

North Platte Roundtable Meeting Minutes, 07-24-2007
7-9 pm, Parks District USFS Conference Room
Minutes submitted by Curran Trick.

Members/Guests Present

Deb Alpe
Hal Hagen
Paula Belcher
John Rich
Kent Crowder
Tom Hackleman
Mike Allnutt
Dave Meyring
Ty Wattenberg
Dirk Ramsey

Kent Crowder called the meeting to order.

There was a change to the minutes: Waskom was spelled wrong in the 06-26-07 notes. (Pointed out by Deb Alpe).

John Rich made a motion made to accept the minutes from 06-26-07. Ty Wattenberg seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted.

Kent reported that Eric Hecox will be here next time (August meeting) to talk about the non-consumptive needs assessment procedures and suggested steps to be undertaken by the roundtable.

Non-Consumptive Needs Workshop report:

By Hal Hagen and Ty Wattenberg

Hal: Generally they had put together a set of criteria for everyone to agree on about how to do a non-consumptive needs assessment, for all the roundtables have cohesiveness. They came up with a set of criteria, and how that criteria could be implemented in terms of doing needs assessments. They wanted to see all the roundtables have their non-consumptive assessments done by the end of 2008. As far as information, a lot of GIS data is being compiled, and information is being compiled. There is a lot of information out there.

Other criteria were set up that roundtables could assess: endangered species, goldwater, etc. There was talk about places where needs assessments don't need to be done, and a set of criteria for those. Example: where CWCB has in-stream flows.

Ty: They had a lengthy wish list, and they want to keep most of the water in the river.

Hal: there are 2 workgroups: Non-consumptive and consumptive, statewide. They are hoping that the consumptive use group can look at non-consumptive needs assessments for projects, and if the project matches both needs, then the project can happen.

Kent: Eric Hecox is going to come up for the August roundtable meeting, and he will talk about a lot of this same stuff, and also about prioritizing. It will be driven by this roundtable. It will be a state template, a common-technical platform. Nicole from CDM was supposed to be here for this meeting, but she had scheduling conflicts so Eric Hecox will make a presentation to the roundtable in August..

Hal: It was very clear that a lot of needs assessments for the various basins are dramatically different.

Ty: Yes, we definitely don't want a blanket approach.

Hal: Arkansas River has lots of information, recreation, environmental, etc. They have a lot of GIS data. I don't know if ours is going to be like that. We don't have much to worry about in terms of being dictated to, except for this common technical platform.

Kent listed off some of the various prioritization parameters such as goldwater fisheries, in-stream flows, natural environment, etc. These kinds of things are what you consider in a non-consumptive needs assessment.

All of the meeting minutes and slideshow presentations were sent to Hal (they were too large to printout for handouts), and he can forward it to anyone who wants it, just send him an email at: **aquatic@aquaticalt.com**.

The consumptive workshop is August 1st, John Rich is still "volunteered" to go, as long as no one else wants to.

Hal: last thing about the workshop: statewide GIS data is available online, but he couldn't get it to work very well. He thinks it's on the CWCB website.

Kent: Trout Unltd, CO div of Wildlife, etc, also have information. You can't see a lot of detail in the data unless you blow it up to look at it.

Kent: Maybe next month we can download some of that information for when Eric comes here.

Hal: decision-making process is flowcharted, and they do give you a decision making criteria.

Deb: Can CDM help us with our assessment or not?

Ty: They give you guidelines, but it's up to the roundtable.

Kent: They aren't going to tell you, the roundtables have to set their priorities.

Kent: when they first started talking about this, and a statewide common technical platform, there were some groups saying no you're not going to dictate. Now it is

clarified that it is up to the roundtables. The state will provide data and information, but not tell the roundtables what to do.

Criteria and Guidelines Committee report:

By Deb Alpe, John Rich, and Paula Belcher

Deb: We built on our conversation from last time. Paula had shared the CO basin techniques. Every criterion is listed on the distributed handout. Deb took CO's chart and put our information in it. This roundtable talked about a ranking system in case there were several grants at a time to consider—she decided to put a star in one of the columns, and rate the project's strength level as 1-3 according to category. That would give a way for the roundtable to further refine selecting. Also made a column for other North Platte basin-specific criteria to consider.

Paula: Deb did a good job putting this together

Deb: CO basin had a guideline on when the grant applications would be due which is in-sync with the CWCB deadlines. She had a handout for that. We might want to think about if we would have to approve a grant 60 days before CWCB, do we need to schedule 30 additional days so we have time to consider grants? Will that delay us or not? That question needs to be decided. We need to articulate a schedule that makes sense.

Kent: we should have the applications considered preceding the 60 days.

Deb: But what about the 30 day window? CO has a 90 Day window. Paula said they don't follow it to the letter in some cases, however.

Kent: if we get the applications at the roundtable meeting that is 60 days prior to the CWCB, that should be adequate.

Kent: If someone can get a grant application to us prior to the 60 days, we ought to be able to make it happen.

Hal: So would we have to decide the application on the day of the meeting that we receive it?

Kent: I think anyone who submits would not wait until the day we have the meeting, they will probably get it to us ahead of time. Maybe we should say the applications need to be presented to us 10 days before the basin meeting held 60 days prior to the application deadline. At least 10 days so we can circulate the apps before the meeting.

(Some members think it might be challenging to do it that way, some don't). The issue wasn't voted on.

John Rich made a pending motion at the last meeting (June) to accept the criteria and guidelines with North Platte specific ranking system. He brought up the motion again. Dirk seconded. Motion passed to accept the criteria and guidelines as they are and as the committee has determined them.

Water Needs Assessment Committee:

North Platte water resource planning model was given out by Kent. He thinks this document will take some time to look through. It's a detailed work plan for a North Platte Decision Support System. It's about 125,000 dollars worth of work. It's being funded by the CWCB. Ray Alvarado has held preliminary discussions with Kent and Carl Trick II. Kent said that if the members have issues with the document content, let him know. The resource planning model will be done through a contract with CWCB and Jackson County. No one knows how the money will flow yet. Consulting firms will probably send an invoice to the county, or CWCB might send the county the money. The county may charge a small administrative overhead fee for the handling of this project. This is a fairly in-depth modeling system; it will be calibrated and tested. We will have to proof everything.

Dave Meyring: Who will do the work? CWCB staff?

Kent: probably Leonard Rice Engineering. There are task descriptions and the cost at the end of the handout. Not sure who all will do all the work.

Dave: Will this primarily be useful to a division engineer and water commissioners?

Kent: Yes, but it will help us also, non-consumptive and consumptive.

Dave: What part of this coattails on to the S. Platte [decision support]?

Kent: The basic model, templates, crop coefficients. But it will be unique to North Park. S. Platte was the model, it's based on their template, but it's just the documentation template.

Kent: As we get into this, we may want to come in for a basin account application to refine the irrigated acreage information, to bring it up to 2005. That may cost 50 to 60 thousand dollars, but compared to Colorado study it's not as costly.

Kent asked everyone to look over the documents. Also, everyone please try to find photographs to put on the IBCC Website. Please give them to Curran by the 1st of August.

Kent got an email from Greg Kernohan of Ducks Unlimited, but he couldn't download the attachments. Kent will send them to the roundtable by email or print. It's a project submitted to the S. Platte roundtable for funding through the statewide basin account. The proposal involves construction of several re-charge projects that will be used by SPWRAP to meet their water demands. These projects will provide re-charge credit that will eventually benefit the North Platte Basin. Greg is asking for a letter of support from the Roundtable to Mr. Rick Brown at CWCB. The proposal was approved by the S. Platte roundtable on July 19, 2007.

Kent: By the next meeting (August 28) we should be in a position to make a recommendation of whether or not to support this project and supply a letter or not. He thinks it's a project similar to the Tamarack project. It's groundwater recharge or retiming.

Hal: How would we get the re-charge credits Greg mentioned?

Kent: We are part of SPWRAP. SPWRAP is covering our existing water depletions. The USFWS and the other states don't care how we meet our obligations. And tamarack is half what it needs to be. SPWRAP would look for recharge activities (like this), that could be funded through 179 that would help Colorado meet the obligations to the downstream states.

Hal: But not specifically North Platte obligations?

Kent: It could be that if we would have a new water related activity, maybe one of these could help offset that mitigation. DU might be doing something that could help us get some credits. S. Platte sees that this project will help them.

Deb: What was Greg talking about when he said we should access SPWRAP money at the last meeting?

Kent: If SPWRAP saw a project that N. Platte could do here that could also help the state overall, and that meets the Platte river recovery, SPWRAP might put money in.

Kent discussed how SPWRAP was created.

There was discussion about the Tamarack project, and other recharge projects to get water into the Platte River system. Dave M talked about how it isn't quite a recharge project, but a retiming of flow for groundwater.

There was also talk about the alluvial aquifers and how by irrigating, we are essentially "recharging" these aquifers. Hal wondered if we could use that same logic to increase the number of irrigated acres allowed in this basin through recharge credit. Ty wondered if we could get more reservoir storage as well. It might be possible, but it depends on what you use the reservoir for. There was discussion about reservoir storage, and the 17,000 acre feet storage limit.

Hal: Do we know how much water is stored in the alluvial aquifers in the area?

Kent: We probably don't know, we might be able to predict it with diversion records and return flow.

Hal knows of a lot of aquifers that are documented in North Park, he has seen some of the maps. He thinks you could calculate how much water they have by using acreage and depth calculations maybe.

There was more discussion about aquifers. Our aquifers are all exposed, as opposed to other ones around the state that are closed, and they also are documented with how much water is in them.

We've had these arguments before in the basin. All of the waters in exposed alluvial valleys are directly tied to the river system. If you take water out somewhere and put it into those alluvial gravels, water will come back to the river eventually. If we are going to store for wildlife, recreation, etc., those projects will have to be mitigated, and they may or may not be considered a recharge.

The discussion ended with how waters can be measured in alluvial aquifers.

Other business?

If anyone wants to go to the groundwater policy workshop, Kent shared the info. If you need more info, contact Kent.

Kent will try to re-schedule Kelly Elder to come and speak about forest health and water yield.

Dave moved to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: August 28, 2007