

Laramie County Control Area Steering Committee

Meeting Summary

August 31, 2015

Herschler Building, Cheyenne, WY

Draft for Review

Approved

Participants:

Bill Bonham, *Laramie County Stock Growers*
Jim Cochran, *LC Conservation District*
Bill Edwards, *Southeast Wyoming Builders Association*
Greg Gross, *Ag/Irrigators*
Kristi Hansen, *University of Wyoming*
Jim Hastings, *Alternate*
Gary Hickman, *Cheyenne/Laramie County Health*
Brenda Johnson, *Alternate*
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*
Jim Murphy, *Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities*
Joe Patterson, *Southeast Wyoming Builders Association*
Lisa Tabke, *Cheyenne Board of Realtors*
Troy Thompson, *Laramie County Commissioners*
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; Agenda review & approval; Announcements
2. Review and adoption of the 06/15/15 meeting summary
3. Economic Analysis Update
4. Discussion of communications with groundwater users and appropriators in the Control Area
5. Introduction and discussion of Draft Groundwater Management Plan Guidance Document
6. Discussion of where to go from here
7. Adjourn

Handouts:

1. 8/31 Draft Agenda
2. 6/15 Draft Meeting Summary
3. Groundwater Management Plan Guidance Document

Action Items Completed:

Committee members will reported back intermittently on progress in talking to water user groups, then report back discussions on August 31st.

Action Items Pending:

Committee members will review Section 1-3 of Groundwater Management Plan Guidance Document (page 1-10) in preparation for next meeting.

Summary:

Q=Question R=Response C=Comment

1. Welcome; Steering Committee member introductions; Agenda review & approval; Announcements

Shannon Glendenning opened the meeting and introduced the agenda.
Committee members introduced themselves.

2. Review and adoption of the 06/15/15 meeting summary

No changes to meeting summary.

3. Economic Analysis

Kristi Hansen presented an update about a grant to conduct an economic analysis on water management in Laramie County.

The steering committee will sign a letter of support of the grant proposal.

The Laramie County Commissioners will sign a letter of support of the grant proposal.

Q: Is there enough money available from the granting source to do the study you want to do?

KH: Our main expenditure items will be to fund a grad student, and to bring on some time from a hydrologist as well as an expert from Kansas.

4. Discussion of communications with groundwater users and appropriators in the Control Area Development of subcommittees and assign tasks to develop and refine plan components

Jim Cochran: Had meeting on August 18, 2015. 50 Irrigators attended the meeting. We broke into community groups: Albin, Carpenter, and Pine Bluffs. Topics discussed and agreed on by those in attendance are summarized below:

Albin:

- Where are monitoring wells? Are they showing drawdown in a wet year?
- Should be more emphasis on monitoring wells than basing decisions on model
- AWEF or other program to buy-out
- Reduce demand
- Metering should be consistent across the board
- Drip systems should be considered to reduced water usage
- Would SEO be will amenable to having local input into advisory board decisions
- Recharge: there are funds available for recharge systems

Pine Bluffs:

- Need to set a goal for aquifer levels
- Not willing to restore if upstream users aren't willing to reduce pumping
- Need to have a say in what is happening upstream
- Need to show that irrigators are cooperating with SEO
- Group may want to form a special district of some kind
- Discussed the petition in front of Board of Control; may amend that petition
- Discussion of wastewater treatment discharge into Crow Creek (recharge)

Carpenter:

- Need to continue conservation and reduction
- Meters
- Discussed allocations and reductions
- Discussed buy-out program
- Discussed setting up a water district to enable funding
- Difference between E. Carpenter and W. Carpenter. Should the two areas be treated differently
- Need irrigation water management
- Not happy with current control area boundaries
- No one from Carpenter serves on LCCASC

Jim L.: Many people were not properly informed about the interaction of Cheyenne water use and discharge and its effect on Crow Creek

Tim: We can provide information as needed

SZ: How was the distribution of the 50 people among the three communities?

R: Pine Bluffs group was small. There was good representation for some communities, but not from others.

Bill E. and Joe Patterson: We asked realtors, homebuilders, developers to attend the meeting. Had 16 people show up.

The majority of the people had no idea why they were being asked to attend.

The emphasis of our group was to provide people with basic information.

Education needs to be big part of what the Steering Committee does. The homeowners in this county don't really have a clue about what's happening with respect to groundwater.

Some comments:

- Can we set up management districts?
- No response on the SEO's order
- Discussed the concepts of community wells

Bill E: There isn't much development activity in the county. There is not much organized concern among this group. Other than keeping our constituents informed, I don't know if there will be a significant role for this user group to get deeply involved in our planning effort.

Jim L: Do you see the need to go back to those folks as we move forward?

Bill: Yes, but it will be challenging. But this will likely have to come through their own subdivisions. We'll have to engage those communities to get involved. There are many rural well owners that are not part of a subdivision, and many subdivisions don't have a homeowners association.

Troy: Would a special improvement district be a workable mechanism for involving people?

Jim Murphy: The newer subdivisions are required to have homeowner associations by county ordinance.

Bill E: Long but informative discussion about the formation of special improvement districts and homeowner associations.

Judy Johnstone: All four municipalities were represented (7 people in all).

Bear in mind that the Mayor of Pine Bluffs has allegiance to Pine Bluffs irrigators association....

Our conclusions were:

- SEOs order currently in effect does no harm to municipalities
- We recommend that meters be installed on all new wells in the Control Area
- The municipalities strongly urge that conservation measures be part of the solution

Mayor Shane (Pine Bluffs) is concerned about water use in Lodge Pole Creek. Also some questions and concerns about what is in the SEO's order.

Some discussion about municipalities' providing water to residents outside the city limits. Tim reported on the cases where Cheyenne provides water services outside the city limits.

Bill E provided information about a development called Mustang Ridge, which started out independent of the city, but was eventually annexed at the urging of the developers.

Gary Hickman: The regulatory requirements for community water systems and water treatment systems is a hurdle for developers.

Shannon: Based from what you heard from these reports, are people behind the idea of a water management plan?

R: Municipalities and fully behind it.

R: Irrigators are fully behind it.

Bill: Will the water management plan replace the SEO's order?

Lovett: Yes.

RK: We need to be mindful of the different authorities that this plan will involve...

5. Introduction and discussion of Draft Groundwater Management Plan Guidance Document

Shannon led the group through the basic contents of the guidance document

JL: There needs to be some mention of supply management.

6. Discussion of where to go from here

JL: We may need to address expansion of the control area: (Jim described the petition to the Control Board). If the Control Area is expanded, then you will have the voice of people who may be in a drawdown area that is currently not in the Control Area.

JL: Does this committee want to endorse the petition to expand the Control Area?

The committee declined to endorse as a whole. Individuals of the committee may attend the committee and speak as a member of the committee but not on behalf of the committee.

Bill Bonham: Should this committee postpone any further action until after the Control Board decides on the definition of the Control Area?

Outcome of the discussion: we can proceed on many aspects of the plan without waiting to hear from the Control Board.

Judy: what would be the impact of expanding the control area on our activities?

Jim C: It doesn't change much to what we do.

Are there decisions in the development of this plan that need to be made by others not in this room?
... the discussion devolved around the issue of metering.

Homework for next meeting: Go through Sections 1-3 (pages 1-10) in the Groundwater Management Plan Guidance Document for discussion and adoption at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

Date: September 21, 2015

Location: Herschler Building, Room B63, 122 West 25th Street, Cheyenne, WY
(May need to change due to construction)