

Grand View-Bruneau Ground Water Management Area Advisory Committee - Meeting Minutes

Bruneau Emergency Center
1:00PM - March 31, 2021

WELCOME

Meeting came to order at 1:05pm at the Bruneau Emergency Center – 32531 Belle Avenue, Bruneau, ID

INTRODUCTIONS AND ATTENDANCE

Committee Attendance: Gene Tindall, Ken Unruh, Kent Frisch, Roy Mink, Russel Schiermeier, Sid Erwin

Public Attendees: Lynn Bachmann, Carlos Ensz, Grant Hegerhorst, Sam Ward, Shane Ward

Soil & Water Conservation Commission: Joe Peterson

IDWR: Rob Whitney, Erik Boe, Mike McVay, Nick Miller, Shilynn Novak, Kellie Smith (via Zoom)

APPROVE AGENDA

Discussion was held regarding the revised meeting notice and agenda proposed by Sid Erwin. Sid's notice included specific topics for discussion under "Old Business" a) discuss selecting a chair and vice-chair of the committee; and b) discuss adding Oreana area to GWMA. There were no objections from attendees or AC members so the revised agenda was followed.

OLD BUSINESS

Members reviewed and commented on the minutes/notes from the February 24, 2021 meeting.

The following changes were suggested:

1. Ken Unruh needs to be included in the Advisory Committee members.
 - a. Ken was present on Zoom during the meeting (2-24-21) and was listed under the Present of Zoom section and was not included as a Committee Member.
 - b. Ken lives within the GWMA.
2. For future minutes: Add a section for "Action Items" which will include what needs to be completed and by whom for the next meeting.

The agenda will be approved with those changes.

Organization

Sid proposed the committee consider a chairman, vice-chair, secretary as a way to 1) ensure meeting items reach a consensus during the meetings and 2) have someone who can approach the Department on behalf of the water users. Structure may help but the committee needs to determine the roles and responsibilities for the above described positions.

Question: What is the objective of this? -- Ultimately come up with a Ground Water Management Plan so the Department and users have guidance to address declining ground water levels. Management plans include: 1) Actionable items to reverse declining ground water levels, 2) The necessary data needs to recover declining ground water levels, and 3) Charting a course. It will take time to develop a management plan and it will not happen overnight. Just because there has been no curtailment, does not mean it will not happen. Being proactive now and having a plan in place to avoid future curtailments.

Question: What is the Department's goal? -- The Department's goal is establishing a management plan and taking it one step at a time. The Department wants everyone who uses the water to have a voice.

Expansion of GBGWMA to include Oreana

Mike is investigating and putting together a report with recommendations. IDWR will keep the committee updated as the investigation progresses.

The Collette Well is the oldest well and dates back to the 1950s. There are two other wells that are more recent (less than a decade). Having wells with a history of more than 10 years helps determine long term declines versus annual water level fluctuations.

Question: Can we apply what is going on with GBGWMA to Oreana? -- Expand GWMA boundaries to include Oreana? There are some things to think about such as: How far to expand? What should define the boundary? Topographic basins? How much of Oreana is considered a good representation for the area? Residents from Oreana are encouraged to attend meetings.

Answer: Because additional data will be needed to propose expanding the GWMA, it was recommended that the focus stay within the existing designated area for now.

In addition a hydrogeologic investigation, IDWR would hold a public meeting in Oreana to discuss expansion of the GBGWMA and seek public comment.

Foreman Well Discussion: Try to manage it independent of the GWMA.

REVIEW OF GWMA MANAGEMENT PLANS PRESENTATION: ERIK BOE (IDWR)

Erik presented the ground water management plan for the Lewiston Plateau GWMA as an example of what a plan looks like. He would like to have an outline ready for the next meeting.

Erik wants to find out what is important to the water users in the GBGWMA to work out a rough draft of a ground water management plan.

IDWR Website for the GBGWMA: www.IDWR.idaho.gov > *Water Rights > GWMA's > Designated Areas*

Note: Not all GWMA's have management plans in place.

The Advisory Committee website has all the information and materials presented during the meetings.

(Zoom was ended here at 2:18pm as there were no online attendees.)

DATA NEEDS OF GBGWMA PRESENTATION: MIKE MCVAY (IDWR)

Withdrawal rates from the individual water user is good information. Having more information provided will lead to a more accurate estimation how much water is being withdrawn from the aquifer. Exact is expensive, but estimations by pivot output is valuable information. An estimation may be better than having no information.

- *Aquifer Water Budget*
 - $\text{Inflow} - \text{Outflow} = \text{Change in Storage}$
 - If *inflow* is what recharges the aquifer (precipitation, surface water seepage, etc) and *outflow* is the withdrawal from the aquifer (ground water pumping for farming), then we need to quantify the imbalance to determine a plan.
- *Precipitation (Inflow)* -- The last meeting Mike was unsure if there were enough weather stations, but there are enough climate stations. Mike plans to use PRISM for precipitation data since it uses weather stations.
 - The aquifer water budget is out of balance. Since it is out of balance, we need to know how big the imbalance is. You only have so much water before you run out and cannot withdraw any more.
- *Groundwater Diversions (Outflow)* -- Need to determine/quantify how much water is being used to irrigate.
- *Springs (Outflow)* -- Determining how to collect discharge data. Should measurements from springs be skipped?
- *Streams (Inflow and/or Outflow)* -- Spot measurements may help since some creeks dry up.
- *Groundwater Monitoring (Wells)* -- Quantity of outflow will determine how much to start saving to avoid declining.

Discussion:

Oreana is similar, but it is unclear if it is part of the same hydrologic system and problem.

Question: What does the Department have on file? Can we get an inventory of current water rights? We can start comparing the actual irrigated acres versus what is recorded on paper. Maybe some water rights are not used to their fullest extent. The inventory will see what the Department has on file and give us somewhere to start.

Review the paper record then have boots on the ground inventory to verify.

COMMENT

Sid volunteered to take comments and questions in private and when the meeting is not in session.

Having Connie (Tharp) attend a meeting to discuss monetary aid for the water users is something that the committee members may find beneficial. A management plan is one of the necessary items for assistance.

NEXT MEETING

Topics for Discussions

Draft management plan, discuss IDWR paper inventory, and discuss committee organization

ACTION ITEMS

Committee

- Consider if they want a chair, vice chair, and/or secretary and determine roles and responsibilities for each position. Agenda item for next meeting.
- Determine what long-term goals they would like to accomplish that works towards reversing or stabilizing the declining ground water levels.

IDWR

- Erik will come up with a general outline to work towards a draft of a ground water management plan.
- Come up with a paper inventory of water rights within the GWMA.

Next GBGWMA Meeting: **1:00PM - April 28, 2021, Bruneau Emergency Center**