

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Watershed Management Planning Committee

DATE: January 8, 2018

SUBJECT: Summary of Watershed Management Planning Committee Meeting

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Watershed Management Planning Group (WMPG) is to help protect existing water uses and watershed health in the Upper Gunnison Basin in the face of pressure from increased water demands and permanent reductions in water supply.

A meeting of the Watershed Management Planning (WMP) Committee was held on January 8, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. George Sibley, Michelle Pierce, Ashley Bembenek, Matt Feier, Mark Jiganti, Butch Clark, Tom Grant, Jessica Noelke, John McClow, Frank Kugel, and Beverly Richards were in attendance. Bill Trampe, Andy Spann, and Jesse Kruthaupt participated by phone.

George Sibley called the meeting to order.

Wilson Water Group Update

Ashley Bembenek provided the update for Wilson Water Group. Recent progress includes the completion of revisions to irrigated acreage in Water District 28. They have reconciled irrigated acres in Water District 59 with diversion records and water rights. Progress also includes assisting Camille Richard, the Lake Fork sub-basin coordinator, with streamflow gage analysis in support of upcoming stakeholder meetings. Ashley also said she has had conversations with Frank Kugel and Julie Nania to assure that progress continues with all four water uses; agricultural, municipal, environmental, and recreational.

Work continues on reconciling irrigated acreage with diversion records and water rights in Water District 28. They are planning on meeting with larger ranch owners to review return flow timing and location estimates. They are also continuing to collect water use data for municipal, industrial, environmental, and recreational uses where available as well as updating StateCU and StateMod models. The group is also working on reviewing existing instream flow rights and proposal documents.

In February Erin, Chris and Ashley will attend the committee meeting scheduled for February 12th. They would like the following agenda items included for discussion at that meeting: review of Basin Implementation Plan, discussion of modeling process, discussion of how to identify flow critical reaches and areas for additional modeling.

They will also meet with sub-basin coordinators, select stakeholders and committee members on February 12th and 13th.

Wilson Water Group is on track for completion of the East, Ohio, and Lake Fork Watersheds in December of 2018. In the winter and spring of 2018, they will conduct ranch owner meetings and complete data collection and modeling. In the summer and fall of 2018 they will complete field work and report writing.

Sub-basin Coordinators Update

Jesse Kruthaupt said in December he began circling back with water users and providing them surveys. These should be coming in soon. He will speak with Ashley Bembenek about possible stakeholder meetings in February.

Ashley gave an update on the East River for Julie Nania. They have updated the Crested Butte Town Council and they have continued to work with the town to complete surveys. They are planning a meeting for February.

Camille Richard provided a status update prior to the meeting. They have tentatively scheduled a stakeholder meeting for the Lake Fork on January 27th. The original meeting was scheduled for January 13th and this reschedule should allow people notice for the meeting. Michelle Pierce said that Jessica Noelke is available to help with the organization of the agricultural subgroup. John McClow said he would be available for that meeting to discuss compact issues.

Recap of Gunnison County Stockgrowers Annual Meeting Presentation

Frank Kugel said there were many presenters and a lot of information provided at the annual meeting. He and Tom gave a brief overview of the watershed management process. There are several representatives committed to participating in the process but due to a scheduling conflict, they were unable to attend the meeting tonight.

As an update on the agricultural subgroup, Andy Spann he has reached out to many members and has received positive responses. They are considering sending out another email to try and get a meeting coordinated for next week. He said this is a good group of interested parties that are willing to participate in the discussions. He is also working on including representatives from the Lake Fork.

Discussion of Balancing Four Main Water Uses in the Basin – Agriculture, Municipal, Environmental, and Recreational

Ashley said this topic came up while working on irrigation and diversion records updates. There is a concern that the municipal, environmental and recreational uses are not being sufficiently addressed. This is the reason behind the proposed discussion of the Basin Implementation Plan as all four uses are discussed in that plan. This will help in ensuring there is enough water available for all uses. Frank asked what has been done in the initial screening in the stream assessment. Ashley

said she is going through and using background knowledge to include in the options document. The sub-basin coordinators will include information from stakeholders into their working spreadsheet. This information will help identify some of the areas where there are concerns.

John suggested we reconcile the analysis of environmental flows with existing instream flow decrees. This should include requesting actual proposals while reviewing the decrees. Ashley said the challenge is identifying the reaches that may need attention with regards to environmental flows and this is where she will be focusing her attention in the coming weeks.

Michelle Pierce said it is good to be discussing our approach and how we are going to be addressing these issues. The assessment and inventory phase will provide a good picture of how these uses are not equal. Ashley said this is the reason behind the proposed discussion on modeling. This will likely result in a more stakeholder driven reality-based approach. Frank said this could also result in reaching out more to all four water user groups. George said we needed to hear from agriculture first due to the distribution of water in the basin. The balance will come as more is revealed through this process.

Discussion of Literature Review

Included in the committee meeting packet was a literature review which contains information about literature the District has available that may pertain to the watershed management process. Staff asked that committee members look over this information and make any suggestion for items that could be included or should be deleted. Butch Clark suggested we include an article he provided which discussed water quality monitoring on farms, reserves, and urban creeks. He also suggested that a useful source for literature to include might be the campus library as they have several publications he has provided concerning water and water uses. John McClow suggested there are also reliable sources from the state that could be included. He also suggested these items be catalogued to make it easier to reference the topics included. George reminded the group that our purpose in the literature review is primarily to pull together material (research, studies, etc.) specifically about the Upper Gunnison River Basin, and we should keep to that focus.

Update on Video Production

Frank spoke with Tin House Creative and they have completed all interviews. They have interviewed representatives from municipal, agricultural, environmental and recreational interests. They are compiling the information garnered from these interviews and are working on including narrative. Once this is completed they will need talking points from the group. They anticipate completion of the project at the end of January.

Additional Grant Funding Opportunities

Tom Grant provided information about two grants that are available for the watershed management process. The first is from the Healthy Watersheds Consortium and the other is from the Bureau of Reclamation as part of the WaterSMART program. These grants are for \$200K and \$100K respectively and are due at the end of January. He said he can consider these further if the committee thinks we are at that phase. It was the consensus that it may be premature, and these should be reconsidered for 2019.

Meeting Wrap-up and Action Items

In preparation for the next meeting the following items were discussed:

- The next meeting for the Watershed Management Planning Committee will be February 12, 2018 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Action items include:

- Schedule for Powderhorn stakeholders meeting will be finalized.
- Ashley Bembenek will meet with Erin Wilson and Chris Kurtz to prepare for February meetings with sub-basin coordinators.
- Ashley Bembenek and staff will contribute to literature review. This review will eventually be posted to the District's website
- Frank Kugel will investigate NRCS survey to determine benefits for our process.
- Frank Kugel and Andy Spann will finalize meeting with agricultural sub-group.
- Tom Grant will further investigate funding opportunities with Healthy Watersheds Consortium and the Bureau of Reclamation

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.