ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE

 STEERING COMMITTEE

*Riverside Hotel – Liberty Room*

*IAC Midwinter Conference ~ Boise, ID*

*Wednesday, February 8, 2017 ~ 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM*

MEETING MINUTES

1:30 PM Call to Order - Chair, Larry Schoen, Blaine County Commissioner

* Welcome and Introductions
* Approval of September 2016 Meeting Minutes

Marc Eberlein mentioned that John’s reply to his question was it was metal found at the specified project and Marc stated that the minutes reflected lead. Kelli will amend minutes to reflect the correct response from John.

***Dwight Davis*** ***made a motion to approve amended minutes. Tom Dale seconded. Motion carried.***

1:35 PM **Climate Change, Long-term Drought and What Counties Can Do About It - An Interactive Session - Mark Solomon, Director, Idaho Water Resources Research Institute**

Mark Solomon stated that the first thing we think about when we think about drought is our Ag industry. Other things we need to think about is what if there isn’t enough water in the stream, etc. to take in our discharge or is there enough flow to keep our hydropower going?

When we think about drought planning there is a cycle to watch and take into consideration. The cycle contains apathy, drought, awareness, concern, panic, and then rain.

Mark asked the committee why plan for drought? We need to plan for drought because we don’t know what climate change will bring. We have streams that have dropped more than 15%. Our peak flow times are beginning to change. The normal peak time is around June and we are seeing these times move back toward May. Climate change is leading to the soil moisture changing as well. Our mountains are seeing a decreased amount of moisture. This leads to higher risk of fire. Long term drought planning also helps in aspects of insects, tree mortality, fire, air quality, economic dislocation (creates shifts in access to areas), regulatory thresholds, and water rights.

Critically based Planning: When trying to plan it is important to think about all assumptions you can and which ones will have the greatest impacts. Some key things you can ask yourself and those around you are: does it “make the wheels come off,” what are the triggers, are there cascading effects, and how do we plan for all of these instances?

When criticalities are identified, we can go to each county and create scenarios to plan for this situation. By mapping these critical issues, we can go to the locals and help plan/prioritize steps to address drought.

The Magic Valley is #3 for producing milk, #1 in the Ag commodity sector in Idaho, and alfalfa hay is now #3 in Idaho. All of these are subject to drought. All of these are high water users of about 46: of water/crop. In this area the water users have been asked to reduce usage by 240K-acre foot to help with the high water demand. Idaho Water Resources is in the middle of researching this area and mapping the Ag crops and crossing this information with IDWR water right database.

Larry Schoen mentioned that the domestic well exemption is for approximately 13K gallons/day and maybe we could look possibly reducing this number. This is an example of how we could possibly help in the matter.

Terry Kramer stated the water is a state issue. We should all be lobbyists at the state level. In the magic valley, with the changes in the zoning, we need to make sure the water stays with the property. We need to keep the surface water on the land, so we are not depleting the aquifer.

Larry Schoen stated that common wells for subdivisions are not qualified for the domestic well exemption. Marc Shigeta asked if the group thinks the number in that exemption is accurate. Mark Solomon stated he didn’t think so because that number has been around forever.

Marc Shigeta mentioned that the Teton dam issue changed the lay of the land and we need to recharge the aquifer. There is a collateral damage to conserving water. Scott Hancock also mentioned conserving water has created a problem with recharging the aquifer because the extra water is not going back into the aquifer. We have to manage each basin differently because they are all unique.

Mark Solomon stated the counties need to look somewhere besides IDWR for a quicker fix, as they are very slow moving. They are interested in helping; however, it will take longer than you probably want.

Steve Smith mentioned that the basin in 34 has multiple aquifers and the climate is very different in each of these aquifer areas as well. We may need to include planning and zoning as we are constantly putting in more residential properties, which is a constant pull on the aquifer. Mark Solomon said that was a good point. Could you maybe make the exemption seasonal? This might help replenish a little bit.

Larry Schoen stated that Blaine County asks for water meters to be put in subdivisions when they are developed and we have had good luck with the contractor’s compliance.

Kirk Chandler mentioned that the building of reservoirs could be a good thing for areas like Washington County. They could be used to help store extra water in times like this year where there has been an excess of snow.

Kelly Aberasturi stated that 13K gallons is a lot of water. Are our residents using that much water? We need some realistic parameters.

2:15 PM **Potential Conflict between FEMA and Idaho on Management of Irrigation Structures in a Floodplain - Maureen O'Shea, NFIP Coordinator, Idaho Department of Water Resources**

Maureen O’Shea stated that FEMA thinks our regulations in are not in compliance with the federal regulations. FEMA has a definition for “development” and there are minimum standards for floodplains. Flood development permits need to be issued for anything in the floodplain. FEMA has an issue with the state definition of “development.” They also want to work on the definition of “maintenance.” They do not understand our interpretations of these two definitions. If Idaho does not comply, the state will be terminated from the Floodplain Insurance Program. FEMA also has concerns with the floodplain zoning issues because the interpretation is not clear.

Kelly Aberasturi stated that Owyhee County has irrigation districts and they are not at the table. Maureen O’Shea mentioned that she would be meeting with the Idaho Water Users Association. You all need to be informed because you are the ones in control of the Flood Insurance Program.

Tim/IDUA stated that there will be a meeting with FEMA soon and IAC will be involved. The last time this came around it was only for new construction, not existing. Now we will be including existing.

Maureen O’Shea stated that there are about 6000 flood plans in Idaho. Only about 2500 are in a floodplain. Make sure you are looking closely at your communities. About 40% of businesses that flood across the country never reopen. It only takes 30 days to implement.

2:30 PM **Update: Is the Mid-Snake River Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Obsolete? - Leigh Woodruff, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Idaho TMDL Coordinator**

Leigh Woodruff explained that Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is the reported total pollutant in our waters. With this Middle Snake issue there are multiple reporting/testing facilities. This section of the river is an issue because there is excessive algal growth. The management plan for this area has been going on since 1995. This plan has been modified multiple times with the last being in 2005. The targets of this issue are to reduce macrophytes levels by 30% and to get phosphorus to a .075 mg/l total.

TMDLs, by state law, are to be reviewed every 5 years. The conclusions from the last review are that there is still growth of macrophytes, and the Snake River flows are declining. There is a load capacity formula used to determine the TMDL. There has been a recommendation to revise the TMDL formula to ensure it reflects the current flow conditions. We are also looking at a compliance schedule as well. We would like to add this to our permitting process.

Kelly Aberasturi asked what the actually numbers to the TMDL are because he wanted to know how do we know where those companies are in comparison to the TMDL limit. Leigh Woodruff stated that the dischargers are actually doing a good job.

Kirk Chandler mentioned that Washington County has put in some sediment filters and run them through treatment plants. Steve Rule asked if the spring run off is included in those flow rates. Leigh Woodruff stated he flow rates are an average over 15 years and yes they include spring runoff.

2:45 PM **The Potential of GIS Mapping Services and What to Do If Your County Can't Afford Its Own System - Bill Farnsworth, Geospatial Information Officer & Bob Smith, Senior GIS Analyst, Idaho Geospatial Office**

Bill Farnsworth stated that GIS is important and could benefit counties to have better data. GIS benefits emergency planning efforts. With better data and GIS, agency responses can also be quicker. GIS is the gathering of data and applying it to maps to provide better information for the benefits mentioned. The state has mapping that can be shared with to create better access. This creates better communication. Our company can help you counties with housing GIS data, help with access to AGOL, help with access to state data, and can help with GIS expertise.

3:00 PM Adjourn

Members Present:

Larry Schoen, Blaine Commissioner, Chair

Dave McGraw, Latah Commissioner, Vice Chair

Tom Dale, Canyon Commissioner

Vaughn Rasmussen, Bear Lake Commissioner

Kimber Ricks, Madison Commissioner

Kelly Aberasturi, Owyhee Commissioner

Marc Shigeta, Payette Commissioner

Sharon Worley, Payette Assessor

Bill Willey, Valley Commissioner

Jared Stein, Bannock Assessor

Rene LeBlanc, Public Health Districts

Bryce Somsen, Caribou Commissioner

Dwight Davis, Cassia Assessor

Rick Winkel, Clearwater Commissioner

Cathy Roemer, Jerome Commissioner

Marc Eberlein, Kootenai Commissioner

Linda Jones, Lincoln Assessor

Joe Merrick, Owyhee Commissioner

Scott Hancock, Jefferson Commissioner

Steve Smith, Custer Commissioner

Terry Kramer, Twin Falls Commissioner

Terrell Tovey, Bannock Commissioner

Devin Hillam, Bannock Planning Director

Cresley McConnell, Lincoln Commissioner

Tom Lamar, Latah Commissioner

Harley Wilcox, Teton Commissioner

Members Not Present:

Radene Barker, Bannock Treasurer

Rebecca Wood, Lincoln Commissioner

Bill Brown, Adams Commissioner

Mike Paradis, Adams Commissioner

Mark Bair, Bingham Commissioner

Rose Bernal, Butte Commissioner

Mike McDowell, Kootenai Assessor

Max Vaughn, Minidoka Assessor

Other Guests:

Leigh Woodruff, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Travis Pyle, Great West Engineers

Bill Farnsworth, Geospatial Information Officer

Maureen O'Shea, NFIP Coordinator, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Mark Solomon, Director, Idaho Water Resources Research Institute

Kelli Brassfield, IAC Staff