

Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC) – Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)
Meeting of June 7, 2007

Attendance:

Members present:

Michael Echanove	Dan Boone
Fritz Fiedler	Bill French
Kirk O'Reilly	

Helen Harrington, IDWR, ex-officio (via telephone)

Members Absent:

Joe Spoonemore	Keith Stoffel (in Turkey)
Mark Loaiza	Jim Mital
George Grader	Jerry Fairley

Guests:

Steve Robischon, PBAC	Mark Storey, PBAC
David Hall, PWCN	

Approval of minutes:

The May 3, 2007 minutes were approved as amended.

PBAC Report & Update (May 17 meeting): by Steve Robischon.

- Palouse has purchased a data logger for well #1. It is equipped for special tube size that allows monitoring where it was not possible before, without a lot of hassle. Palouse is doing this on its own initiative.
- Framework project (Fairley proposal) and the WRIA prioritization process. This proposal is now the #1 priority for the implementation of the WRIA 34 Watershed Plan. The number 2 project has to do with the impacts of conservation tillage methods on aquifer recharge and stream flow. The number 3 proposal is for installation of static monitoring wells at several locations in the Palouse Basin. The number 4 project is to fund the civil design of the water reuse project in Pullman. Lastly, the fifth priority is a ground water monitoring project in the West Plains area near Spokane.
- PBAC 2007 “Call for Research Proposals”. PBAC is asking for proposals to study various aspects of the Palouse Basin, and are due June 15. The only proposal received so far is from Dr. Fairley to statistically evaluate whether or not there is a decrease in the drop of water level in area wells.
- Continued Wanapum (shallow) aquifer water level monitoring. Monitoring will include some evaluation of Moscow pumping rates from the shallow aquifer to help induce better or more recharge. This will be a Jim Osiensky project with the assistance of a student.

- A funding resolution is proposed to the supporting agencies that will increase administrative dues to support the operation. PBAC is also considering a new research agreement for the entities that fund ongoing research.
- Mike McVay presented his Thesis last month. His primary conclusion is that the Grande Ronde (deep) aquifer is connected between Moscow & Pullman.
- WOW has distributed an information gathering survey to residents in the Palouse Basin, to help them better evaluate water use in the basin.

Idaho DWR - Helen Harrington

- The final meeting of the Spokane Aquifer group occurred in May. Wrap up of the project will likely help out with the efforts under way in the Palouse Basin. The Spokane project has helped to develop a sense of cooperation between the two states.
- Much of IDWR efforts have been focused on the Snake River Plain, and not on North Idaho.
- No new news on the Moscow Cemetery application for a water right.
- North Idaho adjudication is starting its educational meetings later this month to start setting the foundation for the process. The process will focus on Rathdrum Prairie first. It won't start in the Palouse area for 5 or so years yet.

Washington DOE - No Report

Hawkins Water Right Transfer Proposal

- Hawkins withdrew its first mitigation proposal and substituted a newer proposal with respect to supplementing the Paradise Creek flow (Steve Robischon). No additional information at this time.

WRIA 34 Planning Unit – Mark Storey

- Summary of Instream Flow meetings – the group has discussed many of the issues regarding Instream Flow. There are still two concerns by the local representatives, a “reservation” of exempt permit domestic wells, and the ability to have a future allocation that could be used by the cities for winter-spring diversion from the North Fork Palouse, to be used for a ASR or other storage project.
- Discussion of plan adoption – the plan will be forwarded soon to the County Commissioners for approval and adoption.
- Discussion of Implementation money and proposals – implementation of the plan will occur slowly over the next several years, depending on the availability of funding.

Business: Continuation of a discussion on water conservation.

Reilly: The question was raised about whether or not it is too late to approach the two cities about a conservation oriented regional plan. The suggestion was made that the CAG should try to invite members of Councils and PBAC to attend a CAG meeting.

French: Met with Moscow Public Works Finance Committee about water rates. French asked whether or not the newer tiered rate structure was affecting water use for the people using over 2000 cu ft per month. The answer from Les MacDonald was that there is no observable decrease in water use. Also, other conservation measures were discussed with the committee, and staff was directed to look into evaluating implementation of other conservation measures. The conclusion is that Moscow is at least willing to start looking at basin-wide conservation measures. Hall informed the group that the City of Moscow has just installed three new waterless urinals (East City Park), indicating that there is some progress toward conservation.

Echanove: Suggested that the CAG could invite Kevin Gardes to a meeting to discuss the new water plan, developed by the City of Pullman. French thought that it might be a useful exercise to find out why the city believes that its rate structure is a “conservation” rate structure. Echanove concluded that the will of the group is to invite individuals from the cities to a meeting to discuss conservation issues and rate structures. He also suggested that CAG invite Colfax to discuss pro’s and con’s of trying to implement a new rate structure. French reported that Moscow business rates are not tiered, but it is not that big of deal as most water use is residential (using about 80% of the water), not commercial or industrial. Hall suggested that maybe the community education personnel might be able to target business related conservation (i.e. water coil cooler units). First step in education might be to have a kind of “round house” discussion with representatives of each of the pumping entities. Echanove and Robischon will try to get Moscow, Pullman, and Colfax together for the discussion. They will talk to Aaron Ament and Les MacDonald from Moscow, Carl Thompson from Colfax, Kevin Gardes and Barney Waldrop from Pullman, and Mark Aarasmith from Palouse. This will be arranged for the July 12 meeting.

Harrington reported on an example of water conservation from Micron and Boise solving a serious groundwater decline issue. The solution was driven by Micron and Simplot in the basin, not by IDWR or the application of regulatory involvement. The problem was solved by the economic need to have a reliable water supply by investing in infrastructure for a water re-use system.

Open Forum:

Water Summit update – Robischon

- Currently working up an agenda
- Afternoon session is targeting a panel discussion involving business, growth, land use, and environmental representatives. This is not settled yet so may still change.
- French and others said it is probably time to start the discussion of growth and how it impacts water use.
- Water Summit is on the Tuesday the 2nd or Wednesday the 3rd? of October this year.

Fairley is going to send a letter to PBAC asking for it to develop a more open proposal process for research. No new information.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2007, at 7pm, Jacks Creek Room, U of I Facilities.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.