

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

Bruneau Emergency Center
1:00PM - December 01, 2021

WELCOME

Meeting came to order at 1:03pm at the Bruneau Emergency Center – 32531 Belle Avenue, Bruneau, ID

INTRODUCTIONS AND ATTENDANCE

Committee Attendance: Gene Tindall, Kent Frisch, Roy Mink, Sid Erwin, Bill White, Billy Wolfe,

Public Attendees: Greg and Lisa Callen, Grant Hegerhorst*, Byron Jones*

Soil & Water Conservation Commission: Joe Peterson

IDWR: Rob Whitney, Erik Boe, Laura McSherry, Kellie Smith*, Tim Luke*, Scott Storms*

NRCS Idaho: Connie Tharp*, Maureen Pepper*

*Attended via Zoom

OLD BUSINESS

Members reviewed and commented on the minutes/notes from the meeting on April 28, 2021.

1. *Committee Organization* – non-formal committee; decisions based on discussion and consensus
2. *Expansion of GBGWMA to include Oreana* – addressing existing area and wells first; will revisit Oreana area in the future if needed
3. *Well Inventory* - previewed well locations and data within thresholds on digital record and map; reviewed in detail later in the meeting

REVIEW RECENT GBGWMA WELL INVENTORY (DIGITAL RECORD & MAP)

- During the week of November 15, IDWR staff collected well data and photos using the Survey 123 app. Notice was mailed to active water right holders prior to inventory.
 - Survey outcomes:
 - 145 total wells (irrigation of 5.0 acres and greater & other uses 0.24 cfs and greater)
 - 125 wells surveyed
 - 20 wells were abandoned or mislocated
 - 10 flowing artesian wells
 - 2 of the flowing artesian wells were leaking to the extent of needing repair
- Main objectives of the survey: 1) verify well location, 2) document well conditions, 3) identify maintenance requirements, 4) collect photos.

Discussion

- Less than 10% of wells surveyed were flowing at the time of survey. Heavy summer use impacts off-season flow. Most wells begin to flow in March/April with deeper wells increasing in pressure in June. Multiple committee members suggested the completion of an additional survey during the spring.
- Several well pictures were observed and discussed, particularly one leaking geothermal well noted as being ~180° and flowing at ~75-100 gal/min.
- Survey questions may have been subjective. Rob stated artesian well depths are conventionally below 50-60ft in depth.

Future Considerations/Outcomes

- Build well portfolio that includes survey data with cross-referenced well log reports and other pertinent info.
- Correlate well logs with gps locations.
- Designate “critical” wells as more in-depth data is collected to help strategize maintenance efforts.

REVIEW DRAFT OUTLINE OF GBGWMA MANAGEMENT PLAN (Erik Boe)

- Hard copies of the draft outline were made available at the meeting. The current draft represents previous comments/additions made and examples of applicable text from other current groundwater management plans.
- Objective of review: 1) Determine what sections to prioritize, 2) Establish future timeline of presented content.

Areas of Focus

- II. *Area Hydrogeology* - Add updated research or publications
- VI. *Water Use Management and Implementation Strategies*
 - A. *Expansion of Groundwater Monitoring Program*
 - Current network is limited in some areas. Monitoring wells in Bruneau area are sufficient. More monitoring wells are needed in the Grand View area to satisfy data gaps.
 - Groundwater levels are monitored manually with tape. Monitors/meters acquired from funding could improve database quality.
 - The committee would like an update from Mike McVay on the proposed monitoring network expansion.
 - B. *New Appropriations*
 - Low Temperature Geothermal water rights require more stringent review and approval.
 - Many questions were raised on the topic including right expansion, transfers, limitations, new developments, water supply bank, and “stacking” water rights.
 - The committee would like Nick Miller to present and address questions on rights and new appropriations.
 - D. *Water District*
 - Rob Whitney recommended creating a water district to manage the area.
 - Creating a water district from conception to implementation is ~18 months in duration. The process requires input from public meetings.
 - Roy Mink believes that wells on the northside of the Snake River are connected to the aquifer system. Mike will be asked to clarify those well impacts at the next meeting.
 - The committee would like Rob to give a presentation on Water Districts.
 - E. *Consumptive Use Volume Reductions*
 - Users will be asked to use practical knowledge to improve efficiencies.
 - If Water District formed, elected watermaster manages volume mechanisms and if needed, regulates flow by priority date.
 - Water smart grants can be used to incentivize efficiency by funding telemetry and flow meters.
 - Connie Tharp and Maureen Pepper can provide additional insight on cost share options.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Q: Where was the second well that was observed leaking during the survey? Several committee members

A: Rob and Erik hope to identify that well from the survey data in the future.

- Discussion on underground leaks from older wells that have not been cased or sealed consistent with current standards. Cracks around casing or improper installation can cause vertical movement of hot water into the cold water aquifer. Rob stated that initial focus of managing water use output should be on consumption rather than subsurface waste. The cost to identify and repair leaky wells is substantial. Managing consumption has more immediate impacts and is less difficult.

Q: Will increased domestic use/rights negatively impact the GBGWMA? Bill White

A: Erik and Rob expressed how increased domestic usage is a concern statewide. They both explained statute on domestic water rights and the cost benefit of single and community wells.

Q: How long will it take to complete the groundwater management plan? Bill White

A: If primary questions are answered the plan could be created during the upcoming irrigation season. Erik Boe

Q: Can an updated draft of the Management Plan be provided prior to each meeting? Roy Mink

A: Erik will implement that practice going forward.

- Russell Schiermeier's email comments were read by Erik which mentioned (1) funding pools for meters by the NRCS and (2) options for mitigating water concerns, other than mandates.
- The groundwater management information will be posted here: www.IDWR.idaho.gov > Water Rights > GWMA's > Designated Areas. The Advisory Committee website has the information, materials, and drafted GWM plan presented during meetings. Revisions to the plan will be designated after comments are submitted.

NEXT MEETING

Topics for Discussions

Groundwater monitoring update, water rights, and funding.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Tentative Topics for Discussions

Water districts

ACTION ITEMS

IDWR

- Mike to present groundwater monitoring updates and expansion.
- Nick to present water right information related to GWMA's.
- Connie and/or Maureen to present on funding guidelines and programs that incentivize efficiency.

Next GBGWMA Meeting:

1:00PM - January 13, 2022, Bruneau Emergency Center