

Wood River Water Collaborative Minutes
4-11-18

Action Items in Yellow

Attendees: Richard Carr, Kira Finkler, Bob Simpson, Chris Johnson, Brett Stevenson, Maggi Kraft, Justin Stevenson, Carl Pendleton, David Stephenson, Sharon Lee, Michelle Stennett, Cooper Brossy, Kevin Lakey, Jim Phillips, Kenny Bailey, Pat McMahon, Mark Davidson, Josh Johnson, Peter Anderson, Keri York, Patti Lousen, Rusty Kramer, Leah Meeks, Ryan Santo, Cassie Lundegreen, John Wright

Surface Water Forecasting Update

- Surface water forecasting and projected shutoff dates are posted on the agricultural section of the Wood River Water Collaborative website, and were presented at the February WRWC meeting
- Questions have been asked about how similar snowfall and surface flow predictors can be used to understand groundwater supplies
- Greg Loomis has compiled available data from IDWR's groundwater well website, and Alan Wylie (IDWR) has also provided the group data
- A study completed by Rob VanKirk and others researched predictor values for discharge from Box Canyon Springs in the ESPA, and the group may want to pursue something similar for the Silver Creek aquifer
- Keri will reach out to Rob and Jim Bartolino to discuss this concept and turn over to the model run subcommittee group
- TNC completed a GIS spatial analysis of priority dates in the Bellevue triangle, which may be useful in these analyses. Mark will send the data to Keri, who can convert it to Google Earth format

Groundwater Model Run Scenario Subcommittee

- The next MTAC meeting is on May 17th at 9 am at the community campus, and there will be an update of model version 1.1 calibration
- Once version 1.1 is calibrated, IDWR will run the full curtailment scenario and compare results to version 1.0
- IDWR is not ready to accept model run scenarios from the WRWC until version 1.1 is calibrated and tested
- Information on available water from water conservation projects will be helpful for the model run scenarios, to incorporate available water and location
- Larry has asked that a subcommittee be formed to help advise Blaine County's watershed planning process with the Army Corps of Engineers
- Keri will follow up with Larry on organizing this subcommittee
- Peter announced House Bill 712, which was passed through the legislature for a supplement of \$1.1 million to IWRB's water management fund, which is a continuous appropriation
- These funds will be allocated for 2017 flood mitigation projects statewide
- It will be a competitive process, 50% match requirement, and the \$50,000 maximum amount has been waived

- IWRB is currently creating the ranking criteria, and Peter will arrange a meeting with Brian Patton and Neeley Miller to find out more about the program and its applicability to members of the WRWC

Presentation by Leah Meeks on Bureau of Reclamation Programs – see attached powerpoint

- Water Conservation Field Services Program is used to fund planning for WaterSMART projects; grants have to be in a Reclamation district or have a direct connection to a Reclamation project

- WaterSMART programs – non-federal cost share is required, can include in-kind and labor, applicant has to be a water delivery entity

- Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse program could be used for aquifer recharge programs, none have been funded in Idaho yet;

- Cooperative Watershed Management Program – WRWC applied earlier this year for administration of the WRWC and project planning/support funds; the Boise River Enhancement Network received a CWMP grant for their watershed group

- Drought Response Program: Drought Contingency Planning Program – recognize vulnerabilities and mitigation strategies for drought; Drought Resiliency Projects – for projects resulting in new water sources during drought

- Water Energy and Efficiency Grant (WEEG) Program – just announced; large and small funding pools for water conservation, water marketing, possible funding source for WRWC water conservation projects

- Operations and Maintenance can not be funded through the program or counted as match,

- All projects require some version of NEPA (which could be a categorical exclusion) before breaking ground; Leah indicated that the level of NEPA required depends on the type of project – anything with instream or riparian habitat components will likely trigger NEPA

- Funding is for delivery projects managed by irrigation districts or canal companies, not individual users

- Projects that support or tie to on-farm improvements applicable to NRCS funding will receive higher points

- For large funding pool, water savings is 30% of total points – need to have measurable and beneficial water savings to get funded

- Helps to have a water management plan – maybe we can look at updating District 37's plan

- NRCS can help with project design as technical assistance, if staff is available; it helps to have a completed design when applying for BOR grants

- Leah recommended for small funding pool, if we review the application and think we can get 75 points we should consider applying

- can use funding spent on project prior to grant application in pre-award cost section of grant application but not as matching funds

WRWC Member Projects

1. SVGWD Recharge – Brett announced that IDWR presented to IWRB a comparison of aquifer retention time between ESPA and the Wood River Valley. Retention time in the Wood River Valley is much less than in ESPA; water recharged in the spring will be available later in the year; **SVGWD is looking to enhance current recharge programs in the future**

2. Silver Creek/Hwy 93 Project – Mark described that the current need is to measure groundwater to understand where surface water is lost into the wetland due to lack of bank structure, that could be delivered downstream. There is also a need to understand the effect of clearing out the culvert under the highway. **These analyses are needed before moving forward on project design and NEPA.** It has been difficult to understand at what point received WaterSMART grant funds can be used in relation to the timing of NEPA.

3. Purdy/Gardner – Mark described this ground to surface water conversion project that will result in a 20-25% demand reduction and 3-5 cfs of conserved water. The goal is to eliminate the use of groundwater on this property through piping and a recharge/pivot reservoir. **They have applied to the NRCS for EQIP funding, and may apply to RCPP. Another component of this project is determining how and where the conserved water would be delivered and used.**

4. Water District 37B – Rusty described a project to install three flow gauges on tributaries to Camas Creek: Willow Creek, Soldier Creek, and Corral Creek. They have cost estimates of approximately \$14,000 for installation and \$7,500/year for maintenance. Instream gauging would be for the irrigation district, not individual users. There is another potential project for ditch piping from Mormon Reservoir to reduce the use of groundwater on farms. **Keri will work with Rusty to organize a tour of these projects around May 23-25; potential application to small-scale WEEG**

5. Brossy Farm Drip Irrigation – Cooper described a project to convert to drip irrigation on approximately 20 acres on the Brossy farm outside of Shoshone. One field is currently flood irrigated, and to conserve the most water, would require piping and a booster pump. The other fields could tie into the existing main line and variable drive pump. Kodi recently came out to the farm and will provide a cost estimate. **Chris will include these acres in his current NRCS special project application.**

6. Hiawatha and Bypass Canal – Keri and Jim described how both the Hiawatha and Bypass canal headgates were impacted by the recent flood. Hiawatha is interested in completing an analysis to determine the best location of the headgate considering river and fluvial conditions. Then they could apply for funding to complete headgate repair or replacement and instream work. Keri has worked with the Bypass canal folks to submit an application to DEQ for instream work that would reduce sedimentation and improve water delivery. **Both of these projects may be applicable to the HB 712 funding.**

7. Triangle Irrigation District – John Wright described the irrigation district, and to date projects have been funded by users although they would like to look at grants. One project has been canal maintenance by removing cottonwoods and willows; this has resulted in eroding streambanks and

widening of the canal channel. They are now allowing remnant vegetation and only cutting new vegetation. Maybe there is a potential project with Dist. 45 headgate in Bellevue. Ryan will follow up with John and Justin to discuss potential projects and grants.

8. Big Wood Canal Company – Carl talked about piping projects that the BWCC has been working on over many years. They have their own equipment and staff, making in-kind contributions to grants possible. In the past, bigger operators have financed projects without a lot of planning; smaller users will have to pay to hook into these pipeline projects. They have viewed the extra expenses and planning as a deterrent to WaterSMART grant applications. SCADA has allowed them to have better control of systems and make data available to users. Upcoming projects may be the Dietrich 702 pipeline; still too soon to implement. Also North Shoshone pipeline project; there are smaller landowners and BWCC has some funding for grant match requirements; possibly apply next year.