

Integrated Management Plan Stakeholders Meeting

Twin Platte Natural Resources District

March 19, 2007

Stakeholders present: Phil Armstrong, Don Colvin, Lisa Dominisse, Mike Drain, Jim Goeke, Steve Krajewski, Tina Kurtz, Frank Kwapnioski, Dudley Oltmans, Roric Paulman, Robert Petersen, Page Peterson, Dennis Schilz, Kenneth Schilz, Jerry Steinke, Mike Svoboda, Steve Van Boening, Joe Wahlgren, T.J. Walker, Jerry Weaver, Mike Wheeler, Robert Wiseman.

Stakeholders absent (excused): Jim Hawks, Marion Kroeker, Jim Meismer, Doug Teaford.

Stakeholders absent (unexcused): Burdette Cooley.

Resource People: Ann Dimmitt, Kent Miller.

The Stakeholders Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. CDT

Announcements and Presentations

Kent Miller reported that a groundwater modeler has been hired. Kevin Spelts will begin working in late April. Joint training has been planned for Kevin and another modeler hired by the NRDs in the Panhandle. Kent also discussed the last COHYST meeting where it was reported that the shortage in the river post-1997 ranges from 29,000 to 39,000 af. At this point it is unknown how much of the shortage is due to post-1997 development in the TPNRD. The COHYST tech committee is planning to have the information as to the amount of the shortage from each NRD in the basin within the next 30 to 60 days. The COHYST sponsors are considering the addition of a surface water component to the COHYST groundwater model. Central Platte NRD has explored hiring a consultant to complete a surface water component for just Dawson County, but will hold off on selecting a consultant pending rapid response by the COHYST sponsors. If COHYST cannot get the information in place in a timely manner and Central Platte NRD goes ahead with hiring a consultant, TPNRD may join them and expand the consultant's work beyond Dawson County. A decision about adding the surface water component for the entire area will be made at either the April 2 or April 17 COHYST meetings.

Report from Stakeholder Subcommittee

The subcommittee of the Stakeholder group (Jim Meismer, Frank Kwapnioski, Roric Paulman, Joe Wahlgren, Jim Goeke, Ken Schilz) met on March 15. In light of this new development with COHYST and the hiring of a TPNRD groundwater modeler, the subcommittee recommends that TPNRD postpone hiring a consultant at this time. It may, however, be useful to use a consultant on a pay-as-you-go basis to help bring the modeler up to speed and assist with creation of a water budget. The subcommittee will continue to meet to discuss that possibility and recommend that Stakeholders continue with discussion of different management scenarios.

Mike Drain expressed concern about waiting for COHYST before selecting management tools to recommend believing that tools could be selected and put in place immediately and then adjusted with new information.

Other Stakeholders worry that this might lead us down a path like the Republican River is following and suggested we continue our plan to look at all possible management practices before we make a recommendation.

Mike has a written document detailing concerns and expectations of Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District regarding implementation of controls. The document will be distributed to Stakeholders with the meeting notes for discussion at the next Stakeholder's meeting

Discussion of IMP Management Scenarios (Tools)

The group discussed whether “tools” was the right word to use and decided that Management Scenarios or Practices would be more accurate. So the term “tools” will not be used going forward.

Frank Kwapnioski presented a brief program called “One Nebraska-One Water” created by the Nebraska Water Resources Association and The Groundwater Foundation with funding provided by the Water for the West Foundation. It clarified the difference between water consumption and use and included the following facts:

- o 1 million* acre feet of surface water flow into the state of Nebraska.
- o 8 million* acre feet of surface water flow out of Nebraska.
- o 90 million* acre feet fall on the state as precipitation.
- o 90%* of precipitation is consumed at the surface through plant transpiration and direct evaporation.
- o Approximately 5-8%, or about 8 million acre feet, runs off and flows out of Nebraska annually.
- o Approximately 2-5% is available as recharge to groundwater in the basin.

Discussion of possible management scenarios began. Stakeholders were asked to define the management scenario and then offer pros and cons of this practice.

Allocations: One definition offered is limitation of the amount of irrigated water allowed per irrigated acre. A more general definition is the limitation of consumptive use of water. Traditionally this is done with water meters. Currently, there are allocations of surface water. Some think allocations may be unavoidable in order to achieve required reductions. Others contend that rather than being over-allocated we may be under-managed. The Upper Republican uses allocations, but not in isolation. They are used in conjunction with pooling (grouping allocations within a floating township), transfers (point of use transferred to another location) and carryovers of unused amounts.

PROS	CONS of ALLOCATIONS
Easily understood by most people	If allocations are set too high, there is no reduction in consumptive use
There is a track record – Allocations have been utilized before	Promotes a regulatory arm that may be unaffordable – Expensive in this district to police and maintain given the large number of wells
Technically easy to adjust – moving allocation up or down	This is an indirect way to address consumption so it is probably inaccurate and potentially unfair
May encourage more efficiency	Some consumptive uses would be missed with this method – like sub-irrigated acres and evaporation
Can vary allocations by location or time (e.g. upstream, closer to a stream, during drought) which may be seen as a “con” by individual producers	Users can adjust their operation to more efficiently use water so you may not get the savings expected, which would require continued adjustment of allocations to get the desired reduction in consumptive use.
If all parties (including municipalities) are included, it can help point everyone in the same direction	Process doesn’t allow for variation in precipitation unless use is calculated on a multi-year basis
	Allocation level becomes a target for producers to use ALL of it and a guessing game as to how to use the water effectively
	Allocations alone only measure withdrawals – not deposits – so they don’t take into account the entire water budget
	Ignore crop and soil type – unfairly treat different consumptive uses

	Only focused on a small part of the water supply – the part that is pumped
	Negative economic impact on entire region when acres are dried up
	Difficult to come up with a fair allocation for unique uses
	Need to factor in consumptive use
	Historically allocations have been arbitrarily selected based on how much water is needed with no determination of available supply

Future Meetings

We will continue with the process of defining and discussing management scenarios in the order listed below. Stakeholders should be prepared to voice their thoughts and concerns so we can quickly move through the list.

- Crop rotation
- Irrigation scheduling
- Groundwater metering
- Acreage reductions
- Well spacing
- Prevent or limit expansion of consumptive use
- Require use of best management practices
- Mandatory education
- Regulate transfers
- Moratorium on well permits
- Conditioning of permits
- Incentive programs (CREP, EQIP)
- Retiming projects
- New storage developments
- Water banking
- Vegetation management
- Pooling

Meeting Schedule

All meeting times are from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. CDT unless otherwise noted. Future meetings:

7:00 p.m	April 16 – Quality Inn
<u>7:30 p.m.</u>	May 21 – Holiday Inn
7:00 p.m	June 18 – Holiday Inn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. CST.