

**Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership  
Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning  
Stakeholder Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 6th, 2017**

**Union County OSU Extension Office**

**10507 N McAlister Rd. LaGrande, OR**

**ATTENDANCE:** Steve Parrett, Kyle Carpenter, Jed Hassinger, Dana Kurtz, Darrin Walenta, Scott Hartell, Brett Moore, Tim Bailey, Connor Stone, Anton Chiono, Smita Mehta, Jim Webster, Rodger Huffman, Jeff Oveson, Gary Miller, Larry Larson, Brett Rudd, Maren Peterson, Tony Malmberg, Curt Ricker, Kathleen Cathey,

**Via Computer conference call in:** Margaret Matter, ODA

Union County Planning Director, Scott Hartell, opened the meeting at 5:00 pm. He explained that Commissioner Donna Beverage is in Washington DC this week, so he will be facilitating the meeting this evening.

**I. Welcome & Introductions**

- A. Scott introduced himself, welcomed everyone present and asked what the Stakeholders thought about this room. He shared that they are looking for a permanent home for this meeting. Scott also asked about changing the time of the meeting from 5-7 pm to 12-2pm moving forward, all agreed that the change would be better. Scott asked everyone present to introduce themselves and share a water demand issue.

Dana asked everyone present to share their concerns for water needs in the next 50 years.

- Brett Moore, Anderson Perry- He personally owns 5 acres and would like to have water on his property.
- Kathleen Cathey, Senator Wyden
- Anton Chiono, Umatilla tribes- Water demand in the entire community will not be met in the next 50 years. He knows this is the same concern of all Stakeholders here. He would like to make sure that his community is able to have water for fisheries and agriculture needs for 50 years and 100 years.
- Steve Parrett-, OWRD- His mother's cousin owns the Steins Distillery in Joseph and he understands the need for water for distilleries and breweries.
- Darrin Walenta, OSU Extension office- There is a greater demand for water in late summer, early fall in Union & Wallowa Counties. It's always a great historical agricultural water challenge.
- Smita Mehta, DEQ- Water quality not being met in several basins during certain times of the year. How to fix that.
- Jeff Oveson, Grande Ronde Model Watershed- Restoring fish habitat. He is very aware that if the needs of ag, municipalities and ecological simultaneously they really haven't met any of them.

- Gary Miller, US Fish & Wildlife in LaGrande- He echoes Jeff, biggest issue is instream flows during late summer, early fall for endangered species.
- Darrell Dyke, Bureau of Reclamation- Echoes what Jeff & Gary said as well.
- Tony Malmberg, Fresh Water Trust- He stated that there is a definite scarcity of water consistently with time & place more so that volume and how to level that volume. He said that the Fresh Water Trust works with "markets" to distribute water for its best use.
- Lauren Peterson, Geography @ EOU- Their perspective is to get students involved & be educated of water resources that will affect them. Teach them how to work in a really unique setting gathering all stakeholder information and how to use that since they will be in jobs as a professional in the future.
- Mike Burton, NRCS- 50 years is a long time, we aren't making any more land or water, but we are making more people. He is concerned that power, water, food and recreation supply are all at risk of not being met in the future.
- Jim Webster, SWCB- Consider later winter early spring high run-off events, being concerned with flood plains and river overflows when we do have the high water
- Brett Rudd, Union Co. Seed grower & farmer- Water availability is the demand not being met in the later 6 months of the year. He hopes they can find a solution.
- Curt Ricker, Farmer- Agrees with Brett.
- Rodger Huffman, Union County Cattlemen's Association- Thinks the need has been stated numerous times already. He hopes that we can find a way to store some of the excessive spring run-off and be able to use it. We know that there will be more demand on the water we do have, with population etc.
- Larry Larsen, U.C Citizen- He sees risk in the fact that we have not defined what off channel storage means. He doesn't think we have done a good job of defining sustainability.
- Jed Hassinger, Union County Farm Bureau- He farms out of lower Catherine Creek, at this point in the year there is either little or no water available. Concerns him, as well as he is with the Grande Ronde for all users.
- Tim Bailey, Oregon Fish & Wildlife- He acknowledged that the mid to lower basins do have issues with species life stages demands that aren't met. Upper basins are what nature provides.
- Connor Stone, GR Model Watershed- He echoes what Jeff said. He also agrees with Tim. He hopes that in 50 years we can meet the demand and not have to short anyone.
- Kyle Carpenter, City of LaGrande- Lives by a lot of retired folks who like their green grass and he is worried in 50 years they won't have anything to do.
- Dana Kurtz, Anderson Perry & Associates- She is intimidated with the question of "50 year time frame", thinking in advance. She is concerned with basic life spans of equipment in place now & how expensive everything would be.
- Margaret Matter, Oregon Department of Agriculture- The idea of thinking out 50 years, is a lot to think about as a climate hydrologist. She is interested to see what the future demands are that will affect the hydrology, physical changes, climate changes etc. She wonders how much things really will change in the future.

- B. Dana shared the planning process as it has been done and where the future of this group will go. She shared some of the documents, data and handouts. She wants to focus on the demands and worries that everyone has addressed.
- C. Dana shared high lights of the past Stakeholder meeting June 21st and also shared feedback from the "Field Trip" on July 28th. She got a lot of feedback on the reports shared June 21st and from the Field Trip, all feedback was positive. They were both perceived as going very well. Dana said that there was interest of doing another "field trip" in the spring, going to see storage & high water locations.
- D. Approval of the meeting minutes from the June 21st Stakeholder meeting.
- E. Lauren Peterson from EOU spoke to the group about the Oral History Project that her students will be working on. She gave a personal background of how she grew up. She handed out paperwork to the group that she hopes will give feedback from the Stakeholders to assist the students in the direction this group would like the Project to go. She asked the group to let complete the paper she handed out to assist the students to know who they should speak with; what historical stories does this group want the students to ask about when they do the interviews. She also asked that when creating a list of people to interview, that Stakeholders reach out to those individuals know that EOU students will be contacting them. They will also create reports from the information they gather.

### **I. Step 2 Report Review**

- A. Dana shared what she has created as the "Step 2 document", using Tech Committee data for this report. She went through the document one section at a time, pointing out that this should reflect the progress that has been made within the group as we have been working together the past 10 months. She briefly explained the graphs and reports that have been created by the Tech Committee that were presented in this draft document. This is a cooperative working document at this point and moving forward. Steve asked Kyle if they take a chemical analysis before it's treated. Kyle said that they do after chlorination, but he doesn't think they do a raw sample. Rodger asked if who and what information get priority when feedback has been provided. Dana said that everything has been considered. Brett stated that this report will be sent to the Stakeholder group, comments will be collected and they will be reviewed by the Steering Committee. The same process as creating the Governance Agreement will be used. Kathleen Cathey asked that this document can be shared by and approved by everyone. Brett and Dana said that anyone who would like to provide input is welcome to attend the Tech Committee meetings. Larry Larsen believes we are mixing apples & oranges. He thinks we are mixing potential sustainability and suitability.

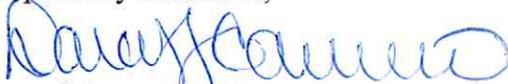
### **III. Step 3 Brainstorming**

- A. Steve Parrett provided an overview of Step 3. He explained that Step 3 is primarily is about really understanding demand. The three primary sectors of demands are: instream demands, municipal demands and agricultural demands and within that, what unique demands are on that water resource. Dana shared that she sent out an outline of the Step 3 work plan.
- B. Dana asked that the group brainstorm a bit on Step 3. Kyle Carpenter shared information regarding the municipal sector. He shared how their resources are determined by demand and need, based on factors such as population, system efficiency and seasonal factors. Jed Hassinger shared the agricultural perspective for the 50 year time frame. Sharing factors such as crop market variability, cropping changes within farming management, political mandates and local climate changes. He thinks we could also see improvements in water efficiency, efficiency in tillage and advancing seeding through no-till drilling, creating better water retention. There was a lengthy group discussion regarding what to measure, how we will measure it, what priorities will be placed and other variables to consider if considering the 50 years future aspect. Scott shared information regarding natural hazards. How to handle flood waters in the spring and where to find water in drought to fight fires. JB Brock, Union County Emergency Management Director will be at the next meeting. Tim Bailey shared the ecological demands in the water, fish size, fish needs, flow, flow volume, temperature and what the fish will need to maintain fish life. Also need to maintain habitat need for the fish to thrive & maintain the complexity. Water quality, basic flow and habitat needs all work together and they all have a different demand. We will need to find gaps, identifying in stream restoration priorities. He said that ODFW did this study in the 80's and has a map that is included in the Step 2 document, but need to be done again and updated. He stated that maybe we can look back 50 years in the past to see if we can find a trend that could help us determine what could come 50 years in the future. Forest density & tree composition can change and affect water supply. Dense forests can capture water & snow and help supplement water. Someone in the group suggested a representative from a forest management group such as "Wallowa Whitman Forestry". Dana will reach out and see if she can get a rep at the October meeting.

**IV. Conclusion:**

- A. The next Stakeholder meeting is October 4th @ 5pm at the Union County/ OSU Extension Office.
- B. Scott adjourned the September 6th, 2017 Stakeholder meeting at 7:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Darcy Johnson Carreiro  
Senior Department Specialist II

## Brainstorming points from 9-06-17

- Admin asked which meeting time the Stakeholders would prefer, 5-7pm or earlier? Dana will send out a poll asking which time is preferred, 1-3pm or 12-2pm

### **Municipal Demand Brainstorm**

1. Water is community property
  2. In drought, municipality gets water first
- Every 10 years WMCP needs to send to OWRD our concerns :
    1. Population growth, Bend issues...
    2. System efficiency- determines water use over the month, finds leaks, loss for hydrants etc. When we don't know what is in our system, can we figure out how to fix it correctly? 5% lead rule, means throw out all lead parts, huge cost
    3. Industrial – LaGrande gets a letter of interest for industrial users, what if one moved here? We'd need to drill a new well?
  - Does the drought benefit apply to industrial users? Could monitor industrial users.
  - Governor could have a state of emergency/drought "book", with rules that may say cities get water first. Priorities would be: human, then health and then water rights.
  - How legally, do cities have the right to call out water rights? Is that considered beneficial use? Livestock takes precedent over agricultural needs?
  - Are there exceptions in the rules for priority water rights?
  - Cities could narrow it down to a real emergency (cut off grass watering) possibly call it a "curtailment plan".
  - Contamination in water – what would we do if the groundwater was contaminated? (We do have a vulnerability analysis)
  - We (locally in the UGRR Basin) have three supply sources. Not all cities do (example: Pendleton lost 2 wells, needed to ration)
  - How does GPC compare to other cities within planning area and state averages – gain a relative sense of efficiency and consumption?
  - Personal water containment on their own property (not legal in LaGrande) economical for watering lawn/plants

## Agricultural Demands

- How we define ag water demand? Should we take the sum of irrigation water rights/season, or should we try to estimate actual crop water use acres of each crop and use evaptrans model to see true use?
- Timing: different crops use water at diff times of the season. Actual use will not correspond with irrigation season or hydrograph.
- Water rights likely to remain static over 50 years. Actual crop water use may change a lot over the next 50 years.
- Differences in cropping schemes – farmers are at the mercy of global markets (for example, currently wheat prices down, half of our valley is growing canola instead). Cropping regimes may change based on markets over 50 years.
- Crops could change with consolidation of small farms to large farms.
- Political mandates are not predictable, trade policies influence crop profitability.
- Changes in local climate
- On the other side: we might have improvements in efficiency (tech tools, no till drilling can improve, better irrigation/application methods ex: buried drip tape).
- Could see changes in tillage regimes (more organic matter retains water better).
- In 50 years, better soil amendments, technologies could produce better crops that use less water.
- Changes to local climate (we are in a snow pack dominated area, shifting hydrograph, worse droughts (1 degree F 5 percent increase in evapotranspiration)).
- Methods of estimating demand: ET models or other models must first develop a good understanding of what those models involve. It is really important to understand assumptions built into these models.
- Data put into the model is important “garbage in, garbage out”.
- Geospatial analysis: with that we do not have as much data as it looks like on maps (interpolation/derivation from models) need to understand what information is on your

map (is it genuine observations that are actually measured, or is it something that came from a model).

- Climate: inherently variable, changes complicate things. One hopeful thing is that we are starting to understand physics behind natural variability. This allows us to improve our forecast, and get more timely forecasts and more accurate.
- Utilizing water rights would be a mistake. That would overestimate water use. ET models underestimate, without exception, with efficient application and monitoring people can reduce water use. Usually we use more water than needs to be. NEED to do a survey of acres irrigated and then have efficiency of irrigation, then see management system. Easy to over irrigate, (aerial photograph how many acres under pivot, flood etc.) – Brett at Freshwater Trust has this data.
- Still need to look at water rights. We also may want to take a look with respect to the hydrograph and when water comes, and also analyze different crops in the valley and see what the demand is. Then we can see difference between when water is needed. Get this documented in the study.
- If we use ET model, when we forecast demand, examine possibility of shifting to higher water use crops in the future if within the water right. Cannot apply water at ET rates (always need to over apply to prevent crop stress).
- Model will need to be multivariate– sometimes most glaring problem is not the biggest problem. Utilize cover crops to increase organic matter will increase water capacity on every acre.
- How can we use water rights (report shows legal demand on system) and also need to show crop use?
- We design systems for crop needs – alfalfa and mint not water rights (also reservoirs are not designed for peak use, just for demands).

### **Natural Hazards**

- JB brock union county emergency management services – drought and floods.
- Water for late summer fire season (where to get it to contain fires). In spring the floods.
- LaGrande and hospital is on a fault line.

## Ecological Demand

- Fish life stages – adults in, smolts out, spawning, egg incubation, rearing. Water needs vary based on size of fish and need at time.
- With salmon and steelhead – need water with certain quality attributes (temp, and DO) affected by flow. Need cool water and water with oxygen.
- Habitat needs – deep pools, different kinds of cover, to maintain this we need high flows in the winter time to flush spawning gravel, and maintain pool depth, and to maintain complexity (wood is a large component of complexity – comes into the system from storms).
- Analysis of departure (diff between existing flows and existing instream water rights) where are needs not met.
- Identify data gaps (where do we need instream studies to figure out the needs).
- Stream flow restoration priorities map (ODFW and OWRD made map in 1990s, needs to be updated).
- We know what fish need in ideal conditions, but did the Grande Ronde system ever produce those conditions? Estimated annual natural flow to see if these instream flow studies are in the ball park.
- 50 years ahead, life stage needs don't change, but if climate change occurs, there will be change in where fish live, and change in timing (bull trout probably have a smaller distribution range).
- Forest: structure, composition, and density of the forest will have different water demands – conifers for example shut down, others are okay – how trees arrange have a big effect on snowmelt systems, and how snow is captured and released.
- Natural hazard: wildfires will continue to impact watersheds positive, negative. This will impact water supply and quality.
- 1/3 of county is federal land, and that is the 1/3 that gets the most precipitation. If we could compare species composition and see water retention.

- Demand is not just for water, but that is for functioning ecosystems (overstocked forest at risk for fire and at risk for sublimating snow).
- Floodplain connectivity has water retention benefits and fish habitat benefits – identify opportunities to improve ecosystem function.
- Fix riparian systems may restore species like beavers.
- Bring in EOU experts to help with these questions, students could help.
- Water quality, quantity, time & space – the foundation is in soil organic matter.
- Need someone to provide information to this group from the Wallowa Whitman forest collaborative.