

**Grand View-Bruneau Ground Water Management Area
Advisory Committee - Meeting Minutes
1:00PM - February 24, 2021**

WELCOME

Meeting came to order at 1:12pm at the Mountain Home Elks Lodge.

Primary concern: Increasing withdrawals and decreasing amount of water available in the aquifer.
Discuss the importance of a Ground Water Management Area (GWMA).

INTRODUCTIONS/ATTENDEES

Introduction of the Advisory Committee members, their locations, general well info, and what they consider important.

Advisory Committee Members Present:

<p>Chris Black Area: Little Valley Wells Info: pumped and flow Hot water well and farming are important</p>	<p>Sid Erwin Area: West Bruneau Well Info: 7 wells total; 2 of those flow and rest are pumped</p>
<p>Russel Schiermeier <i>Representing: Schiermeier Farms</i> Area: Little Valley Well Info: 4 deep wells; All wells are pumped Irrigating 600 acres</p>	<p>Roy Mink Individual ground water right holder Worked with Erwin Farms Worked to study snails; University of Idaho Hydrogeologist</p>
<p>John Morrison <i>Representing: Grand View City Council</i> Well Info: 2 wells are pumped and used for drinking water</p>	<p>Billy Wolfe Well Info: One Flowing LTG Irrigation well in Grand View</p>
<p>Gene Tindall Area: Sugar Valley Well Info: 2 wells; 1 well is very old</p>	<p>Bill White Area: Oreana Well Info: 2 wells pumped; 2 wells flow but 1 is abandoned and the other no longer flows</p>
<p>Kent Frisch <i>Representing Simplot Co</i> Area: Bruneau Valley Well Info: 15 wells total; 1 flows rest are pumped; 1 well is used for fish propagations</p>	

Members of the Public and Other Interested Parties Present:

<p>Lynn Bachman Area: Bruneau Valley Well Info: Flow wells</p>	<p>Joe Peterson <i>Water Quality Resource Conservationist</i> Soil & Water Conservation Commission Water quality coordinator for Boise office</p>
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Idaho Dept. of Water Resources (IDWR) Staff Present:

<p>Rob Whitney <i>Water Distribution Section Manager</i> IDWR State Office</p>	<p>Tim Luke <i>Water Compliance Bureau Chief</i> IDWR State Office</p>	<p>Erik Boe <i>Ground Water Protection Manager</i> IDWR State Office</p>
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<p>Mike McVay <i>Technical Engineer, Hydrology Section</i> IDWR State Office</p>	<p>Nick Miller <i>Western Region Manager</i> IDWR Western Regional Office</p>	<p>Shilynn Novak <i>Water Resource Agent</i> IDWR Western Regional Office</p>
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Present on Zoom:

Kellie Smith –*Technical Hydrologist Distribution Section; IDWR State Office*

Connie Tharp – Natural Resources Conservation Service Idaho

Ken Unruh – Individual water right holder; 2 wells in Oreana

GENERAL HOUSE KEEPING: Rob Whitney (IDWR)

Meeting Notes

Shilynn will take general notes at each meeting. The meetings will then be posted to the IDWR website for the public to view. The Grand View-Bruneau GWMA website is currently being built and will be available in approximately 3 weeks. Committee members are encouraged to take your own notes from each meeting.

Function of the Committee and Ground Rules

Respect one another. One person should speak at a time. Do not speak over each other and do not interrupt. Bring ideas to solve problems at hand. Keep the meetings producible and keep them on track by remembering the main goals and looking at the bigger picture.

Roles & Responsibilities

- IDWR
 - Provide technical support
 - Provide facilitation
 - Post agenda and other relevant documents
- Members
 - Boots on the ground and local experts
 - They are the actual users and best understand the objectives of what they want in a GWMA
 - They have the knowledge of the real world and can provide insight for what actually occurs beyond conceptual data

Open & Public Meetings

All of these meetings are open to the public. Agenda for scheduled meetings will be posted on the IDWR website.

What are the long term goals?

1. Identify how to get a plan in place.
2. Stabilize and ideally recover ground water levels
3. Comprehensive inventory. A short term goal may be to expand monitoring wells network.

Timelines discussion

Funding for well repairs will likely drive some of the timelines. The types of wells that need repairs and uses can drive funding. This will give a better idea of a deadline that drives the timelines to get projects completed or established.

Another item that may need to be discussed is whether or not the GWMA boundary should be adjusted.

The draft strawman plan outline that Sid wrote up may offer ideas and help initiate discussions. This plan outline will be distributed by Sid for everyone to review and offer input as to what is important for the GWMA.

IDWR has other ground water management plans that can serve as a template or generate ideas. We can bring some examples with us or present some ideas in the future. The ones we will bring are plans for specific problems in specific areas so not all items from the examples will be suitable for the Grand View-Bruneau area.

Determine a long term goal. (rhetorical questions following)

Do you want to focus on recharge or fix wells? Both?

What are the options for alternative surface water supply?

The geographic area drives potential actionable plans. What is doable to meet objectives?

Questions: What do we need to do to manage the water? Are there other areas that are similar to this area with ground water management plans? -- This area is unique. There is limited surface water available and the ground water levels are low. Other areas have more surface water available.

Questions: What does IDWR want to look at? Domestic and stockwater wells? -- Are you concerned about those wells? You should evaluate problems and if they (domestic and stockwater wells) are part of it or if it will help meet an objective. Determine if it is part of the bigger picture and if it works towards part of a goal.

We are concerned about the general volume of water available. -- Managing the resource is a good goal. What types of wells can be used to monitor? Thermal wells versus others.

GWMA PRESENTATION: ERIK BOE (IDWR)

Please see the presentation.

DISCUSSION

Question: Do we include Oreana? -- May expand the GWMA and it depends on the data from that area and what it shows.

Question: Would water right holders in Oreana have a voice here? -- Could hold a public meeting to introduce the idea of them joining and request information from that area may be beneficial.

Question: Is Oreana affecting the Grand View ground water? -- IDWR will review the data and see what it shows.

Old Foreman well is very hot and historic concern in Oreana. -- Mike will review, report, and investigate.

Oreana may need representation. -- Will have to propose new members at a future public meeting.

REVIEW OF GROUND WATER LEVELS AND TRENDS PRESENTATION: MIKE MCVAY (IDWR)

General information below. Review Presentation for more info.

Conceptual Model

Gradient is upwards. The deeper you drill, the hotter it gets.

Snows in the mountains which recharges at the base. Goes down deep, heats up, and comes back up into the sediments. The faults and geology of the area changes how the water flows.

Geothermal Aquifer System vs Cold-Water Aquifer

All mostly hot water and cold water is so small and does not show up on the conceptual model.

Thermal wells vary in depths and temperatures.

Spreads in general area. This is conceptual since there is not much history or data in the area.

Unsure if Oreana is connected.

Location of Well Map

Nothing in Grand View but wells and representation in Bruneau. Not a ton of data available near CJ Strike area. Hard to say if Oreana is affecting the aquifer due to lack of data and wells.

Note the trend in the graphs.

Simplifies: Implies not compartmentalized in multiple, different aquifers.

Describing general wells. Generally consistent.

Outliers are generally cooler and shallower.

For more information, please contact Mike McVay at IDWR State Office.

DISCUSSION

Question: Is there a good flow monitoring device that can handle the heat? -- There should be some out there, but we will look into it.

Question: Are the water level trends statistically significant? -- Yes, they are statistically significant. The trends are based on the highest water level so it does not include pumping. It also goes through a statistical analysis to determine if the trend makes sense.

Question: Do snow packs affect the ground water level? -- Have not looked at snow pack for this area. The snow packs lead to variability in the ground water level.

Question: What is the trend line showing? -- Discussion that also leads to moratoriums, adjudications, etc.

Question: Has all of the ground water been adjudicated? -- Yes, water rights have been adjudicated. Which is a good reason to look at management to avoid another adjudication. Manage now to prevent adjudication.

Discussion about how some areas are subdividing and how domestic wells are going in. Old farm land is being sold with the intent to subdivide into 5-acre lots. What is going to happen with overuse and future population when everyone has their own well? -- Good reason for administration. Water right transfers should be filed by the individual homeowners. This will move the POD from the larger well to their own personal well and divide the current water right that was originally used to irrigate large acres of crop. The same amount of water that was originally used to irrigate 300 acres of crop, is now used for irrigating 300 acres of individual lawns, gardens, etc.

Question: But what happens with all of the domestic wells? They draw up more water when there is a community of subdivisions that have their own well drawing up water for domestic use. -- IDWR cannot enforce the number of domestic wells that go in, but can request that the new owners file a transfer to split their portion of the irrigation water right, because domestic use does not include irrigation of multiple acres. There is an increase of domestic wells but domestic use are excluded for requiring a water right.

All of this could lead to what should be included in the ground water management plan. Knowing the issues and working towards ways to resolve them for the benefit of the aquifer and the users.

SETTING UP NEXT MEETING

Meeting frequencies. Monthly? It depends on the timeline. What should the meeting length be?

Question: What do you need from us? That could help us determine how much time we need. -- It depends on what the GWMA goals are. What do you all want to know?

Question: What do you need? How do we catch up? We are the oldest GWMA, but we don't even have a ground water management plan in place. What are we working towards? -- The committee is an advisory committee and does not need a chair person. It is different than a water district. Determine the issues that you want to address and can apply towards a ground water management plan. IDWR can present some paths to take, but the direction should be determined by the committee members because they are part of the community that is impacted.

Question: Surface water in GWMA's? Examples of who measures surface water? -- Malad GWMA.

Question: The trend shows losing water. A water district may be an idea for the GWMA? -- A water district can be discussed in a future meeting. Wells and seepage measurements are needed for data gathering. Canals that go into the river will help determine seepage. Will need access to take measurements. Weather stations may be helpful and may need funding to get more information.

Grant funding. Connie can do a future meeting about assistance from NRCS. This may help determine where you want to direct the GWMA and the management plan.

This will be a reoccurring meeting. IDWR will return in one month (end of March) then can come back in the fall after harvest season. Now that the issues are on people's radars, they know what to look out for and can start thinking about where they want the GWMA to start moving towards.

Erik will pass contact information to Mike so he can start getting a network of wells together.

The next meeting will be held in Bruneau or Grand View so it can be closer to the attendees' location. The meeting time will depend on availability of a venue.

Plan examples that may be presented: Water Districts, Ground Water Districts, etc. We will discuss what they are which may determine what is appropriate for this area.