

WR Water Collaborative

Meeting summary: April 11, 2016
The Nature Conservancy Office, Hailey

Present: Carl Pendleton, Brett Stevenson, John Stevenson, Kevin Lakey, Pat McMahon, Mark Davidson, Keri York, Dayna Gross, Chad Chorney, Greg Loomis, Judd McMahan, Larry Schoen, Mariel Platt, David Sias, Pete VanderMeulen, Barry Beavers, Rod Hubsmith, Sharon Lee, Sally Toone, Brian Patton, Jim Jaquet, Anna Packerham, Bill Hazen, Chad Stoesz, Peter Anderson, Kathleen Eider, Michelle Stennett, Donna Pence and Patti Lousen

Meeting Overview: Snake Plain Aquifer recharge presentation, Bureau of Reclamation grant proposal, drafting committee update, and OSU social capital study update.

Meeting specifics: Underlining in following section denotes action item.

Presentation: Snake Plain Aquifer recharge by Brian Patton (IDWR Bureau Chief)

Attached is Brian Patton's power point presentation of the State's recharge efforts and history of surface and groundwater use in the Snake Plain Aquifer. The state has an obligation to provide Idaho Power with 3900 – 5600 cfs (seasonal variation) at the Murphy Gauge stemming from the Swan Falls agreement (1984). Historical records show a 60 year aquifer decline of ~ 215 AF per year and that the system could no longer meet all assigned water uses. IDWR worked with surface and ground water users reaching an agreement in August, 2015 establishing that groundwater users would provide ~240,000 AF/year of water to surface users (through reductions/private recharge) and for the state to help stabilize and rebuild the aquifer with goals of providing ~250,000 AF/year. These goals were established to resolve water call conflicts (started in 2005), maintain minimum Swan Falls agreement flows and maintain Idaho's economic viability.

Wood River Basin take aways : Water conflicts in the Wood River basin will be resolved through a similar approach that was taken in the ESPA. As we know, members from the Wood River Water Collaborative have proactively begun discussing possible scenarios that may form the framework for a Wood River settlement. If we as a basin are able to come together around a set of solutions to resolve water calls, improve water management on a basin scale, and agree on a path forward we can count on support from the Idaho Department of Water Resources and the Idaho Water Resource Board to help us implement our shared vision. The Big Wood River basin is also in a good position to partner with the Idaho Water Resource Board to achieve aquifer recharge objectives in our watershed as well as the ESPA.

Collaborative Grant request endorsement

Patti Lousen, with the Wood River Land Trust, discussed the opportunity for a grant from the Bureau of Reclamation which funds grass-root water initiatives to plan and work to identify solutions for resolution of water conflicts. The Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant provides \$50,000 per year for two years and does not require a match. After discussion, members voiced support for the Land Trust to write an application to fund the staff time of the Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited and hire consultants, as needed, to work towards identifying long term water management solutions and projects that would help achieve the shared goals of the Collaborative.

Drafting Committee Update

Pete Van Der Meulen reported that the drafting committee has been meeting to determine steps forward to resolve the current water call. At this time, there is no information to share and they will keep the collaborative updated as needed.

Oregon State University Social Capital Study by Anna Pakenham

Pakenham Stevenson is a graduate student from Oregon State University. She is conducting a survey with Wood River Basin water users and discussed a previous survey (Deschutes) to show the opportunities of this survey.

Highlights of Deschutes Basin, OR survey: The survey was designed to examine aspects of their collaboration and water management in their basin. Highlights of her presentation include: highlighting where trust was strong in their basin, identification of resource gaps (for example they felt like they didn't need more studies but did need infrastructure improvements and financial backing), and prioritization of management options overall and by user group (e.g., efficiency projects were the highest ranking overall and conserved water projects scored the highest for consumptive and non-consumptive users).

Data collection for the Wood River Survey is now complete and Anna is analyzing the data. She will connect with this group about an appropriate time to present preliminary results and ask for feedback on other analyses that the group wants to see.

Next Meeting: targeting June or July