

Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC) – Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)
Meeting of May 8, 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		
Julie Titone	Other	X		
Keith Stoffel	WSDOE, ex-officio		X	
Ken Neilly	IDWR, ex-officio		X	

Guests:
Mark Storey

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Echanove at 6:20 pm

Approval of minutes: The April 17, 2008 minutes were approved as amended to reflect a minor correction regarding the roster details.

Idaho DWR Report – Ken Neilly. (Not Present)

Washington DOE Report– Keith Stoffel (Not Present)

PBAC Report & Update (Steve Robischon): The last PBAC meeting was held near the end of April. Steve Robischon was not present. No PBAC report was presented.

Water Conservancy Board: (Joe Spoonemore): Nothing really new to report. The board is still working on the bylaws. There was some discussion regarding the Water Pollution Control Board (WPCB) hearing regarding the Cornelius case against the DOE. Right now, there is some further discussion regarding the appeal. WPCB is discussing the need to evaluate sustainability

of the water source. Jerry Maley came and asked the conservancy board about transferring water rights to a different point of withdrawal. There may be an application in the near future.

Open Forum Discussion:

- Ree Brannon reported on the modeling project. Lots of discussion regarding the final model and its potential uses, either managerial, or educational in use. It would be nice to have two versions of the model (managerial, educational). The model will be a multiple input systems analysis of the aquifer, and how various inputs may change our understanding of aquifer management. Inputs will be things like pumping rates/quantities, development scenarios, supply issues, physical aquifer attributes, aquifer storage, etc. Results will depend heavily on principles of probability. The model will be visually oriented, and is intended to be ready for the “Water Summit” in October. There was also some discussion about expanding the model in the future to be more of a management tool. Next meeting will be May 30 at 9am in Jacks Creek room.
- Discussion about how PBAC and CAG are organized.
- Water Summit, October 7, 2008. Planning is ongoing. Morning agenda will be technical in nature, IDWR, etc. Keynote speaker will be from the Bureau of Reclamation. Afternoon session by Chris Webb regarding local governments and staffers on conservation efforts. Evening will be a panel of people to discuss roles of stakeholder/managers, etc regarding a scenario of potential water shortage issues. Also, presentations of things like the WOW water model, where people can work with the model. There will be tours of the U. of I Xeri-scaping efforts. Outreach is currently ongoing to get legislative people to attend.
- Kirk O’Reilly sent an email to Michael Echanove regarding the Whitman County water case (Cornelius vs. WSDOE). It was passed around for people to read.

New Business:

City of Moscow, Nicole Baker, Moscow Water Department:

- Discussing future intent of water conservation efforts at the City. The City is trying to think more “regionally”. Over the last several years, Moscow has taken a stronger position on water conservation. It started a few years ago with the hiring of a part time staff position, and transitioned it to a full time staff position about three years ago. Nicole is working to expand the conservation program. Right now Nicoles’ City Water Conservation Plan is on the order of 30 to 40 pages and growing as time becomes available to work on it. Right now the City is working hard on installation of water saving devices. This targets both rental and owner water savings kits. Some of the kits go to property management groups, some to students, some to home owners. The kits are most effective to residential units constructed before 1994, when current low flow plumbing codes came into play. The City is working with PCEI to the tune of about \$20,000 per year to promote education, etc regarding conservation and the value of water. The device program started in 2002, and has been expanding to near 4000 devices per year. The requests for assistance and education are increasing all the time. Nicole described her technical background and education in natural resources, as well as her work history. Nicole’s budget is being developed right now. The budget is approximately \$10,000 for devices, \$20,000 for PCEI in student education, some

advertising, and some money for a rebate program, currently being developed through the creation of the Water Conservation Plan. The whole program is probably around \$100,000, including salaries, etc.

- PCEI representative discussed the education program. The program is constantly changing based on the perception of what is working. The education component works a lot with the 4th, 5th, and 9th graders in town. The teach facts regarding the aquifer, the hydro cycle, etc. They are going to increase the number of classes they address. For example they have 5th grade workshops on how the aquifer works. This year they also worked on a stratigraphy lesson to the 9th graders. PCEI also writes the curriculum to meet the Idaho education standards.
- Irrigation season now starts on May 15th this year.
- Echanove asked Nicole whole the CAG should tackle conservation on a regional basis. Nicole suggested that it is already happening on a limited basis. Sharing of information and resources. The City is starting the “Wisescape” program, which started as the Xeriscape program. The intent is to encourage people regionally to conserve water. The program is on the Moscow web page and can be used by any city in the region to get a program started. Mital asked about the value of tiered rate programs. Nicole said that the results of the Moscow tiered rate program are not conclusive yet, and needs to be monitored for several years. Les MacDonald would be a better person to talk to about the effectiveness of tired rate programs. One of the biggest questions to Nicole is why we should conserve if the City is merely going to sell the water across the border. Nicole suggests that most people don’t realize that the water on both sides of the border is coming from the same aquifer. It is a confusing issue for the citizens.
- PCEI also has a small educational contract with the City of Pullman to provide education assistance. It is smaller than the Moscow program, but they are hopeful of increasing the program over time. It focuses on water saving devices.

Latah County:

- Trying to do outreach to Latah County residents regarding the Comprehensive Plan.
- Planning Commission is reviewing the Comp Plan. The last review was 10 years ago. Land use ordinances have been revamped over the last 7 years. Now they are conducting a very comprehensive review, and collecting information from Latah County residents. The workshops are structured, and have reached about 150 people so far.
- The Commission is asking questions to find criteria with which to look at the Comprehensive Plan. The plan will look at the 10 to 15 year vision of development in the county. Future work would include public meetings and hearings. The workshops are helping identify what people want the county to look like. One tool they are using is “paired interviews”, with people who aren’t familiar with each other. They have done the workshop with several rural oriented groups so far. They are trying to target rural residents.
- Several members of the Planning Commission have experience preparing a Comprehensive Plan. The County Planning staff will be the ones to write the new plan. The Comprehensive plan sets the over-riding principles by which individual ordinances are prepared and administered. The elements of the plan are governed by the State law. Water resources are covered in the “Natural Resources” section of the plan. Planning entities are compelled to consider water resources in its land use processes.

- The overwhelming desire of rural residents is to preserve open spaces. As the process goes on, the group will develop information regarding the results. They will quantify the categories of residents' issues. Examples include simplifying land divisions, recreational opportunities, transportation infrastructure, protecting agricultural land.
- Current Comprehensive Plan favors development along highways 6 and 8 (and 95), and discourages development in more agricultural and rural areas. This process may lead to changes in the Comprehensive Plan Map. For example, Palouse Prairie Foundation is very interested in the process. They will likely be looking for saving some of the native prairie areas, which happen to coincide with areas more favored for growth. Another example is the consideration of the residents along the eastern portion of the county who may want different rules governing development.
- The workshop will also be taken to the area High Schools, trying to get the message out to the next generation of residents and their parents. They also have some questions presented on the web site, but have not gotten a big response.

Questions and Discussion:

Echanove asked both Latah and Moscow whether they have any thoughts on the aquifer, or even concerns, or actions to consider.

- Latah PC in the past was asked to evaluate the area of impact around the City of Moscow. The influence area was several miles around the City. The influence area should be based on projected growth, which is very small in Moscow and Latah County. It makes sense that the development should occur near or in the Cities. One view is to try to keep agricultural ground around the cities as intact as possible by only allowing development to occur in zones around the cities. This might allow for agriculture that is not as water intensive, and also allows for continued recharge.
- Nicole – maybe the CAG should consider writing some small articles to include in her newsletter. Next draft is to be done June 1. It would help get the CAG word out. Nicole also asked for any input from the CAG about how to improve her activities. Joe Spoonemore suggested that one of the highest considerations should be for continuing and expanding the education programs in the schools. Nicole has curriculum for all age groups. Nicole will get the information to the CAG members to start working on the Washington schools to work into their programs.

Other New Business:

Note: Editorial in the paper regarding President Elson Floyds opinions about water reuse: “Water Treatment and Reuse Long Overdue”. Julie said PBAC should write a letter supporting the article on reuse. Julie suggests that the only real thing that CAG can do is be “nags” to PBAC regarding actions they should take. This is our duty as spokespersons for the citizens. There was great deal of discussion regarding how the CAG needs to communicate with PBAC and urge them to action.

One thing that needs to be discussed is the need to educate the WSU administration or state budgetary people to fund construction of the reuse project. This may include education of the

regents, the president, the legislators, etc. This topic should be considered at the summit as a way to educate the decision makers.

The letter to PBAC regarding PBAC letters of support for conservation issues was approved and given to Mark Storey to deliver to PBAC next week at its regular meeting.

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

Adjourned at 8:40 pm.