, Sharon Lee, Pat McMahon, Larry Schoen, Ron Abramovich, Mark Davidson, Keri York, Ryan Santo, Justin Stevenson; Phone: Frank Edelmann, Kevin Lakey

### **Member Updates – two upcoming workshops**

1. Planning for Wildfire in the Urban Interface workshop in Idaho Falls on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>
2. East Side and West Side SCD Regenerative Agriculture workshop March 4<sup>th</sup>

### **Snow Forecast (Ron Abramovich, NRCS)**

- The jet stream is still split so both North and South western US are benefitting
- Temperatures should drop for the rest of February and then increase in March and April
- In general, we have seen a trend of snow melting earlier in the year than later
  
- The Big Wood SWE is at 106% and Little Wood SWE at 110% (it has seemed like a lot, but still just a little above average); the snow has had low density and not a high water content
- The Little Wood Reservoir may have to start releasing soon, goes through the river system
  
- If look at snow index graphs (page 7 of presentation), can see both Big and Little Wood getting closer to March 1 median (Big Wood is from Feb 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Looking at historic and forecasted water supply graphs, need at least 60% average streamflow to meet adequate irrigation supplies in the Little Wood
- In recent years, there has been more variability in the snow index, so we see more of a range between 10% and 90%
- These graphs are based on current and historic information, doesn't incorporate 'projections'
- At this time, we need 50% of normal (265K acre-feet total flow) between Apr – Sept. for adequate irrigation supplies
- Looking at SWSIs, Big Wood above Hailey, meeting 30% and 10% exceedance forecasts

### **2019 Shut-Off Date Predictions (Keri York, Ryan Santo, Kevin Lakey)**

- Last year, we attempted to predict shutoff dates of 1883 and 1886 water rights from SWSIs and Kevin's historic shutoff records. The estimate of demand for Big Wood above Magic is 135,000 acre-feet.
- As of Feb. 12, snow index was 87.4 inches for the Big Wood; recent similar years are 2013 and 2018
- In looking at Kevin's data, first 1886 shut-off dates are predicted between 7/8 and 7/13
- First 1883 shut-off dates are predicted between 7/11 and 8/1, depending on spring precipitation
- Kevin commented that we still need average or better precipitation in March – May for water years similar to 2011 and 2012; if not looking like 2013 and 2015
- Ryan compiled information and ran regressions to see if we can predict shutoff dates through a modeling procedure. A regression will compute an R2 value, which is an indicator of how good you can use one or more variables (April flow at Hailey and April SWE) to predict other variables (shut-off dates).
- We might need to look at other predictor variables, because the R2 value was very low

- However, when the model was tested using information from 2017 and 2018, the 2018 model-predicted and actual shut-off dates were very close
- Ryan will be looking into fine-tuning this analysis with snow to flow relationships and more data throughout this spring
- This group will continue to provide updates throughout the spring and summer as more NRCS and flow information is available

#### **IDWR Presentation Follow-Up (General Comments from Members)**

- There is frustration because Mike's presentation had specific recharge locations but Sean said our model proposal needed to be general
- One goal of the WRWC should be to sustain aquifer water levels; if have certain water level goals, could use the model to determine how much water is needed in recharge and where to input
- Need to find sources of new water to accomplish goals, not just use existing water
- The Big Wood aquifer is not like ESPA, so we might rethink how we compare the two; there are not as many opportunities to replenish water resources
- Could a solution be simply injury-related – when BWCC supplies are gone, groundwater pumps get shut off?
- Maybe groundwater could be put into recharge on a regular basis to accommodate continual use
- Maybe we should look at groundwater well measurements as well as surface water target flows
- We are still struggling with a pathway forward with IDWR; maybe the groundwater management area could take a request for action to the director of IDWR
- Possible avenues for funding include groundwater districts; another taxing district could be created to include more than groundwater users
- Groundwater districts make their own decisions based on volume available or allocated per agreements
- Both SVGWD and GGWD would need to participate in solutions; both have been working on plans
- The WRWC should come up with solutions that all parties can agree on, which would require some transparency and being forthcoming in meetings
- SVGWD is taking a management plan to IDWR within the next month; the results of which could inform our next steps on developing solutions
- Justin will update us once there is a clear pathway forward with the proposed management plan
- Keri, Ryan, and Kevin will continue to work on predictive tools