

Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership
Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning
Stakeholder Meeting No. 31

Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2020
Conference Call

ATTENDANCE:

Jesse Steele, Gretchen Sausen, Curt Howell, Adrienne Averett, Tim Baily, Jim Webster, Ann Hulden, Rodger Huffman, Tony Malmberg, Larry Larsen, Brett Moore, Rachel Lovell-Ford, Steve Parrett, Jed Hassinger, Dana Kurtz, Donna Beverage.

I. WELCOME

a. Introductions

Dana stated that they hoped this meeting would be in person, but with COVID related closures it wasn't possible.

b. Meeting Guidelines

State your name and speak up when talking to the group, use the chat function, mute your line when not speaking.

c. Recap of May 20, 2020 Stakeholder

Last meeting was via conference call due to closures. Step 4 updates were sent out a week in advance for your review and then reviewed. Step 5 work groups were briefly introduced. Margaret and Steve provided presentations about Step 5 Guidance and additional background.

Donna is looking into the possibility of having the next meeting at the Senior Center Bus Barn; that would accommodate the number of people we have at tonight's meeting (17). If guidelines are less restrictive than they are now, then an in-person meeting is preferred. Dana added that in order to hold meetings in person, we may need to be stricter with RSVPs and headcounts.

II. Step 4 Report Review

a. Schedule

June 15: Steering Committee completed their review/first draft

June 16: Sent to Stakeholders

June 23: Preliminary Comments were due

July 1: Send in additional comments

July 8: Dana will compile comments, then send revised report

If comments are conflicting or higher level, smaller meetings may be set up

July 15: Next meeting to discuss feedback and possible changes

Aug 19: Plan to vote on Step 4 Report

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b. Report Overview

Donna stated that ag producers are super busy this time of year and some are unable to come to meetings. Considering the desire to have a high vote turn out, there is concern about voting being limited to those able to attend. Dana said the goal is 100% consensus; the vote can be postponed if needed. Tony asked about quorum requirements; Dana said there is not a specific number requirement, but the MOU indicates that we will try to have wide representation. She added that if someone felt adequate representation was not available, then the vote could be postponed. Donna suggested that the next meeting announcement email should remind everyone that two of the last four meetings must be attended in order to vote. That email should be sent before the July meeting.

Rodger echoed sentiments about ag producers being busy this time of year; he suggested that someone could be considered present if they took the time to review the documents emailed and responded to Dana that they did the work. Dana said that it is good to get disagreements out, and her concern is that if someone does not come to meetings and is not happy with the report, then subsequently votes against it, the group will be at square one and have to revise the report again. Thoughts and suggestions about attendance could be discussed by the Steering Committee to determine requirements, then the group could vote on any potential changes. Tim added that meetings are for stakeholders to voice perspectives, but also to hear others, those who are not attending are not hearing those discussions. Steve suggested that calling into a meeting would be considered the same as in-person attendance. Larry noted that the group has already worked through what would be considered attendance. Dana added that the document indicates that the group could vote on changes to the agreement. Jed suggested polling stakeholders to get an idea of who might have a problem with attendance/voting ability at the August meeting. Tim suggested that a later evening meeting may also help attendance. Tony asked if proxy voting could be allowed; Dana stated that there is not a process for proxy voting right now. Jed noted that emails have been accepted as votes in the past.

c. Preliminary Comments

Dana asked stakeholders to provide suggestions, specific revisions, and overall impressions. These will be recorded and incorporated into the document after the meeting, along with additional feedback received over the next week.

Larry Larsen stated that the executive summary should be expanded since most people will read it instead of the report. More detail is needed explaining why surface water has an increase in transpiration demand, and what is causing that. Also, more detail is needed for municipal efficiency savings and industrial demand. Brett noted that those details are in reports prior to Step 4;

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how much reiteration does the group want? Dana said the issue of reiteration was also mentioned by Adrienne. She suggested that references be added to Step 4 for readers to have access to those additional details.

Jesse stated that the report is great and suggested a minor change under main water issues.

Gretchen did not have concerns with the report.

Curt Howell stated that Larry brought up some of his concerns; he would like to see where figures are coming from and why.

Ann said that she agreed with other comments and may have additional comments to add at another time.

Jim agreed with Brett: this is one section of a multiple-chapter document and he would rather not see language unnecessarily repeated.

Dana noted that guidance for Step 5 indicates that the first four sections are recaps of the Step 4 Report.

Rodger suggested adding acronyms and definitions to the whole document. For example, something should replace the word "balance" as it is defined in supply and demand. The "critical opportunities" section says to reduce overall irrigation, but what we are really talking about is fall and summer seasons when water is low. Despite some of the oldest water rights, it is still possible that it could create a decline so it may be false hope to say that there is available water. His understanding of water rights law is that when the Watermaster turns it off, efficiency goes to the junior water right holder. Also, the report indicates that we are still striving to eliminate 100% deficit; he thought that was being dialed back because we know it's not attainable. Based on Step 3 Report, we will never meet instream needs if you include the volume from the low part of the year. Brett disagreed and said that there is a surplus on an annual basis; the deficit in the summer/fall is less than in winter/spring. Dana said that if all the water went into a pot there would be enough, but it doesn't work that way: we can't use winter water when flow is low. Dana explained that the group decided to keep it as is and explain that it was aspirational; having a higher goal is better. Jed agreed with Dana, that sounds correct according to how he recalled discussions.

Tony commended the group for the work that had been accomplished so far; consensus is a powerful thing, meaning there is a synergistic effort. However, he does have an issue with the tone and approach. Instream storage seems to be a priority, but it doesn't represent that consensus. It is expensive and

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depreciable. On-stream depletes water quality. The report could add weight; on-storage should be last resort, not first option. Dana noted that comments from both perspectives have been shared. The group decided to work on the top five action plans, with the addition of smaller working groups addressing concerns. She hopes that Tony will join the group that will develop ways to move forward and evaluate them. A lot of the strategies will be addressed in Step 5. She said she was not sure that on-stream storage is the last resort; some people are excited about that option, so it was decided to let the feasibility study determine what is out there.

Jed stated that the report does a good job of capturing chronology, the process has not been linear. It reflects all the votes taken along the way. One thing we struggled with was how much detail to include from previous reports.

Steve felt that the steering committee did good job producing a first draft for stakeholders; he is looking forward to new contributions from stakeholders.

Margaret's suggestions/comments were about clarification of language. She felt there was good work done in documentation and structure of the report. Newcomers could pick that up and know where the group has been.

Dana stated that new comments would be incorporated in the next draft. She appreciated requests for more documentation; people will want that.

III. Step 5 Update

- a. Requests for working groups forthcoming
Hoping to send invites before next meeting.

IV. Conclusion

- a. Next meeting is July 15, 2020 (4-6) Misener Room/Conference Call
- b. Other Comments
Dana will poll the group for next meeting date and time preferences. An email will be sent detailing voting date, as well as a reminder about the attendance requirement to be eligible to vote. The Step 5 timeline is planned for the end of the year or beginning of next year. She expects that it will be much faster than previous steps, but it is important not to rush it or leave people behind.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cinda Johnston
Union County Planning Department Specialist