

In cooperation with:



Idaho Water
Resource Board

&



Henry's Fork
Watershed Council

Henry's Fork Basin Study

Meeting Summary: Workgroup Meeting 5

January 18, 2011

Meeting date: January 11, 2011

Summary prepared by: Mark Bransom – CH2M HILL

Attachments:

1. PowerPoint presentation

Introduction

The Henry's Fork Basin Study (Study) summarized herein was conducted as an agenda item during a regular meeting of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council (HFWC). The HFWC has agreed to provide a forum for Stakeholders to participate in the Study. The Council and other interested stakeholders represent the Study Workgroup.

Bob Schattin/Bureau of Reclamation opened the Basin Study discussion (refer to attached slide presentation) by reviewing the meeting agenda. As part of the introduction Bob reiterated the primary functions of the Core Workgroup to have consistent participation in the Study so that input and feedback is informed and well reasoned, with individual participants empowered to speak for a specific constituency, agency, or other stakeholder group. Although the Core Workgroup is larger, and somewhat different than Reclamation originally envisioned, the HFWC encouraged Reclamation to be inclusive and include all interested parties.

This meeting summary is organized according to the headings/topics listed in the Study meeting agenda. Attendance at the meeting was recorded on the sign-in sheet prepared by the Council.

Needs Assessment

During Workgroup Meeting 5 several members raised the issue of the importance of completing a needs assessment or having targets, e.g., flows or storage volumes as a framework for consideration of the degree to which alternatives achieve desired benefits. The members were very interested in reviewing Reclamation's work plan to complete the needs assessment, and in general, feel that the needs assessment must be completed prior to the initial selection of alternatives so that it can be used to inform and guide the selection of alternatives.

Additional comments from the Workgroup on the needs assessment are summarized here:

- It is difficult to determine which alternative is best without knowing the actual needs.
- Needs assessment should include diversion locations, timing and amount of withdrawals.

Revised Screening Criteria

The intention of the list of issues, opportunities, constraints, and ideas Matrix developed during Workgroup Meetings 3 and 4 was to shape the Study and the alternatives analyses objective. It was proposed that Part A of the Matrix – Translation into Goals & Objectives and **First Phase Alternatives Screening Criteria** - was to be used as initial screening criteria for the surface storage sites. Although it is agreed that the Matrix is comprehensive and will be an effective tool for alternatives analysis, Reclamation

felt that much of the information needed to fill out the criteria matrix at this point in time was not readily available. Therefore, a modified approach was used. The criteria used for the initial screening were derived from the following four higher-level categories that represent the Study Goals and Objectives articulated by the Workgroup:

- Water Supply (water availability, storage capacity)
- Water Rights
 - Water Rights was retained as one of the four categories from the complete matrix however, at this point of screening water rights was not evaluated. It is acknowledged that water rights information is extensive however it is not feasible at this point in the study to apply water rights as screening criteria.
- Natural Environment (impact to cold water fisheries, impact to potential wild and scenic rivers)
- Socioeconomic Environment (cost, hydroelectric potential, physical impacts)

Water Storage Presentation

Bob presented a summary of potential new surface storage sites that had been previously identified in other studies, opportunities to enhance existing surface storage sites that had been previously identified, as well as a concept for a flat land reservoir. Bob presented opportunities and concerns for the surface storage alternatives in terms of the four screening criteria listed above (refer to attached slide presentation).

Group Discussion

Mark Bransom/CH2M HILL facilitated a discussion to receive comments from the Workgroup on the water storage presentation, and to gain input on additional potential surface water storage sites to screen. The Workgroup also offered suggestions to enhance the Workgroup process and engagement in the Study. Comments are summarized here. with post-meeting responses in italics:

- In general, many members offering comments were seeking additional information, including the following inquiries/considerations:
 - Additional detail/information relative to Island Park Reservoir and Ashton Dam raise.
 - Hydrology considerations
 - Impacts to hydrology on streams for offstream reservoirs
 - Reliability of fill
- Members inquired on the anticipated timing for water rights evaluations.
- Some members felt that different locations and reservoir sizes on Teton River (relative to the original Teton Dam site and configuration) may still be a good alternative(s), and combinations of surface water storage alternatives should be considered.
- In general, members had questions regarding operational considerations of the generic flat land reservoir and were concerned that evaporation losses of this alternative would be high.
- Additional potential surface storage sites:
 - Harropes Bridge (Teton River)
 - Dam site in Wyoming (Teton Creek)
 - Warm River
 - Webster Dam (Upper Moody Creek)
 - Horseshoe Creek

- Canyon Creek? Look at other steep canyon sites that would provide good storage.
- Members feel that a combination of several sites together would maximize flexibility.
- Other alternatives to consider
 - Dredging existing reservoirs
- Cost considerations
 - Perhaps a cost per acre-foot threshold should be established above which alternatives would not be considered
- What has changed since the 1981 study to make Lane Lake appear more favorable today?
- Which sectors will benefit from new storage water (e.g., agriculture and municipal use)?
- Incorporate additional natural resources data from agencies into screening analysis (Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service)
 - The State Water Plan has “wild” reach designations in addition to “recreational” reach designations
 - Henry’s Fork Foundation has GIS data available (wildlife, fisheries, etc.) for use in the Special Study.
 - Commenter noted that the potential Bitch Creek reservoir site is the only Yellowstone cutthroat critical habitat
 - Include wildlife winter range (see 1997 Revised Caribou Forest Plan)
 - In general, make sure the Special Study is in line with current Forest Service, BLM, and IWRB Management Plans.
- Infrastructure considerations
 - Need to include all infrastructure necessary for new storage sites, especially for sites in higher elevations where new conveyance and delivery systems may be expensive.
- Considerations for future meetings
 - Members requested that Reclamation distribute relevant materials, talking points and a list of questions for the Workgroup in advance notice so that members can be prepared to provide the requested feedback during the meeting.
 - NF and Marys Fork have more pressurized irrigation so less water leaves the basin; can we use/recapture the conserved water? (water conservation and management).
 - Greater basin benefits could be achieved if new alternative could prevent spills at Milner Dam.

Upcoming Meeting and Agenda

The next meeting – Meeting 6 - will be on Tuesday, February 15, 2011; the subject of the meeting will be a presentation and discussion of managed groundwater recharge (and potential recovery) and water markets. Subsequent meetings will be held on Tuesday, March 15, 2011 (conservation and water management) and Tuesday, April 19, 2011 (final Workgroup meeting to select 10 alternatives that will move forward with reconnaissance evaluation).