

Wood River Water Collaborative

Meeting summary: September 29, 2015

The Nature Conservancy Office, Hailey

Present: Kevin Lakey, Pete VanderMeulen, David Sias, Carl Pendleton, Brett Stevenson, Pat McMahon, Mark Davidson, Kristy Molyneux, Keri York, Dayna Gross, Mariel Platt, Jim Jaquet, Gerry Bashaw, Sharon Lee, Chad Chorney, Robyn Mattison, Terry Ring, Karl Nichol, and Patti Lousen

Phone Callers: Pat Purdy, Wendy Pabich, John Fry, Laura Gvodais, Neeley Miller, Peter Anderson, Doug Megargle

Meeting Overview: Subcommittee reports, status of the water call, how public is this group and what is our narrative were topics of discussion.

Meeting specifics: Underlining denotes an action item

Agricultural Subcommittee report: Carl, Mark, Brett

- The group identified the need to better coordinate seasons of use, in particular, aligning the timing of ground water pumping in the upper watershed with the surface water season of use. This will be a more important issue to address in light of conjunctive management. The group was committed to finding a way to come to some consensus on how groundwater pumping will work in the future. The primary concern from surface water users is that this continued pumping in the fall effects surface flows and can have high impacts to surface water flow. Magic Reservoir ran dry as of 7/29 this year. In addition the basin suffered record lows this year on the Little Wood River.
- We continued to discuss how we may develop alternative water inputs into the Milner/Gooding Canal in order to move Snake River water into the system as potential mitigation and to reduce demand on upper water users is a good idea to pursue.
- We reviewed the overall demand on water from all aspects of the agricultural component of the Wood River watershed. We agreed that within the agriculture working group we have 4 distinct areas of focus. Within each group we worked to refine our understanding on water demand from both the best case scenario and what we are currently experiencing.
 - o Water users south of the Milner/Gooding Canal with using Snake River water. The focus will be to reduce water demand by improving efficiencies on lateral canals, on farm infrastructure improvements, and delivery structures.
 - o North of the Milner/Gooding Canal water users that uses Magic Reservoir. The focus will be to reduce water demand by improving water delivery efficiencies much like the area south of Milner/Gooding canal. Additionally we will work to identify areas to increase delivery of Snake River water to portions of this area.
 - o Little Wood River surface water diverters. Focus will be on reducing water demand through irrigation efficiency projects on farm, delivery systems, and lateral piping projects.
 - o Bellevue triangle area. The focus will be to improve aquifer recharge opportunities throughout the Bellevue triangle some efficiency projects but in a much more targeted approach. Other examples of ideas we discussed include end gun removal, decreasing ET losses and building up the aquifer.
- In the triangle though, piping is not the answer as they need to look at other water savings mechanisms
- Ag committee will develop a list of projects to pursue as well as an estimated cost, time frame and eventual prioritization of projects that will provide the most return for water conservation on investment.

Agricultural Subcommittee report: Carl, Mark, Brett con't

- Acknowledged that representation from District 45 and Camas is needed - Keri will call Jolyon (District 45 board) and Gerry Bashaw will work to invite someone from the Camas Prairie to participate.

Conservation Subcommittee report: Dayna, Mark

- Discussion and ways to achieve goals included many ideas yet came back to target flows, delivery numbers and looking at dates for critical water flows (July/August). See using range of flows for adapting to diverse conditions.
- Need representation from recreation interest. Terry Ring will join this group.
- Fish and Game can participate yet has policy limitations.
- Next steps: prioritizing sections of the Big Wood, Little Wood, and Silver Creek for fish habitat and instream flows. Then, they will see how those priorities fit with agricultural delivery priorities and potential projects.
- See enforcement, being involved in the county comprehensive plan and legal aspects of water exchange as future opportunities.

Municipal, HOA, Galena GWD Subcommittee report: Patti, Pat

- Galena GWD rights have been broadly categorized into groups (see charts at bottom). Implications for various groups in regards to the water call were discussed; 17% of rights are non-irrigators, are subject to a call, yet do not have an active voice in the call unless they petition into the GWD.
- 2014 water usage for the Galena GWD has a lot of data gaps due to lack of metering. The group is waiting on 2015 water usage data which should be more informative (with increased metering). This data will be forthcoming in December or January. Municipalities will wait for data before their next subcommittee meeting.
- HOA's decided to form their own group due to more vulnerability, different projects, applicability, and would like to move forward faster. Small agriculture (rights of < 30 acres) and consumptive recreation (Sun Valley, Valley Club) would be included in this group. They will meet to identify commonalities and needs.
- A grant is available from the state for municipalities, HOA's and smaller water users for water conservation. Total monies = \$200,000 and are available in 5-20,000 increments. Information is at IDWR website: <http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/WaterBoard/Financial%20program/Financial.htm>
- Ketchum, through a Water Smart pilot project, will be able to give their customers online ability to check their rates, usage and comparisons as an incentive to grow water usage awareness. Hailey is in the beginning phases of starting a Landscape Irrigation Rebate program for conserving water and creating efficiencies. They have allocated \$20,000 for next year's rebate program.
- City representative asked for a narrative to take back to their mayors, staff, attorneys and councils to share the WRW Collaborative goals and our needs from city representatives. Staff can currently participate at a listening level since decisions require the input from the above.
- Municipalities subcommittee will include commercial, industrial, schools, and aesthetics since they are included within city boundaries. Patti will contact Howie Royal (BC School District) to join the collaborative.

Water call: Call is stayed by all parties until action on a contested case (area of common ground water supply question) has been determined by the courts. We anticipate a six month delay which is helpful to the collaborative and ground water districts.

Narrative and Public Outreach: After discussion, the group decided that this is a working group and there is no advantage to create awareness on WRW Collaborative at this time. Real information about water issues is needed in the community yet this group is not the vendor for that in the community. A vision and mission statement were requested by the group and the conservation nonprofits will draft this for the next meeting.

Miscellaneous

SNAP update: SNAP (Science for Nature and People) is a Nature Conservancy program that we have asked for analysis of target flows and how often these are met on the Big and Little Wood Rivers. This information should be forthcoming along with a cost/benefit analysis for water transactions.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 12 at 10 a.m. at The Nature Conservancy

Location: The Nature Conservancy office Hailey, Idaho, 116 1st Avenue North
 Call in number: 866-385-9623 code 6239780454

Galena GWD Water Rights (IDWR LIST)		CFS	% of Total	Acre
HOA Rights		44.58	19%	2,063
NON Irrigation Rights	Commercial, Industrial, Aesthetic, Cooling, Heating, misc	40.44	17%	-
Irrigation Rights	Irrigation Rights < 30 Acre	36.72	16%	1,537
IRRIGATION RIGHT	Irrigation Rights > 30 Acre	44.70	19%	4,433
Municipal Rights	Cities, BCRD, Animal Shelter, Mid Valley LLC & Croy Creek LLC	69.67	29%	647
Mitigation Rights		0.51	0%	15
TOTAL		236.63	100%	8,694

Municipal Information			CFS	% of total
		Bellevue	6.02	9%
		Hailey	24.63	35%
		Ketchum	15.239	22%
		Sun Valley	19.54	28%
		Other	4.241	6%
	Total		69.67	100%