

Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC) – Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)
Meeting of January 10, 2008

Introductions:

Attendance:

Name	Representing	Present	Excused	Absent
Michael Echanove, Chair	Municipal Provider - WA	X		
vacant	Municipal Provider – ID			
Dr. George Grader	Petitioning Group	X		
Dr. Jerry Fairley	Petitioning Group	X		
Dr. Jim Mital	Water Conservation Group	X		
Joe Spoonemore	Rural Interests – WA	X		
vacant	Rural Interests – ID			
Dan Boone	Developer/Business – WA	X		
Mark Loaiza	Developer/Business - ID	X		
vacant	Technical Representative			
Ree Brannon	Other	X		
Dr. Bill French	Other	X		
Keith Stoffel	WSDOE, ex-officio	X		
Ken Neilly	IDWR, ex-officio	Phone		

Guests:

Walter Steed, Moscow City Council
 Dan Carscallen, Moscow City Council
 Wayne Krause, Moscow City Council
 Steve Robischon, PBAC
 Mark Storey
 David Hall

Approval of minutes:

The November 8, 2007 minutes were approved as amended to reflect minor corrections.

PBAC Report & Update: The last PBAC meeting was held in December, as a joint meeting with the CAG. There is nothing to report.

Idaho DWR Report – Ken Neilly. (by phone)

- Ken does not have much to report as he was just assigned to the Palouse basin. Ken introduced himself as a hydrogeologist with IDWR. Ken is responsible for conducting ground water quality work in Southern Idaho.

Washington DOE Report– Keith Stoffel

- Keith said that the DOE is participating in a mediated settlement with the Hawkins Group and City of Moscow in late January.
- Keith reports that Evan Sheffels is already working on behalf of the Palouse Basin while in Olympia.

Conservancy Board Report (Joe Spoonemore)

- Joe reports that the Conservancy Board will be meeting in the first week of February to discuss the four Hawkins water rights transfers.

Open Forum Discussion:

- Chairman Echanove received a letter of resignation from Dr. Fritz Feidler, stating that he felt his service on the CAG represents a conflict of interest. Dr. Fairley asked if anyone on the CAG believed that he had a conflict of interest. By consensus, it was felt that no conflict exists. Ree Brannon asked if the CAG should seek another technical representative to replace Dr. Feidler. This was not resolved.
- Chairman Echanove welcomed the three new members of the Moscow City Council to the CAG meeting.
- Presentation by Steve Robischon: History of Ground Water in the Palouse Basin (in his most time-efficient presentation yet).
- Joe Spoonemore asked about whether there are measurable recent declines in WSU wells since summer (as a result of Golf Course watering). His well has been static since summer, and it typically matches the WSU wells.
- Mark Loaiza brought up the question regarding how long it would take for surface water reservoirs constructed in our area to recuperate the capital investment.
- Echanove summarized the history of the CAG since its inception. The first business from the CAG was several written technical recommendations to PBAC. Following that the CAG focused on preparing and sending letters of support for the Pullman water reuse project. Members of the CAG have met with our local Washington legislators about the proposed “Framework” and water reuse projects, trying to secure some funding. Other individuals and organizations, like the Moscow Mayor, wrote letters of support for the Pullman water reuse project.
- Echanove reported that more recently, the CAG has spent a great deal of time talking about conservation, which is the “flip” of these large dollar supply projects. Conservation is immediate and cheap. Bill French elaborated on immediate benefits of conservation. The longer we can make the existing ground water last, the longer we can put off the expensive surface water projects. Fairley reminded the group that conservation is thought of as “doing without”. He suggests that this is not really a correct view of conservation; rather, it should be “the more we can conserve, the more economic development we can have”.
- Joe Spoonemore suggested that the visiting Moscow City Council members should “take away” from this meeting that “ground water levels are in decline”. Also, in Pullman, we know where the bottom of the aquifer is, but we don’t really know the lateral extent of our aquifer. In Moscow, the City is finally getting their pumping level in order with respect to the 1992 Ground Water Management Plan. This is a good sign that people are starting to reduce water use.

- Ree Brannon, said the success of ground water management in the Palouse Basin depends on the structure of PBAC, regional planning and cooperation between the local government entities. Ground water management is a very difficult thing to coordinate, as it is all based on voluntary participation of the member governments. Echanove added that we absolutely need “buy in” from everyone. The success depends on cross border cooperation. Our timeline is short; we are trying to have a ground water management plan in place by 2010.
- Jerry Fairley noted that, on the Idaho side, we are in violation of Idaho State law, as we are currently “mining” the ground water. Wayne Krauss stated his concern that most of the aquifer is under Washington, not Idaho, and asked about Washington’s stance on “mining” ground water. Keith Stoffel answered that Washington has language that states that ground water use must be sustainable. Wayne Krauss is concerned that only the City of Moscow may be penalized for our regional lack of water. He questions how the jurisdictions work across state lines with different legal requirements. He is interested in working more with the CAG to set regional priorities and solutions. Latah and Whitman Counties will ultimately have ground water impacts on each other. There is also local concern along the margins of the basin. Water wells have very low yield, assuming they have any water at all.
- Ree Brannon wanted to generate ideas for the next water summit set for 2008. She asked if the Moscow City Council members have any ideas for the summit. It would be even better if someone from the City Council wants to participate in the planning efforts.
- Dan Carscallon suggested that the work by the CAG and PBAC needs to get out to the public. They need to know about all the ground water management alternatives. They need to be aware that conservation will help prolong the “big” capital costs needed to develop additional water resources. This will help allow for additional economic development in the region.
- Walter Steed asked “how come there is not a representative of a small provider on the Idaho side”. PBAC and CAG have not been able to find someone. Walter Steed asked “what is the CAG position on the Hawkins Development”. Echanove said CAG has not taken an official position. Fairley: Everyone present has strong opinions either way. In order to cooperate, we elect not to weigh in on political issues. Organization: The CAG is an advisory group to PBAC, created at the request of IDWR. CAG is strictly a creature of PBAC, and is in cooperation with PBAC. The Moscow City Council members generally agreed that CAG is looking at the big picture, and it might get crossways with PBAC if it started taking positions on issues back and forth across the border. It seemed the consensus of CAG members that it would render the CAG less effective if it started taking stances on issues.
- Walter Steed: It would be impossible to divvy up the resource in any way. Fairley: we stand or fall together working on the water supply issues. If we cut up the issues we all lose. Wayne Krauss: Observed that the CAG appears to be very diverse, which adds to its’ effectiveness. The CAG will probably be most successful as a public awareness and advisory entity.
- Wayne Krauss: Asked what work has been done regarding the recharge of aquifers and reservoirs. Are there specific areas of the basin where there are layers that may be used for storage, as opposed to introducing it to the Grande Ronde aquifer? Robischon said that it is being studied in Pullman as an ASR project. Walla Walla is currently operating

an ASR project. According to Fairley, the problem here is that we are approaching the ASR projects a little bit too casually. He believes that we need to put more effort into feasibility evaluations, looking closely at potential water recovery if we use ASR on a large scale. There are also many hidden costs in ASR.

- Michael Echanove: Discussion of PBAC funding: PBAC dues are being collected for future “serious” work that needs to be done. Only recently has funding increases helped to get PBAC moving on the real issues. Michael believes that we have a bright future with respect to funding. We are starting to gain some momentum on both sides of the state line. We are hopefully on the verge of some real funding successes. Robischon: IDWR is currently looking at how money would be spent in the Palouse Basin if it were to become available. Near future focus of our local funding requests will be for the “Framework” project. The goal is to collect all our existing information and find out the shortest path to what we really still need to know.
- Wayne Krauss reminded the CAG that the three City Council members are here on their own, and do not represent the City of Moscow. Walter Steed will be the new PBAC representative for the City of Moscow.

IWRRI: Next Wed there is a seminar. It will be at the U. of I., JEB 111 at 10:30 to 11:30. It will cover techniques for estimating aerial recharge for the Spokane Rathdrum Aquifer.

Next Meeting: Feb 21, 6pm Jacks Creek Room, U of I Facilities.

Agenda Items: Conservation, membership,

Adjourned at 8pm.