



Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan

Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

Date: January 22, 2008

Time: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Location: Idaho Water Resources Center, Boise

MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review and Meeting Note Finalization

2. Discussion: Report to Board and Legislature

Goal: Committee review and finalization of Report to Board and legislature

3. Lunch

4. Discussion: Quantitative Goal Analysis and Implementation Phases

Goal: Continued Committee discussion of quantitative goal analysis

5. Presentation and Discussion: Water Conservation

- Bureau of Reclamation

Goal: Committee understanding of conservation issues and role in CAMP

6. Discussion: Management Alternative Matrix

Goal: Committee review and refinement of Management Alternative Matrix

7. Discussion: Board Presentation and Committee Participation

8. Next Steps and Future Meeting Agenda Development

9. Public Comment

*All presentations made during the meeting can be found on the project website:
www.espaplan.idaho.gov*

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AGENDA REVIEW, MEETING NOTE FINALIZATION

The Advisory Committee reviewed the January 4, 2008 meeting notes, revised the attendance list and finalized the notes. The meeting note format was discussed and interest expressed for more detailed notes. Jonathan Bartsch noted that future meeting notes will include more detail with an additional staff member from CDR participating.

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE BOARD AND LEGISLATURE

The Committee reviewed and edited the 2008 Progress Report, agreed on changes and recommended the Report to the Board. For a complete list of changes suggested by the Committee please review the 1-22-08 version of the Report.

The Report was presented to the Board on January 24, 2008. The Board concurred with the Committee's 'initial recommendations' and suggested substantive and editorial changes. At a teleconference Board meeting on January 31, 2008, the Board finalized the Report. The 2008 CAMP Progress Report from the Board will be presented to the legislature on Wednesday, February 20 and Thursday, February 21, 2008 (1:30 pm – 3:00 pm). All Committee members are encouraged to attend and a smaller number of Committee members will be asked to present their perspectives at the legislative briefings.

Progress Report Discussion Notes

Quantitative Analysis

- Some Committee members outlined the need to identify the origins of a 600 kaf – 900 kaf water budget change.
 - Committee members suggested that a 600 – 900 kaf analysis was a way to begin determining the potential effect on the resource and to understand whether such a change would mitigate legal actions.
- Other Committee members noted that a 600 kaf – 900 kaf change was not 'pulled from the air' and that the range was previously discussed in the 2004 Settlement Framework. Additionally, it was noted that the analysis demonstrated that reach gain and aquifer level improvements can be accomplished through such a change.
- Hal Anderson (Department) noted that, based on the direction from the Goal Sub-Committee, the Department had developed a series of spreadsheet tools that were 'scaleable' (able to be easily adjusted to examine a range of water budget changes) and that beginning with a 600 kaf – 900 kaf was not endorsed by any user group, but merely a logical way to build on what was previously discussed.

Initial Recommendations

Minidoka Enlargement

- It was noted that a feasibility-grade analysis for the Minidoka dam enlargement would cost \$1.4 million, not \$1 million dollars. Committee members expressed concern regarding rising costs and questioned whether costs will continue to rise. It was noted that the best estimate available today for dam enlargement was between \$100 million and \$200 million.
- The cost/benefit of raising Minidoka dam was questioned and it was noted that a cost per acre foot, even for a conservative estimate, was extremely expensive.
- Committee members emphasized that water user contributions, public/private partnerships and other ESPA contributions would be part of the Minidoka enlargement strategy and that dam enlargement would not be exclusively paid for at tax payer expense.
- Q: What will be the result of the feasibility-grade analysis? A: Identification of engineering costs, broad environmental issues and a plan for construction.

Buyouts (Voluntary Demand Reduction)

- Requested funds should also support CREP augmentation efforts and could potentially entice producers to join; such CREP augmentation could also be targeted to 'hot' areas.
- The Committee agreed to add CREP enhancements to the list of possible uses for these requested funds.

Recharge

- Numerous Committee members discussed concerns with the current RFP to canal companies to provide recharge with the Board's water rights. Concerns included residual carry-over water and the lack of inclusion of some upper valley canals in the RFP based on flooding concerns.
- It was noted that the requested \$1 million would be used to address short comings in the RFP by freeing up conditions and the purchase of rental water for recharge.
- Other Committee members mentioned that if the legislature approved the requested recharge funds, they would not be available until after July 1, 2008 and would be too late for spring recharge efforts. It was noted that a supplemental appropriation could be made available for use in the spring of 2008.
- Impacts on municipal supplies were highlighted and it was suggested that it be factored into the recharge analysis.

Quantitative Goal Analysis and Implementation Phases

Jonathan Bartsch reviewed previous discussions regarding the identification of a quantitative goal analysis and implementation phases. After significant discussion, the Committee agreed to pursue an 'incremental adaptive management' approach that outlines strategies for implementing the first increment (10 years) and details how subsequent increments will be addressed. The

Committee tasked the Department with developing an analysis to identify what can be accomplished in the first increment (including making assumptions regarding the management alternatives). The Committee agreed that this approach made the most sense given limitations on Committee time and the need to include experts in developing the analysis.

Three strategies and a summary of benefits and challenges with each approach were presented to stimulate Committee discussion.

Identification of a 30-year quantitative goal, implementation phases and adaptive management plan

Benefits

- Aggressive but achievable with water availability
- Identifies concrete goal to work toward
- Creates awareness of the problem
- Highlights the need for state funding

Challenges

- No agreement on whether it is the right place to begin the water budget change
- Need to reach agreement on the end of the process before getting started
- Concern that it may create funding obligations and legal precedent

Identification of a 30-year quantitative goal range (example 600 – 900 kaf) and adaptive management plan

Benefits

- Provides quantitative target (range) to work toward
- Allows more flexibility than a single goal
- Communicates magnitude of problem and funding needed

Challenges

- Some parties want to work toward higher number and others support the lower number
- Time spent determining range could be spent on identifying first increment priorities

Incremental Adaptive Management Strategy

First Increment

- Outline objectives, management tools, impacts for the first increment (5-10 years)
- Identify adaptive management approaches, including process for next increment
- Outline funding needs and strategies

Development of Standards and Criteria for First Increment

- Easiest to implement, most benefit etc...

How to Approach the First Increment?

- Identify an objective (number) for the first increment and work backward in terms of implementing management actions
- Develop a list of management actions, prioritize and add tools together to determine first increment
- Easiest, simplest to implement, what can be realistically accomplished etc...

Committee Discussion

- There are at least two ways to look at this issue, 1) identification of what infrastructure can be implemented in the first time period and 2) what is the change in the water budget. The Committee should be clear about what it is examining in terms of infrastructure possibilities and/or a change in water budget.
- The Committee should look at this issue from a number of perspectives including 1) what is feasible and 'fundable' and then list the measures that are achievable, and 2) what is the measure that we are targeting to reduce litigation and conflict and achieve the Goal and Objectives. Maybe there are ways to identify targets that will not become 'litigatable' targets, such as disclaimers.
- The disclaimer could be that a 600kaf – 900 kaf change is a 'stretch goal' and the Committee could then identify something less as part of the first increment. Then the Committee would need to identify the impacts of such changes.
- The Committee needs to be clear about what can be accomplished and what effect it will have on the resource and the conflicts. Need to clearly identify how near term solutions fit with accomplishing the long-term goal.
- A Committee member noted that the goal is to manage the aquifer, not to resolve all the calls, although that may be a result of proper management. It was mentioned that Idaho is a prior appropriation state, and the job is to try to alleviate conflict but not confuse the task with attempting to resolve all conflicts.
- A number of committee members supported the incremental adaptive management approach as a practical way to start taking action to address the problems versus trying to decide where we are going to end up. It was mentioned that once you get started, momentum will be built and more information will be developed regarding what 'the' quantitative goal should be.
- Other Committee members agreed that the best use of Committee time is to start defining the first 10 year increment.

Incremental Goal Next Steps

The Committee addressed how to proceed with the incremental approach. Jonathan outlined a number of options for discussion.

How to Approach the First Increment

- Identify an objective (number) for the first increment and work backward in terms of implementing management actions
- Develop a list of management actions, prioritize and add tools together to determine first increment
- Easiest, simplest to implement, what can be realistically accomplished etc...

The Committee discussed how best to move forward with defining the first increment and outlining an adaptive management plan. After discussion the Committee charged the Department with developing a first cut at identifying a first increment and making assumptions regarding management alternatives and available supply for Committee review.

Committee Discussion

- One way to go about this task is to start listing the tools and defining the expected amount of benefit for each management tool, i.e. 100 kaf recharge, 100 kaf CREP etc.. Then the Committee could prioritize the alternatives, add them up and decide what is achievable in the first increment (yield of each measure and role in both short/long term).
- Each management alternative could be put in a box to track progress; in this way the Committee will know how well each tool is performing (like a single investment stock in a broader portfolio)
- The real question is how to formulate a series of tasks and projects in a rapid timeframe. One suggestion is that the Department take the Committee input, develop a list of assumptions and conduct an analysis of what can be achieved in the first increment; this analysis would then be presented to the Committee.
- Committees are much better at responding to information than to generating them, we should have the Department develop something like a 'straw dog' for the Committee to respond to.
- The first increment approach should do as much as possible; as quickly as possible to change the direction of the aquifer.
- The Committee needs the freedom to fail and the permission to succeed.
- From a year to year perspective, we need to have the flexibility to adapt and to take into account the changing dynamics – this is the key to adaptive management.
- What will the legislature think of this approach? From a water user perspective we will need to look carefully at the improvements and determine whether it is in our interests to financially contribute.
- A synthesis of ideas was suggested including identifying the impediments to safe discussions about the goals. How high should our stack of measures be? At each yardstick (increment) we should tell the legislature the benefit and costs, otherwise they will not contribute to the funding of these measures.
- Standards and criteria for the first increment, including economic feasibility measures should be developed.

- It would be easier to tell the Board/legislature what the proposal is (CAMP vision), give the mandate to the Department to implement the vision and identify the resources to fund it.
- Metrics to evaluate the benefits of management and use of common language are needed.
- The previous quantitative analysis should be improved upon, by identifying how long it will take to both implement and realize the overall benefit. This will enable the Committee to be clear about where we are going and be realistic about a timeframe to achieve it. This is in contrast to the assumption that management tools can be implemented immediately. It was suggested that any new analysis include a phased implementation schedule.
- A graphic illustration of the increments would be helpful (implementation timeframe, timeline to achieve benefits etc...)
- While we are implementing the first increment, what do you say to the people who want to know about the calls? The Committee needs to examine this issue.

WATER CONSERVATION

Jeff Peterson (Bureau of Reclamation) presented the issue of water conservation and its relationship to the Committee Goal and Objectives.

Committee Discussion

Q: How does the Bureau perceive water conservation activities? **A:** Conservation means a number of different things and very site specific. Clearly, some conservation activities will work against the expressed goal of the Committee. Tools to consider include automation, incentives for irrigators to irrigate only the needed amount of water (use of soil moisture sensors), controlling head gates, and ‘turn-outs’ to eliminate erosion.

Comment: The best soil monitor is a shovel; it is far superior to a soil moisture sensor.

Comment: Conservation that supports the ESPA Goal and Objective will be site specific and dependant on number of factors. One member noted that the discussion has helped change his view that all conservation activities are good and it should always be implemented.

Q: Where would conservation be helpful? **A:** Measures at the pump, crop rotation, soil moisture sensors.

Comment: Power costs have already taken care of conservation for many groundwater users

Q: Where does conservation fit within the management alternative matrix? **A:** One idea is how to conserve water to hold more water within the ESPA and Idaho. Another idea is to conserve water in one location (within the ESPA) for use in another area where it is most needed.

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE MATRIX

The revised management alternative matrix was distributed and briefly discussed. The Committee decided that a series of teleconference calls to discuss management alternatives would be the best way to facilitate revisions to the matrix. An e-mail will be distributed to the Committee regarding available dates and schedules.

BOARD AND LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Jonathan discussed the role of the Committee in the up-coming Board and Legislative briefings. It was noted that the Board and Legislature should hear the Committee's perspective on the overall CAMP process and the initial recommendations. While all Committee members are encouraged to attend, a small number of Committee members will be asked to participate in the legislative briefing(s).

UPCOMING COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEMS

- Fish and Wildlife Issues – opportunities, benefits and potential impacts of a CAMP on fish and wildlife
- Weather Modification – Idaho Power's experience on the Payette and the IDWR contractor, i.e. what is to be studied.
 - **Committee member noted skepticism of weather modification efforts**
- Economic benefits/opportunities
 - **Committee member cautioned that economic studies are based on theory and opinions and that results are often examined through predisposed lenses.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Hazen (Idaho Water Alliance) spoke to the Committee about the importance of ESPA recharge. Hazen expressed interest in the Committee deliberations and noted that he had encountered similar challenges during his years advocating for recharge. He suggested a number of items to facilitate increased recharge including:

- Plan for access to canals, similar to the RFP with canal companies, so that preparedness meets opportunity
- Provide liability coverage for canals providing recharge - flooding and other impacts
- Identification of who is in charge and appropriate staffing to ensure that recharge is implemented.

UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Thursday, February 28, 2008 (10 am – 5 pm)

Idaho State University – 1784 Science Center Dr., 83402 (upstairs multi-purpose room)

Thursday March 27, 2008 – Burley, exact location TBD

Thursday, April 24, 2008 – Rexburg, exact location TBD

Thursday, May 29, 2008 – Location TBD

MEETING ATTENDEES

Advisory Committee Members

1. Dave Parish Idaho Fish and Game
2. Barry Burnell Idaho DEQ
3. Randy MacMillian Clear Springs Foods, Inc
4. Alex LaBeau ID Assoc. of Commerce & Industry
5. Rebecca Casper Land Development
6. Dean Stevenson WD 130-140
7. Tim Deeg IGWA President
8. Will Whelan TNC
9. Lloyd Hicks Burgess Canal CO.
10. Randy Bingham BID
11. Jeff Raybould Freemont-Madison Irrigation District
12. Steve Howser Aberdeen Springfield Canal Company
13. Roger Chase City of Pocatello
14. Lance Clow City of Twin Falls
15. Linda Lemmon IAA/TSWUA
16. Albert Lockwood Surface Water NSCC
17. Dee Reynolds Fall River Electric
18. Max Vaughn Minidoka Co Assessor
19. Kim Goodman Trout Unlimited
20. Steven Serr Bonneville County
21. Craig Evans WD 120
22. Hal Anderson IDWR
23. Rich Rigby Bureau of Reclamation

Other Attendees

24. Jonathan Bartsch - CDR Associates
25. Brian Patton – IDWR

26. Harriet Hensley – Idaho Attorney General’s Office
27. Walt Poole – Idaho Fish and Game
28. Peter Anderson – Trout Unlimited
29. Jon Bowling – Idaho Power
30. David Blew – Idaho Power