

Integrated Management Plan Stakeholders Meeting

Twin Platte Natural Resources District

December 18, 2006

Stakeholders present: Phil Armstrong, Don Colvin, Tina Kurtz, Jim Meismer, Dudley Oltmans, Roric Paulman, Robert Petersen, Page Peterson, Kenneth Schilz, Jerry Steinke, Doug Teaford, Steve Van Boening, Joe Wahlgren, T.J. Walker, Mike Wheeler, Robert Wiseman.

Stakeholders absent (excused): Burdette Cooley, Lisa Dominisse, Jim Hawks, Steve Krajewski, Marion Kroeker, Frank Kwapnioski, Dennis Schilz, Mike Svoboda, Jerry Weaver.

Stakeholders absent (unexcused): Jim Goeke.

Resource People: Kent Miller, Ann Dimmitt

The Stakeholders Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. CDT.

Announcements and Presentations

Tina Kurtz read remarks made by Governor Heineman at the December 15 Republican River Basin NRD Retreat. He said that even when the drought ends, water use will continue to be an issue requiring a balanced, sustainable framework for water use. A collaborative, cooperative effort will be required to lower consumptive use to meet expected allocation under the Republican River Compact and to offset depletions to the Platte River since 1997. The Republican River Compact is different from the Platte River Cooperative Agreement in that we can't withdraw from the Republican River Compact or pay Kansas to settle obligations. They don't want money; they want the water they're entitled to. We could be short as much as 200,000 acre feet by year-end 2007 and must hit targets for water use for a number of years to insure compliance with the Compact. To comply, a combination of tools will likely be used including management of invasive vegetation, better use of surface water supplies, increased participation in CREP and EQIP and reduced consumptive use. Sustainable water policy depends on reducing consumptive use of water in over-appropriated basins and reaching a balance between competing interests for water. The governor supports implementation of LB962, requiring cooperation between the state and NRDs with input from stakeholders. He will encourage the University of Nebraska to find ways to maximize use of available water with research in drought-resistant crops and other high-value crops requiring less irrigation that can be used for ethanol. It will be a challenge to fund water management programs as the state is unlikely to pay for 100% of the solution. The governor will propose that a Water Cash Fund be established to begin setting aside money to implement LB 962 and work toward the goals of the Platte River Cooperative agreement. NRDs will have a responsibility for regulation.

Tina shared DNR's proposal for maintaining compliance with 5-year rolling averages in the Republican River basin: A 15% reduction in pumping of upland wells and a 50% reduction in quick response wells. DNR would also like to see new IMP plans in place by August of 2007.

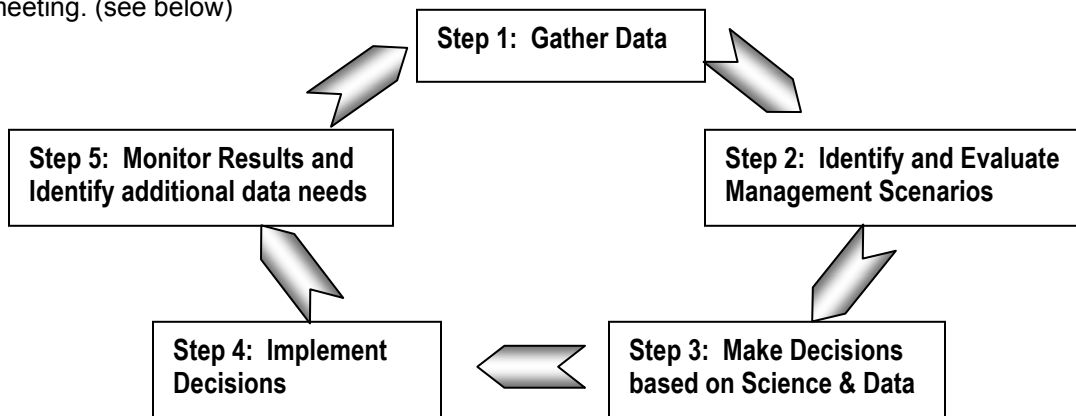
Tina also reported on the Overappropriated Basin-wide meeting. Jim Cook plans to write a statement that each NRD will be responsible for calculating and managing back to 1997 levels. NRDs expect the state to uphold their obligation to offset depletions with cash or water projects (which was their understanding throughout the LB 962 negotiations). **Jim Meismer** added that in a meeting with the governor last week, affected NRDs contended they don't have the tax base to meet these requirements. After lengthy discussion the Governor agreed that the state and NRDs will have to work together to arrive at the offset obligation for the period specified and that it would take time to get everyone on the same page. Tina will bring Jim Cook's comments to the next meeting but reminded stakeholders that he has always prefaced his comments with the phrase "if the legislature will allocate the funds."

Kent Miller reported on activities for determining the amount of new development that has occurred since July 1, 1997 that must be mitigated by the State of Nebraska as required by the Cooperative Agreement for the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program. He said that figures are being developed for the amount of water that must be mitigated over time rather than only looking at the new irrigated acres. He reported that the Cooperative Agreement requires that mitigation begin by the State of Nebraska in 2008.

There was also discussion about leadership issues at DNR. Attorney Jim Cook, who is very knowledgeable and has been working on these water issues for 10 years, is scheduled to retire March 2007 and DNR still has not filled the Director position.

IMP Tools

At the last meeting there was discussion regarding dissatisfaction with the process being used to identify tools. As an alternative, Stakeholders were asked to identify tools they would support for each objective, or tools that could be used in a 5-step planning concept suggested by Stakeholder Frank Kwapnioski at the last meeting. (see below)



An expanded outline of this 5-step process was presented. (In box below and on next page)

Step 1: Gather Data

- A. Water Budget
 - 1. Water Supplies
 - a. Precipitation
 - b. Groundwater inflow
 - c. Surface water inflow
 - 2. Water Demands
 - a. Water consumption quantified and located
 - i. Agricultural
 - ii. Industrial
 - iii. Municipal
 - iv. Domestic
 - b. Water leaving the basin
 - i. Surface water outflow
 - ii. Groundwater outflow
 - iii. Evaporation
 - iv. Evapotranspiration
 - v. Other Sinks
- B. Hydrogeologic Framework
 - 1. Water Sources and Locations
 - a. Aquifer properties
 - b. Surface water infrastructure
 - 2. Groundwater-Surface water connectivity (Determine relationships of water consumption based on location to stream flows.)
 - a. Geology

Step 2: Identify and evaluate management scenarios (include estimating costs)

- A. Identify additions to the water budget supply
 - 1. Water Import
 - 2. Deep Aquifer Sources
- B. Improve water use efficiencies from existing water budget supply
 - 1. Water Accounting
 - a. Determine accounting system for water consumption
 - b. Develop baselines for agriculture, municipalities and industry
 - c. Develop relationships for water consumption by location to changes in stream flow
 - d. Develop system to allow for credits or transfer of reduced consumption (one example is a water bank)

2. Conjunctive Management – projects that utilize surface water supplies, surface water storage, groundwater storage and recharge opportunities
 - a. Recharge projects
 - b. Extraction projects
3. Retiming
- C. Reduce diversions
 1. Allocations
 2. Acreage Reductions
- D. Increase useable supply
 1. Groundwater Storage
 2. Surface Water Storage
 3. Evaporation Management (irrigated and non-irrigated acres)
 - a. Crop rotation in association with eco-fallow, minimum/no till farming
 - b. Application of polymers directly or through center pivots
 - c. Other soil cover processes that reduce evaporation without effecting yield
 4. Evapotranspiration Management
 - a. Alternative cropping
 - b. Phreatophyte management

Step 3: Make decisions based on science and data

- A. Define sustainability
 1. Determine difference between present levels of consumption and sustainable levels
- B. Determine fully appropriated level of development
 1. Allocate water budget to specific uses and locations
 - a. Downstream
 - b. Water rights
 - c. Groundwater use
 - d. Groundwater recharge

Step 4: Implement decisions (estimate costs)

Step 5: Monitor results and identify additional data needs (Return to step one)

Stakeholders added the following ideas for tools within the framework of this 5-step process or in support of previously agreed upon objectives:

Step 1: Gather Data

- Network of weather stations with the ability to measure precipitation
- Measure and publish groundwater levels on an annual basis
- Expand the network of observation wells
- Determine historically how much water was available from precipitation and ground and surface water flows to establish a baseline and put all districts on a level playing field.
- Determine the consumptive use pre-development and whether there has been an increase or decrease in consumptive use.
- Verify increase in irrigated acres, then decide if our objective is to decrease the acres developed since 1997 or keep the irrigated acres viable (for tax purposes) but change consumption.

Step 2: Identify and evaluate management scenarios (include estimating costs)

- Well spacing
- Metering wells
- Use CREP to take acres out of production – must decrease water used
- Farm for water: CRP coverage sprayed to achieve no consumptive use. Federal dollars are tied to habitat conservation. How do we fund this?
- Assign consumptive use value to each property and let owners decide how to meet this consumptive use value. This would likely require metering. The downsides of metering are costs associated with this and the fact that the set value may be viewed as a target rather than a limit so reduction in use may not be encouraged.

- Identify and fund three or four pilot projects to test ways to reduce water use. (For example, timers which shut down during high evaporation periods or stripping CRP to increase recharge or run-off.) Evaluation by Game and Parks, municipalities, etc.
- Different crops that can be used for ethanol that don't have high water needs. How do we encourage this from a cash basis?
- Manage the six months outside of the cropping period. (For example, don't feed corn stalks, or use no-till processes)
- Use cropping reports rather than meters. Submit plan annually to NRD and factor in consumptive use. Include off-season uses.
- Reduce consumptive use from invasive plants
- Look to other states for ideas.

OBJECTIVES:

Explore new sources of water.

- Hydrologic analysis of South Platte River (Colorado compact).
- 3-Brick Project: North Platte River enlargement of Pathfinder

Reach and maintain fully appropriated status of the total water supply in the District.

- Replace end guns with standard sprinkler

Strategy for upcoming meeting

Frank Kwapnioski will provide a more in-depth explanation of the 5-step planning implementation process. Stakeholders will be asked to offer additional ideas for tools that could be used in each step of the process. Our goal will be to arrive at a comprehensive list of acceptable tools for each step and prioritize how these tools should be utilized in an integrated management plan.

Future Meetings

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

7:00 p.m	January 29 – Quality Inn
<u>7:30 p.m</u>	February 26 – Quality Inn
7:00 p.m	March 19 – Quality Inn
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 approximately 9:10 p.m. CDT.