

Meeting Notes
Henry's Fork Watershed Council
February 12, 2013

The meeting was held at the Springhill Marriott in Rexburg. The meeting started at 8:40 a.m. with introductions and community building led by Dale Swensen (Fremont-Madison Irrigation District) and Brandon Hoffner (Henry's Fork Foundation).

Community Building

Brandon Hoffner introduced Rob Van Kirk who is the new Henry's Fork Foundation – Research & Restoration Director; as of January 1st, 2013 he will be working part time (15-20 hrs. per week) and on June 1st, 2013 he will be working full time.

Tom Bassita from Idaho Fish & Game talked about a Public Awareness newsletter that outlines regulation changes and includes other information; send him an email to be included on the distribution list. Also, in March, IDFG is planning to start a Wildlife Diversity Working Group, contact Steve Schmidt for more information.

Recharge Symposium Follow-Up – Dale Swensen & Brandon Hoffner

The Recharge Symposium, held December 12th, 2012 at the Shilo Inn in Idaho Falls, was a great success. There were over 20 briefers that spoke on a variety of topics; this was the largest attendance of any of the annual watershed conferences. The attendees provided very positive feedback on the knowledgeable speakers; all agreed that great ideas were presented on the value of recharge and that the efforts of legislation, water boards, HF Basin Study, etc. continue to be the catalyst of bringing efforts together to better define recharge and to set a path forward. Proceedings and copies of presentations are available on the website and also, a video of the symposium is available on UTube at the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4QcyC1JONo>.

Native Trout Sub-Committee Update – Sarah Rupp

Sarah reported that the committee has met twice. Their goal is to develop an education program that will address some concerns of the Yellowstone Cutthroat. The committee would like to develop an informational pamphlet that talks about history patterns, threats, and impacts to the watershed if populations continue to decline. In order to educate, we need to get the word out, not only with educational pamphlets, but with billboards, on the web, etc. This is a large task and the committee has considered talking to the Friends of the Teton River to see if they would be willing to take over the project. There will be more information forthcoming on this initiative.

Water Rights Applications Update (FMID and IWRB) – Dale Swensen & Brandon Hoffner

In 2012 the Department reinitiated the processing of the numerous water right applications, including the Board's applications. Director Spackman held a status conference on May 22, 2012. On January 15, 2013, following a series of outreach meetings between the Board and interested parties that spanned the latter half of 2012, the Board resubmitted the original 19 applications for recharge. Four of the water right applications were resubmitted unmodified. The remaining original 15 applications were revised, consolidated into four applications, and resubmitted to the Department. Much review is currently underway in the Idaho legislature.

In January 2013, FMID submitted a water right application to IDWR to add 20,000-acre feet of water within the reservoir to the district's current water right of 135,000-acre feet. If approved, the height of the Island Park Dam would be raised by two-and-a-half feet. The application has been protested by numerous agencies which indicates that more information is required in order to determine any environmental and property impacts. Currently, this application is on-hold pending results of the Henry's Fork Basin Study which is due out by December 2013.

Legislative Issues – Jerry Rigby & Jeff Raybould

Jerry Rigby had other engagements and was unable to attend the February meeting, so Jeff Raybould briefed on legislative issues. The Director of Department of Water Resources drafted legislature that all water rights held by the Water Resource Board would allow for mitigation credits to be established. More legislation out there is being reviewed – pre-bill assignment form to look at, "Is it best to have the Water Board hold all the water rights; or is a combination of water rights holders a better plan?" It looks like the Legislature is looking at recharge benefits and may move on a plan this year.

Idaho State Water Plan – Jeff Raybould

Jeff Raybould briefed that the Idaho Water Resource Board is charged with developing the state water plan which guides the conservation, development, management and optimum use of the water resources of Idaho. The first SWP was adopted in 1976 and has been updated several times to incorporate pivotal change in Idaho's water landscape. In November 2012, the Board adopted the newest revised SWP as a result of extensive public involvement over the past five years and formal comment period during the summer of 2012 (The public comment period included seven hearings around the state).

Key elements in the plan include: 1) Water is a vital resource which keeps Idaho prosperous and growing, 2) We must have cooperation, conservation, and good management to minimize future conflicts and provide optimum use of water resources, 3) The uncertainty of future condition and emerging water needs require adaptable policies and actions to the ever changing circumstances, 4)

Prior Appropriation Doctrine as established by Idaho Law provides framework for managing Idaho's water and emerging needs, 5) Continued Public involvement throughout the revision process.

North Fork Natives, Project Report – Jeff Klausman

Jeff Klausman reported on the North Fork Natives project. Jeff talked about the eroding banks on the Teton River that were identified as a potential threat to an adjacent home and outbuilding. Each bank was characterized by shear, exposed slopes ranging from 4-6 feet high dominated by introduced pasture grasses. The goal was to stabilize 800 linear feet on the upper Teton River using native plants that mimic conditions on natural, stable reference banks. The solution was to incorporate wetland Sod into a bio-engineered bank stabilization design that also included willows and erosion control fabric. Three weeks after the final planting, the eroding banks were stable and dominated by native plants. After 2 years, all sites looked and functioned like the natural, stable reference banks. They withstood high flows, fluctuating water levels and wildlife utilization.

Council Plans to Generate Future Funds for Admin/Projects – Brandon Hoffner & Dale Swensen

Brandon and Dale opened discussion on how the Watershed Council could generate future funds for operating costs. The annual estimated operating costs based on previous years is \$1,500/\$2,000. It was suggested to apply for grants specific to the requirements of the Watershed. Brandon will send out an email request to recruit support for a sub-committee that will research options.

BOR Basin Study Hydrology & Interim Report Overview – Bob Schattin

Bob presented an overview on the BOR Basin Study Hydrology & Interim Report. He spoke of using the River Ware modeling software program and how that can help to apply technology of data sets to show outputs in any given year whether the conditions are average, wet, or dry and to create scenarios with alternatives that can better fit the actual conditions. This can also help to develop sets of hydrographs to predict various impacts based on specific conditions; such as back-to-back wet years or drought years. The overall goal is to continue to focus on water storage solutions, conservations efforts, and alternatives as it makes sense. Some of these alternatives being explored are automated canals and larger storage facilities, etc.; some alternatives will be easier and less costly to implement, the larger projects will take more planning and research to ensure the support and funding is available.

Wrap –up & Community Building

As part of wrap-up and final community building, Kim Trotter announced that she will be stepping down from her current position at Trout Unlimited and will be

accepting the position of Executive Director for the Community Foundation of Teton Valley. Peter Anderson and Scott Yates will now be the contacts for TU.

Following the final community building facilitated by Dale and Brandon, the meeting was adjourned.

The next Watershed Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12, at the Springhill Marriott, located at 1177 S. Yellowstone in Rexburg.