

Wood River Water Collaborative

Meeting summary: December 3, 2015
The Nature Conservancy Office, Hailey

Present: Pete VanderMeulen, Carl Pendleton, Brett Stevenson, Pat McMahon, Mark Davidson, Kristy Molyneux, Keri York, Dayna Gross, Sharon Lee, Chad Chorney, Pepin Corso-Harris, Greg Loomis, Judd McMahan, Michelle Stennett, Larry Schoen, Peter Anderson, Kurt Fessenmeyer, Lyn Harmon, Justin Stevenson, Wendy Pabich, Terry Ring, Rod Hubsmith and Patti Lousen

Phone Callers: Laura Gvozdias was on line until conferencing terminated.

Meeting Overview: Goals and objectives were edited, water demand was shared for 5 blocks, and presentation of METRIC and SNAP tools were demonstrated.

Meeting specifics: Underlining in following section denotes action item.

The goals and the objectives of the collaborative were discussed and edited as a group. They were combined into one document and are considered a working document open to future discussion. All members agreed that this document currently reflects the goals and intentions of the collaborative. Michelle Stennett said that this document would be enough for her to use as she starts outreach and “working” the legislative floor for support in January. Document is attached.

Using information collected from previous Wood River Collaborative and associated working group meetings as well as additional input from Kevin Lakey and Lynn Harmon, Mark Davidson characterized the overall water demand (water use, not water rights). In order to describe water usage more specifically, overall use was categorized into five large delivery blocks or areas: North of the Bellevue triangle, Bellevue triangle to Magic Reservoir to the west and the Silver Creek/Little Wood River confluence to the east, Big Wood Magic Reservoir, Big Wood River surface water right decrees below Magic, and Little Wood River surface water right decrees. Mark, Lyn Harmon and Kevin Lakey used a combination of historic water data, in some instances spanning the past 5 to 10 years in order to try and characterize the low and high ends of water use for each block. They estimated a total demand which ranged from 337,840 – 426,732 acre/feet. See the attached map and chart which are color coded for ease of comparing a block to its water use. PLEASE NOTE:

- Ground water data is estimated and needs outstanding 2015 water use to be more accurate.
- The map boundaries need fine tuning to accurately reflect the demand numbers associated with them.

Peter Anderson and Kurt Fessenmeyer (Trout Unlimited) discussed a draft study proposal and would appreciate member or collaborative feedback. Using an application developed by IDWR and University of Idaho that quantifies evapo-transpiration losses, they can compare water use (saving) on residential, commercial or agricultural parcels when switching from irrigated land to non-irrigated land. Water savings can be calculated instantaneously although the actual savings will have a lag time before full water savings are realized. Satellite imagery and on the ground data assessment (wind, clouds, etc) are used in this program which gives the ability to identify total consumption, potential water savings and identify long term voluntary opportunities for future mitigation. Is this helpful to the collaborative and if so what areas would be important to assess?

Peter Anderson discussed a USGS grant that is seeking innovative projects to help USGS assess systems which are most vulnerable to pronounced water deficiencies and to test or demonstrate new methods or technologies intended to lessen or adapt to the ecological impacts of drought. The group proposed that Water Resource Board would be the applicant and Trout Unlimited, Wood River Land Trust, the ground water districts, county and municipalities) could partner to propose additional stream gauging, more ground water monitoring, seepage runs, additional wells and other tools that would better characterize ground water use for inclusion when the next ground water model is updated for the Wood River watershed. Peter, Pete VanderMeulen, and Patti said they would start outreach to IDWR and USGS. The deadline for the grant is January 20, 2016.

Dayna Gross presented two different tools:

- 1) Website put together by The Nature Conservancy that graphically shows through historical data how often a 'target' flow is met for a stream, shows seasonal variability in meeting that target, and the amount of flow the target is missed by. This tool could be used to back in to a realistic target flow in an area (ex: Silver Creek). Ditches and lakes could also be assessed this way.
- 2) The second tool is the climate change website developed by Oregon State University: <http://envision.bioe.orst.edu/StudyAreas/BigWood/default.aspx>. This website has a list of 'stroylines' that show what happens to flow and growing season (along with other things) under different climate change scenarios (for instance warmer and wetter) and different management regimes (for instance more management, more agriculture). This tool could be used to determine irrigation windows, recharge windows, etc.

For the next meeting in latter January, the group decided that more groundwater use refinement was needed by the Galena GWD and the South Valley GWD to accurately reflect water use in the upper watershed. District 37 2015 ground water data is now available; Pat McMahon said he would work on updating the Galena GWD water use and Sharon Lee said that South Valley GWD will review their water use numbers also. Besides water demand, we discussed the need for water supply data. Peter Anderson will see if someone from IDWR can come and discususs the historical data regarding water supply . Working groups will continue to focus on developing water conservation project opportunities and ideas for discussion at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 25 at 10 a.m. at The Nature Conservancy

Location: The Nature Conservancy office Hailey, Idaho, 116 1st Avenue North
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