

Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC) – Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)
Meeting of February 12, 2009

Introductions:

Attendance:

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

Guests:

Mark Storey
Michael Largent, Whitman County Commissioner
Walter Steed, Moscow City Council
John Weber, Moscow City Council
Steve Robischon
Michael Yount

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Echanove at 6:15 pm

Approval of minutes: The minutes of Jan 8, 2009 were approved as presented with minor edits.

Updates:

- IDWR not present.
- WSDOE: Keith Stoffel reporting. Keith reports that there is some funding discussions regarding watershed planning money. They have been working on ranking the eastern Washington project. The “Framework” project is second on the Eastern Washington rankings. These regional recommendations will be submitted to the folks in Olympia. Unfortunately, there is less money in the overall budget this year. We will have to wait until the end of the legislative session to find out if any local projects will get funding. Nothing to report from the Water Conservancy Board.

- PBAC met Jan 15. Nothing big to report. Discussed the wastewater reuse project. Research projects for the future. Talked about 2008 pumping numbers, and how they are down.

Old Business:

- Discussion regarding a Public Involvement Campaign. Michael Echanove read the minutes regarding this item from the last meeting. Julie has prepared a single sheet summary of her proposal to PBAC (see handout). Essentially, Julie believes that we need to start spending some of our effort on education of conservation (regionally rather than just locally) rather than only doing more physical research. The CAG reviewed the letter and made a few minor suggestions for clarity. There was also some discussion about how PBAC might react to this suggestion. Moscow seems already taken care of, but U of I, WSU, and Pullman, likely need to undertake additional effort at educating their water users in water conservation. Jerry Fairley suggests that we merely make the recommendation to PBAC to further education and public awareness. It was motioned by Jerry and seconded by Jim to forward the amended letter to PBAC. Passed unanimously.

New Business:

Walter Steed, Michael Largent, and John Weber are present to discuss the cross state line water use proposal for the Hawkins Development. Walter does not have much of a presentation, but had a general explanation of the proposal to sell water across the state line. Walter points out that it is not his proposal, but a Moscow City Council directive to try to find a way sell water to the Hawkins Development. Several of the Moscow City Council members were “lobbied” to try to come to a settlement regarding the Moscow protests of the Hawkins water rights transfers. Several of the council members and the mayor went to mediation for 22 hours, and ultimately came to an agreement with Hawkins. Moscow subsequently went to IDWR to try to get the “blessing” to sell the water across the state line. It was ultimately determined that the only way to sell the water would be to change the Idaho State Water code. This is one of the requirements of the settlement agreement. Right now there is a proposal in the state legislature to try to make the appropriate changes in State law to allow for the sale.

Jerry Fairley asked why the Moscow City Council decided it is wise to try to sell water to Hawkins. Walter indicated that the primary purpose is to try to prevent additional water from being drawn from the basins resources. The agreement calls for the discontinued use of the two water wells inside the Hawkins development. The other part of the agreement was to not transfer the 100 acre-foot surface water right from the South Fork Palouse from being transferred to a ground water draw. Walter also suggests that the Hawkins Development will have to pay more for the water, which will be a deterrent to wasteful use. This is how the City of Moscow hopes to reduce overall water use in the basin.

Mark Loaiza asked about relinquishment of the water rights. Walter answered that DOE will take the water rights, so that they would not ever be re-issued. The two wells were drilled after the agreement was reached with the City of Moscow. The agreement also limits where the water can be delivered to, to only the Hawkins project limits. The proposed changes to the Idaho State

laws will limit the sale of water to only adjacent properties (for fear of selling to California). Title 42 of Idaho Code, will be changed to incorporate the language for serving only directly adjacent areas of another state. The proposed bill went through the Senate yesterday, and is now waiting for the same process through the House. After that it will go to the Governor. Walter notes that several other communities across the state are either supporting or not supporting the legislation. To date, IDWR has not commented on how they might rule on Moscow's application to sell water across the state line. They indicated to the Senate that they have no problem with the proposed legislation. There was some consideration given to the exact language of the proposed legislation.

Walter and John Weber both stated that the mediation was a far better way of solving the problem, than going to court with Hawkins. Michael Largent mirrored that Whitman County supports Moscow's attempts to solve the problem without a costly court case, and trying to help Hawkins and Whitman County get the project going. The agreement strictly limits the service to Hawkins at 45 acre-feet, which represents about 2% of Moscow's total current pumping levels. The settlement mediation was entered into based upon the presumption that the Hawkins development was going to happen anyway. Also, one of the settlement concessions was that Hawkins agreed to use Xeriscaping for its landscaping needs.

There was considerable discussion of the various permutations of development scenarios possible for Hawkins. Much of the discussion involved legal opinions of the settlement and delivery of water from Moscow. Attorneys would have to settle such issues.

Jerry Fairley indicated that one of his goals is to reduce overall water use so that there can be some new economic development. The big goal is to continue to decrease overall basin water use.

Other New Business:

- Michael Yount reported some of his research regarding proposed water legislation.
- Julie Titone has been talking to WSU's environmental well-being coordinator. She is trying to get her to visit with us about WSU water conservation issues at a future meeting. Julie will extend an offer to her.
- Julie has also talked to WSU staff regarding a planned arboretum on campus, and how they should get a hold of the University of Idaho people regarding their expertise in conservation.
- Michael Echanove will be working on the CAG letter regarding reclaimed water for the WSU golf course. Michael will work on this in the near future.

Next Meeting: March 12, 6:15pm, at the Jacks Creek Room, U of I. Facilities.

The following meeting will be on April 9th, 2009.

Adjourned at 8:10 pm.