



## Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee

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February 19, 2009 Meeting Minutes

### Pullman City Hall, East End (Large) Conference Room

#### Attendance

X	UI: Michael Holthaus, Water Systems Manager	X	WSU: Mike Leonas, Project Manager, Capital Planning & Dev.
X	UI: Joe Kline, Director, Utilities and Engineering	X	WSU: Rob Corcoran, Asst Dir, Arch, Engr & Const Services
X	Moscow: Tom Scallorn, Water Dept Superintendent	X	Pullman: Mark Workman (Chair), Director of Public Works
X	Moscow: Walter Steed, City Council Member		Pullman: Art Garro, Maintenance & Operations Superintendent
X	Moscow: Les MacDonald, Director of Public Works		Pullman: Barney Waldrop, City Council Member
X	Latah County: Paul Kimmell (Vice- Chair), County Representative	X	Whitman County: Mark Storey, Director of Public Works
	Latah County: Tom Stroschein, County Commissioner		Whitman County: Michael Largent, County Commissioner
X	Colfax: Carl Thompson, City Administrator		Colfax: Andy Rogers, Public Works Supervisor

#### Visitors and Others

Bob Haynes, IDWR; Guy Gregory, WDOE; Mandie MacDonald, Landau Associates; Tom Briggs, Landau Associates; Cheryl Morgan, Self; Michael Yount, Self; Allyson Beall, WoW; Julie Titone, CAG; Barbara Cosens, UI/WoW; Jan Boll, UI/WoW; Steve Robischon, PBAC

#### Call to Order

Mark Workman, PBAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM.

#### Introductions

The assembled group introduced themselves and their representation.

#### 1) Approval of the January 15, 2009 Meeting Minutes

The draft January minutes were approved by consensus.

## **2) Presentations –**

### **WoW Systems Dynamics Model: Next Steps**

Beall outlined potential next steps for the model. Cosens reported on work being conducted by two WoW graduate students related to integrating land and water use planning and cataloging interjurisdictional agreements, and noted that the model could serve as a tool to facilitate the integrated planning activities. Boll outlined the project's funding requirements. PBAC members provided their thoughts about cost share funding of the continuation of the project. Project and funding concerns will be addressed off-line and the item will be revisited by the group at next month's PBAC meeting.

## **3) Unfinished Business -**

### **New/Continuing PBAC Projects –**

Workman summarized a meeting with Mimi Wainwright in which PBAC tentatively agreed to cost share a Framework type project with WDOE. A draft RFP developed by PBAC was provided to WDOE for review. Gregory reported that the Framework project had been forwarded to Olympia for consideration as the (WDOE) Eastern Region's top priority for operational funding.

Workman reported the research funding entities have agreed to a switch in projects, replacing the previously approved ASR Impacts project with the Long-Term Aquifer Test project. The next step in the project is to secure the commitment of a graduate student to conduct the research.

Robischon handed out a document outlining three high level approaches to project prioritization and listing potential projects for consideration. The group will comment on the document via email or be prepared to provide feedback at next month's PBAC meeting.

## **4) New Business –**

### **CAG Recommendation for Public Information Campaign**

Titone presented a letter from the CAG recommending that PBAC fund a public information campaign targeted at regional conservation. PBAC members provided their thoughts about the project, and agreed to work on identifying means to develop an effective regional conservation message. The group further expressed its thanks to the CAG for providing its recommendation.

## **5) PBAC Projects Progress Report –**

Robischon reported Brad Bennett has completed a download cycle of the Wanapum monitoring wells. When Bennett's project wraps up in May, Robischon will take over the Wanapum downloads. Aaren Fiedler is close to being ready to defend his thesis on the Grande Ronde project. Robischon is currently accomplishing the Grand Ronde monitoring downloads. When a student researcher is secured for the Long-Term Aquifer Test project, s/he will assume responsibility for the Grand Ronde downloads.

## **6) Citizens Advisory Group Report**

Robischon reported that in addition to discussions about the recommendation letter covered in New Business above, Walter Steed attended the meeting, provided a history of the Moscow effort to convey water to the proposed Hawkins development, and fielded questions from the CAG.

## **7) Budget Report**

Robischon reported the budget status as essentially unchanged from the previous month.

## **8) Other Reports and Announcements –**

### **Motor On/Off Event Loggers**

Robischon passed around a motor event logger purchased to establish proof of concept for capturing pump on/off timing for the municipal and university pumping wells. Scallorn has purchased a unit for Moscow, as well as a device that enables logger downloading without requiring a laptop computer. Moscow will test the unit's feasibility for the desired application prior to PBAC purchasing additional units for each of the (nearly 2 dozen) wells.

### **Changes to Idaho Code for Out-of-State Municipal Service**

Steed reported the proposed code changes have proceeded through the Idaho Senate and await a hearing in the Idaho House Resources and Conservation Committee. He added that the proposed legislation is supported by the Idaho Water Users Association, a very conservative, primarily southern Idaho organization of irrigators.

### **Pullman/WSU Wastewater Reclamation Project**

The WA governor's proposal is at the Legislature for consideration. Leonas noted the proposal provides the authority for WSU to accomplish funding through its internal funding processes and does not involve direct State funding. Workman reported an RFP for consulting services (to update the design development report) will likely be issued in early March. The services contract will utilize DOE grant funds (up to \$100K) contingent upon a portion of the funds being used for habitat restoration.

### **Moscow Well 10 Transfer Application**

Robischon displayed a copy of the letter from PBAC to IDWR indicating that PBAC is not opposed to the transfer application (to add a point of diversion to Moscow's Well 9 water right to accommodate the planned Moscow Well 10). MacDonald reported the comment period on the transfer ends soon, and barring receipt of adverse comments, has been approved by IDWR.

**PBAC 2008 Pumping Press Release**

Robischon displayed a copy of the press release issued regarding the 2008 pumping declines for PBAC entities, and provided revised numbers indicating Colfax pumping was lower than had been previously reported. The revised totals indicate 2008 PBAC pumping was down over 5% from 2007 and nearly 15% from 1992. Colfax's 2008 pumping was 17% less than in 2007.

**Other**

Robischon reported summary results from studies conducted for the Columbia Basin Ground Water Management Area (GWMA), where aquifer characteristics appear to be similar to those of the Palouse Basin (but the GWMA experiences pumping withdrawals over 100 times higher than on the Palouse).

Robischon reported the WRIA 34 Planning Unit approved the Palouse Watershed Detailed Implementation Plan at its January 21 meeting. Discussion related to how to approach development of instream flow recommendations is continuing.

Robischon displayed a press release from the Idaho Water Resource Board announcing adoption of the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP) for submittal to the Legislature. As proposed, the ESPA CAMP involves State funding of \$3 million per year for a period of 10 years.

Robischon displayed the Idaho Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) map as of February 18 indicating the Clearwater Basin is at 82% of normal SWE, down from 92% on January 26. The snow year started out slowly in October and began to catch up in December and January, but has begun to fall with below normal snow amounts since late January.

**9) Next Meeting –**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19 in Moscow.

**10) Adjournment -**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 PM.

**Submitted for review and approved at the March 20, 2009 PBAC meeting.**

**Steve Robischon, Executive Manager**

## Potential PBAC Projects – February 2009 (*Workman comments italicized*)

At the January 2009 PBAC meeting, it was suggested that the PBAC executive committee consider the Potential PBAC Projects issue offline and come back to the full committee with a summary and/or recommendations for action. This document is intended to act as a strawman for that discussion.

According to the 1992 Ground Water Management Plan (GWMP), PBAC has several roles:

- Education and Information Exchange
- Database (water levels, pumping, monitoring)
- Research
  - Field investigations to determine geologic and hydrologic characteristics
  - Model studies of alternative management strategies
  - Feasibility studies of supply and demand management alternatives

In terms of the current PBAC budget partitioning, the first two items above are accomplished through the administrative budget, and the third through the research budget. In this document the discussion will be limited to the research component.

From a high level perspective, three different approaches to establishing research priorities might be considered:

### **Perspective 1**

We can't conserve our way out of the problem, and will eventually have to implement supply enhancement projects. But if we have enough ground water to last many generations, it isn't effective stewardship of the resource to impose significant costs on the community now in order to avoid problems many years down the road. We therefore should focus our current research efforts upon figuring out how long the water will last. Once we know that, we'll be able to decide when and how best to act.

*We likely will never really know how long the water will last.*

### **Perspective 2**

We can't conserve our way out of the problem, and will eventually have to implement supply enhancement projects. Without excessive research expenditures, we'll never know for sure how much ground water we have. Although we need to keep working on reducing the uncertainty around ground water availability, we also need to begin looking at what supply/demand options we have and which make the most sense, not just technically but also socially, politically, economically and legally. And if we can identify those options that make the most sense, we should take steps now (e.g. reserve water rights, establish funding mechanisms, etc.) to ensure that they will still be available when the time comes to implement them.

*I agree with Perspective 2.*

### Perspective 3

We can't conserve our way out of the problem, and will eventually have to implement supply enhancement projects. It makes no sense to expend resources trying to figure out how much ground water we have, because it will never be enough. We need to take immediate steps to reduce demand and identify and implement supply solutions.

*Although this is a frequently heard opinion, it implies a "time to panic" viewpoint that I do not think there is broad-based support or scientific justification for.*

Individual research priorities will vary depending upon which of the above perspectives one most closely identifies with. In a nutshell, it boils down to how you weigh in on the question below:

Should we figure out how much we have available before we enhance supply, should we just go ahead and enhance supply, or should we do some of both?

*I think we should do some of both.*

It seems that the committee (or at least the research funding entities) needs to come to consensus on an answer to the above question before it will be able to constructively discuss which projects to fund. Once in agreement on a high-level approach, the committee might begin to decide upon research funding priorities according to the degree with which a project answers the three basic questions below:

1. How long will the ground water last?
2. What are our options for making it last longer?
3. How do we implement the preferred option(s)?

Referring again to the GWMP, the primary role of PBAC is

“. . . encourage ENTITIES to implement the PLAN.”

This could be interpreted to mean that PBAC is not responsible for accomplishing item 3 above. If that is the case, then funding prioritization becomes easier.

*In general, I agree that implementation should be left to the entities, although, I also agree with the note below.*

Do we do 1, or 2, or some of both? *Again, some of both.*

(Note that if the preferred option(s) identified in 2 are regional as opposed to entity-centric, at some point there will need to be some sort of intergovernmental group responsible for implementation)

The table that follows lists proposed and potential projects for PBAC's consideration. Each table entry includes a project name, (where available) planning level cost and time estimates, and notes where appropriate. In addition, the last column categorizes project objectives according to the following basic questions the project will address:

How long will the (ground) water LAST? (L)

What are the supply/demand OPTIONS? (O)

HOW can we implement the supply/demand option? (H)

*The previous analysis leads me to think that, in general, PBAC should focus on L and O options.*

Project Name	Cost	Time	Cost Share	Notes	Questions Addressed
Framework	\$250K	2yr	WRIA 34 (50%) IDWR??	Synthesis, Field Verification, Visualization, Data Gaps, Outreach	L,O
ASR Impacts	\$50K	2yr		Hydrogeologic Behavior Near Potential ASR Sites, Site Selection	H,O,L
Long-term Aquifer Testing	\$50K	2yr		Storativity, Basin Extent, Hydrogeologic Behavior	L
Tritium Testing	\$125K	2yr	WRIA 34 (40%)	"Young" Water in Grande Ronde - Recharge?	L
Systems Dynamics Modeling	\$40K	1yr	WoW (50%) Feds??	Decision Making, Outreach, Data Gaps	O,L
Monitoring Well(s)	\$500K	4yr	WRIA 34 ???	Basin Extent, Natural Discharge, Storativity	L
Research/Study Synthesis	\$50K	1yr	WRIA 34 ???	Synthesis, Data Gaps, Outreach	L,O
Visualization / Spatial Database	\$100K	2yr	WRIA 34 ???	Field Verification, Data Gaps, Visualization, Outreach	L
Wanapum Exploration	??	5yr		Compartmentalization, Additional	L,O
Geologic Maps	\$100K	2yr		Basin Extent, Site Selection	L
Water Level Analyses	\$50K	2yr		Significance of Water Level Declines, Trend?, Outreach	L
GW/SW Interaction	\$150K	5yr		Recharge/Discharge, Site Selection	L,O
Conservation Studies	??	??			O,H
Demand Management Studies	??	??			O,H
Economic Studies	??	??			O,H
Engineering Studies	??	??			H,O
Environmental Investigations	??	??			O,H
Legal Analyses	??	??			O,H

Feb. 12, 2009

Dear members of the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee,

We are all aware that no amount of scientific study is likely to confirm the extent of our regional ground water supplies. There is broad agreement that the supply is not limitless. In light of those facts, the Citizens Advisory Group recommends that the committee focus more attention on reducing demand for water. We urge you to expend some of PBAC's research funds to develop a regional conservation campaign.

Specifically, we recommend offering a \$20,000 grant, sending out requests for proposals for a public information campaign that would:

- Target all Palouse Basin water users: permanent and transient, city and rural
- Develop a logo, motto and/or other easily identifiable symbols
- Emphasize the high quality as well as limited quantity of water
- Make use of traditional as well as digital media (advertisements, banners, Web)
- Integrate with existing efforts/events (Palouse Water Summit, Moscow conservation office, Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, Lentil Festival, county fairs, etc.)
- Involve the business and academic communities, among others
- Emphasize that conservation will help retain the high quality of life on the Palouse and enhance the region's reputation
- Include benchmarks of success

PBAC could offer a three-month development period followed by an initial campaign, which could be reviewed and extended with an additional \$5,000 grant. We recommend that the request for proposals be advertised to the public, with special invitations to non-profit and university organizations.

A coordinated, basin-wide campaign would help local governments and universities meet their individual public information requirements in a cost-effective way. For example, the City of Pullman's 2007 Water Quality Report lists education as one of eight conservation goals. Similarly, the draft WSU 2008 Water System Plan states that the university will "implement an education program to encourage water conservation."

It would be our hope that this request for proposals could be developed and presented no later than the end of April so a campaign can be launched by the end of 2009. CAG members would welcome the opportunity to discuss this idea further with PBAC.

Sincerely,



Michael Echanove, chair  
PBAC Citizens Advisory Group