

Wood River Water Collaborative Meeting

9/28/17

Attendees: Wendy Pabich, Nina Jonas, Richard Carr, John Wright, Brett Stevenson, Kevin Lakey, Peter Anderson, Sally Toone, Josh Johnson, Pat Purdy, Michelle Stennett, Greg Loomis, Ron Abromavich, Rashawn Tama, Chris Johnson, Dale Ewerson, Keri York, Mark Davidson

Action items are highlighted

Project Updates

1. Bureau of Reclamation Grants Received

- The NGO group is very excited that the WRWC has been the recipient of WaterSMART grants – these are nationally-competitive, and may put us in a better position to receive future funding. This shows that we are working together to implement projects important to our collaborative.
- City of Hailey received a Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) WaterSMART grant for its Water Smarty program which will continue it for another two years. \$120,000 will go towards rebates to homeowners for replacing turf. Funding is: BOR \$75,000, Idaho Water Resources Board \$40,000, City of Hailey \$22,000, City and WRLT in-kind \$14,000. Program details on City website.
- Members of the WRWC also received a BOR WaterSMART grant. The applicant was the Galena Groundwater district, TNC helped write the grant, and it will be implemented by the Purdy family, Simplot, TNC, Silver Creek Alliance, and District 37. Approximately \$53,000 was awarded for the Highway 93 project on Silver Creek which will improve a delivery system to maintain existing wetlands, conserve up to 10 cfs in Silver Creek, and improve habitat along $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of Silver Creek. Approximately \$14,000 was awarded to install telemetry on 14 headgates in the Richfield and Shoshone areas. This will allow Kevin to shut off headgates automatically and improve efficiency in the delivery system. Approx. half have been installed so far. The program is voluntary, and landowners have to pay for a meter upgrade.

2. Bellevue Triangle Demand Reduction Project

- Pat Purdy and Mark Davidson have been working on a project that would improve delivery on the Gardener property along Baseline Rd. that the Purdy's lease. The goal is to reduce water use by 20% through increasing efficiency in surface water delivery and reducing demand on groundwater. Some acres would be dried up and conserved water could be used for projects such as recharge. Wendy recommended analysis of current incidental recharge and how this project would affect. **Chris recommended completing an EQIP application with the NRCS.**

3. Surface Water Forecasting and IASCD Proposal

- Ron Abromavich with the NRCS Snow Survey Team explained the increased need statewide to use SNOTEL data and SWSIs (surface water supply indices), to predict timing of runoff and surface water supply so that producers can improve crop planning and water conservation.
- The Canyon County SCD has drafted a proposal for the Idaho Association of SCD's (attached), which will be discussed at the upcoming IASCD meeting in Nov. The WRWC can help gather support through the Blaine SCD, and Wood River RCD. **Keri and Chris will follow up and bring this to the attention of BSCD, and possibly at the upcoming SCD division meeting.**

- Michelle recommended that we continue to think about our individual basin needs because this position would be state-wide. If we want to ensure that the data is available to our users, we may need to fund a contractor to interact with the NRCS and our needs specifically. **The NGO group will brainstorm ideas for funding such a position.**

Upcoming BOR Grant Opportunities

- Kira provided information on upcoming opportunities with BOR, assuming the budget is passed. She said that, although congress must approve final amounts, the bills are moving through the House and Senate and will likely result in budgets close to the proposal. Opportunities that the WRWC may be interested in are WaterSMART (for water conservation projects), drought management planning (WRWC discussed last year), and a new water conservation field services program (water conservation planning, system improvements, technologies). **Kira will update the WRWC if and when the budget is passed and funding announcements are made.**

New Topic – Rinker Annexation Application to Bellevue

- Dale brought up the Rinker annexation application to Bellevue and if the WRWC should be evaluating the water rights component. It was discussed and agreed that the WRWC should be concerned about annexation proposals and how existing irrigation water rights are proposed for use within the application. There may be water that the City would need for mitigation, or could be used for conservation purposes. **It was suggested that someone in the NGO group approach Rinkers about the plan for the water rights.**
- Chris is on Bellevue P&Z, and indicated that the Rinker and Eccles annexations are being reviewed by city council before going to P&Z. **It was recommended that the WRWC create a list of water-related items that the city council and P&Z should consider, and that it be signed by members of the WRWC who are interested in signing.** Chris has since reported that the **applications are still being reviewed, and will let us know when there is a time to provide public comment.**

Website

- Greg, who created the Galena GWD website, has offered to create a website for the WRWC. The website would archive documents, have a calendar, and be open-source so we can update once it is created. The domain name would be woodriverwater.com or woodriverwater.org. He imagines it will take approx. 40 hours to upload documents (there are a lot). **He is willing to donate half of his time, and Michelle offered to cover the remaining costs – THANK YOU MICHELLE AND GREG!!!**

NGO Survey Posted to WRWC Members

- Patti sent emails to WRWC members asking the following questions, and we received the following input:
 1. How does the WRWC help your organization or entity accomplish moving water management or water quantity challenges forward?
 - Members feel that the WRWC is valuable because it provides a forum to discuss issues and keeps water conservation a priority for everyone. It can help provide education, mediation between opposing views, and an opportunity for lower basin and upper basin users to get together.
 2. What can the NGOs do to more directly help your organization or entity move water management or water quantity challenges forward?
 - Help develop a water credit or exchange system, develop action items within subcommittees and push forward, be more receptive to private sector solutions, provide information on water saving technologies such as those used in the Middle East, apply for grants, keep the ball moving forward
 3. What keeps you participating in the group?
 - The importance of finding workable solutions, interest in water use and management, interest in the water call, working together, resolving issues is critical, it is a meaningful forum, water is the most critical resource, hope and support

Other Final Discussion Items

- A water credit system has been talked about within the WRWC, with a desire to include target flows throughout the system. It has been difficult to move forward until the call is settled.
- We expect the call to be refiled soon
- Subcommittees should meet