

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Watershed Management Planning Committee

DATE: March 12, 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 March 12, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

George Sibley, Rosemary Carroll, Julie Nania, Michelle Pierce, Andy Spann, Ashley Bembenek, Jesse Kruthaupt, Camille Richard, Bill Trampe, Andrew Breibart, Sonja Chavez, Toby Hewitt, Bob Robbins, Matt Feier, Chelsea Wilmer, Frank Kugel, John McClow, and Beverly Richards were in attendance.

George Sibley called the meeting to order.

Wilson Water Group Update

Ashley Bembenek gave the Wilson Water Group update. She said they will be working with sub-basin coordinators to identify potential reaches of concern. They have created draft maps of these potential reaches to share with the coordinators when they meet on March 15th. This information will be used to identify potential assessment locations. At the meeting with the sub-basin coordinators they will also discuss the initial list of issues, the schedule for coming months, and other project components. They are also working to list potential assessment methods and these will be paired with assessment locations based on the issues identified at the location.

In April 2018, they will finish compiling stakeholder input for the assessment phase. Additional stakeholder input is welcome but they will have to establish a cut-off date to allow them to select assessment locations ahead of the field season. In April and May of 2018, WWG will refine model output, identify potential reaches of concern, and identify assessment locations. At this point, they will request landowner consent for assessment work.

In July 2018, they will begin assessment work which will continue throughout the summer. In September through December 2018, they will prepare assessment

documents, create outreach materials, and incorporate input from sub-basin coordinators and committee members.

Sub-basin Coordinators Update

Camille Richard said there is a community meeting scheduled for the next day for the Lake Fork. This has been advertised in the local paper and will include an introduction of the process and a review of the assessment process. She is hoping to get feedback and some volunteers to be part of more focus groups. She will then schedule one-on-one interviews.

Jesse Kruthaupt said he is continuing to get input from surveys. He said he likes the idea of the reach maps and thinks they will be good to use as an outreach tool. There are also many potential projects on Ohio Creek that will address issues such as channel stability, bank erosion, irrigation issues, and flow shortages. George said breaking the sub-basins down into reach areas on the maps is an innovative idea as it shows how the sub-basins are structured.

Julie Nania said she has continued to make updates to the contact spreadsheet to help consultants. She has included over 170 entries for the East River that could be used for initial scoping. She has also continued meeting with municipalities. They are also working on establishing the frequency of calls and when they occurred on the lower East River. This information will be provided at meetings with user groups to determine how best to use this information.

Discussion of Recreational Flow Metrics

Julie Nania said the committee has been tasked with developing recreation flow metrics. She has been working with Ashley to do outreach as to what information is important and how we can match this up with what we are currently experiencing on the ground. They would like to identify white water reaches that are commonly used as well as reaches of concern. They will use this list as a starting point to address various recreational uses and characterize the flow that exists and when this is used.

There has been an increase in recreational uses on the Upper Slate River and these metrics will determine if the existing flow levels are adequate for the uses. This will be looked at on a reach-by-reach basis. They will be using gage data and user parameters for safety and bridge levels. Ashley said this will also be useful in developing a rating system to deter users when they are in a position of trespass. All users of the river system will stand to benefit from such a report.

Discussion of Preliminary Status Report to CWCB

There is a preliminary status report to the CWCB due in June based on their funding conditions. Camille Richard will work with the consultants to prepare this document.

Discussion of Pilot Projects Criteria

There were several grants submitted to the District in their grant cycle that could have the potential to be a pilot project as part of the watershed management process. While it has been decided that these projects will not be considered until after the assessment process is complete, establishing a criterion will be necessary to proceed. George Sibley provided a list of possible criteria for this phase of the project. His suggestions are as follows:

- Project should be multipurpose, meeting more than one of the assessed needs
- Project should be accessible for demonstration purposes
- Project will depend upon landowner wants
- Project should be part of a bigger picture
- Project should have a reasonably long-life span – at least 20 years

George suggested we consider this for the District's next grant cycle and have criterion in place. John McClow said this will be a competitive process where the committee selects appropriate projects.

Video Production Update and Watershed Management Planning Group Presence at Summer Events

Video Production - Julie Nania said the video is finished recording and they have included a segment on the Colorado River with John McClow. She will find out within the next week when the final cut with material and music editing will be complete.

Summer Events – Julie said she has had contact with a class at Western about watershed management planning awareness content and this could possibly be combined with the Communications Club outreach. Committee members will contact the Communications Club to get their input.

The group should also have a presence at the River Festival with informational items to be provided to participants. We could also develop storyboards about the process for display at the Festival.

Bill Trampe said we should be careful about how we reach out to groups as the agricultural community could be overwhelmed. If information is presented constructively and correctly, it could be a great educational piece that helps the agricultural community. Bill Trampe said any message should include information about the Prior Appropriation Doctrine. The information should also include ideas about how to improve existing conditions in the basin.

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 April 9, 2018 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Action items include:

- Consultants to continue development of reach maps within sub-basins.
- Ashley Bembenek to provide draft of proposed flow metrics for committee feed back.
- John McClow to provide trespass information to committee.
- Wilson Water Group and Camille Richard will begin development of draft status report to CWCB which is due in June.
- Staff to develop draft criteria list for pilot projects by January 2019.
- Develop a clear definition of the Watershed Management Planning Group message.
- Develop a list of items the group would like presented as outreach.
- Staff to organize agricultural sub-group meeting prior to next meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.