

**Laramie County Control Area Steering Committee**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**December 15, 2014**  
**Herschler Building, Cheyenne, WY**

Draft for Review

Approved

**Participants:**

Bill Bonham, *Laramie County Stock Growers*  
 Randy Bruns, *Econ Development*  
 Jim Cochran, *LC Conservation District*  
 Bill Edwards, *Southeast Wyoming Builders Assoc.*  
 Dan Frank, *Laramie County Stock Growers*  
 Greg Gross, *Ag/Irrigators*  
 Kristi Hansen, *Academia*  
 Jim Hastings, *Alternate*  
 Gary Hickman, *Cheyenne/Laramie County Health*  
 Scott Horgen, *Industry*  
 Judy Johnstone, *Small municipalities*  
 Rick Kaysen, *City of Cheyenne*  
 Jim Lerwick, *Ag/Irrigators*  
 Brian Lovett, *LC Conservation District*

Leslie Mead, *South Cheyenne Community Development Association*  
 Max Minnick, *Cheyenne Board of Realtors*  
 Jim Murphy, *Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities*  
 Joe Patterson, *Southeast Wyoming Builders Association*  
 Bonnie Reider, *South Cheyenne Community Development Association*  
 Bill Shain, *Small municipalities*  
 Mike Sullivan, *City of Cheyenne*  
 Lisa Tabke, *Cheyenne Board of Realtors*  
 Tom Taylor, *Private Property Owner*  
 Troy Thompson, *Laramie County Commissioner*  
 Tim Wilson, *Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities*  
 Scott Zimmerman, *Rocky Mountain Farmers Union*

**Facilitators:**

Steve Smutko, *UW Ruckelshaus Institute*  
 Shannon Glendenning, *UW Ruckelshaus Institute*

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome, Steering Committee member introductions
2. Agenda review and approval
3. Review and adoption of the 12/01/14 meeting summary
4. Review and discussion of Draft Steering Committee Charter
5. Steering Committee Goals and targets
6. Adjourn

**Handouts:**

1. Draft Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Summary 12/1/14 Meeting
3. Meeting Plan
4. Draft Steering Committee Charter
5. Getting to Yes: How to Negotiate Agreement Without Giving In

**Action Items Completed:**

- Agenda approved
- Meeting Summary approved

**Action Items Pending:**

**Summary:**

*Q= Question      C= Comment      A=Answer      R=Response*

**1. Welcome, Steering Committee member introductions**

Steve Smutko opened the meeting with introductions of the committee and making sure all members of the committee, primaries and alternates, are at the table.

**2. Agenda review and approval**

The draft agenda was approved with no discussion.

### **3. Review and adoption of the 12/01/14 meeting summary**

The December 1, 2014 meeting summary approved with no discussion.

Steve Smutko announced that meeting information will be available here

<http://www.uwyo.edu/haub/ruckelshaus-institute/collaborative-solutions/aquifer/index.html>

### **4. Review and discussion of Draft Steering Committee Charter**

The Draft Steering Committee Charter was introduced. Similar documents are used with every group Steve facilitates. They provide the ground rules in which the committee operates. The goal is to have this draft, or updated version approved at the next meeting in January. There was some discussion about the accuracy of the process of adopting and forwarding recommendations to the State Engineer as spelled out in the charter in Section 3 was correct. Smutko stated that he would work with the State Engineers Office to make corrections to this section.

Smutko suggested establishing a “process sub-committee” to provide feedback and guidance to the facilitators and help address difficult process issues and questions. Steering Committee members who are interested in serving on the sub-committee should contact Commissioner Troy Thompson.

Smutko presented a draft meeting plan that lays out how the process of generating recommendations. He uses a very traditional system, named ProACT. The steps are: defining the problem, defining objectives, developing alternatives, evaluating consequences, and making tradeoffs to then get to a final decision. The book, Getting to Yes, uses interests instead of objectives. The book provides a way of thinking of negotiation.

Discussion about the charter and process plan:

C: In reference to the meeting plan and charter, I have taken the time to learn about the problem and the hydrology of the area. I feel my role on the committee is to represent the citizens of the county and the state, not just the people I was brought on to represent on the committee. Laramie County is a community and I feel the committee can develop a framework that could stand the test of time, but not sure if the framework can be filled in enough to present a complete plan to the State Engineer. If the April 1 deadline has to hold, I have reservations about the big issues being resolved in five months.

R: The committee needs to be efficient, but this process requires time. It is going to be a difficult balance.

### **5. Steering Committee Goals and targets**

Smutko introduced the need for the committee to have goals and targets that this process can work towards. Based on discussion with Bern Hinkley he proposed three strategies to start discussion. The first strategy is recover the aquifer to a level similar to one point in the past. The second, to stabilize the water levels in the aquifer. The third, continue to let the water level decline, treating water as a finite resource similar to mining. He then asked the committee to comment on the issue of goals and targets.

C: ‘I’m giving option 3 a ‘5’.

C: I don’t think we can recover the aquifer to 1900 levels, too many people think that is practicable, but we can’t do nothing. It has to be somewhere in the middle. The situation is different for different areas in the county, we need different approaches.

C: We need to recognize that there will be a decline for some time. It has taken 60 years to get where we are now, we need to monitor and accept a certain level of decline as long as we see a trend in the long term.

C: stabilization has been the perspective of the Conservation District for some time.

C: What does stabilization mean? Stopping at 2014 with no more development, no more irrigation. Is there anything else beyond these options? Not aware of any one solution. We can’t throw out the science to

meet our objectives.

C: We should think about storage in terms of stabilization. 'He who holds the water owns the water.' It is not one or the other. We stabilize the best we can with the long term goal of recovery. We need to find a way to store water. Bringing use to zero is a bad plan.

C: The current thrust in Wyoming is development – population, manufacturing, energy, everything. I think it is going to be tricky to manage development that is already in the pipeline and is coming vs. what we are trying to do here.

C: We can think about regulating water usage with efficiency measures and save water. We're going to have to make tough decision on how much water we use.

C: Those in the municipalities are already managing water financially, encouraging efficient showerheads, low flow toilets. Some of us have experience doing that.

Q: Is there a percentage reduction goal?

C: We don't have to look at these as individual options. We need to look at the regional model, look outside the boxes of options 1, 2, and 3.

C: There are some distinct areas that need very different attention. It is unique that we have the possibility of bringing in water to increase the supply. There are also real possibilities with storage in the region. We need to look seriously at supplies we might not have thought about. WE need to consider multiple uses of the water.

Q: Is it fair to say that this group has the options to develop tools, outside of the State Engineer, what should we develop.

C: we should be looking at tools, not goals.

C: The aquifer is different across the county. Our problems with usage are different spatially, users are different as well. The area and solutions and goals are different. We're going to work on these as a group, but there is no one size fits all solution.

C: A goal could be protecting the aquifer towards its perpetual and realistic use for present and future generations, looking towards sustainability and balance. This can be achieved by using common sense and fairness and get there by using science and best practices.

The committee divided into three breakout groups to discuss goals and targets. The question posed to the breakout groups to discuss was: What goals or targets should this committee set and strive for?

After the breakout sessions each group reported back:

**Group 1:** Group 1 discussed having one end goal but developing a plan for regions and users that cumulatively gets to that goal: stabilize the aquifer with minimal economic damage to user groups and property rights.

Group 2: This group discussed the concept of applying goals and targets to districts which reflect spatial characteristics of the aquifer and its use. We decided that we need a reexamination of district boundaries based on hydrologic conditions. Monitoring is inadequate so that means some of our data is inadequate. The group worked on a definition of "stabilization" as an input and output trend over time, not year to year.

**Group 3:** They began their discussion with the premise that people who have the legal right to use water for domestic uses must retain that right. Discussed concepts of 'hydrogeography.' Similar to Group 2, the discussed the importance of designing solutions that correspond with the prevailing aquifer characteristics and withdrawal patterns that are unique to each part of the control area. They also discussed the need to give the state engineer the tools to allow an economically efficient transfer of water.

Committee discussion:

C: The committee should address recharge considerations and potential as it refers to the

aquifer

C: Geography is important. We also don't want to rule out the idea of recovery. We need to be clear about what we mean by sustainability and recovery. We should replace the term "sustainability" with "stability". The term "sustainability" has ramifications that are not always considered positive by the agricultural community..

C: Do we need to have a specific goal? It's a matter of how we talk about it and will help define options moving forward.

C: It is not a one size fits all situation. We need solutions that work in the places they need to work. How do we define the county in a way that is meaningful for our recommendations?

Q: What information does the committee need that is scientifically valid and enables the committee to develop recommendations?

C: Read the AMEC report. The information is already available.

Q: We need to be sure that we don't forget the impacts of our actions on our neighbors, notably Nebraska..

R: What we do will have an impact on others in the county.

C: We need to think about 'sub-geography' in how this solution and problem is defined.

C: We have a lot of information and resources sitting in this room watching. Members are encouraged to talk to others with expertise before the January meeting.

Q: It would be helpful to have legal counsel from the State Engineers Office on hand as we move down the path of making recommendations.

C: Ask Bern Hinkley to make a sample map to show what would be better lines for districts for management.

C: Make the maps combined so it's easier to visualize the areas that are geographically distinct.

#### **Next Meeting**

**Date:** January 5, 2015 6:00 pm

**Location:** Herschler Building, Room B63, 122 West 25th Street, Cheyenne, WY