

In cooperation with:



Idaho Water
Resource Board

&



Henry's Fork
Watershed Council

Henry's Fork Basin Study

Meeting Summary

May 19, 2011

Meeting date: May 16, 2011 (Meeting #2)

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Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation requested that a series of interim meetings be held independent of the larger Stakeholder Workgroup meetings to informally discuss the Henry's Fork Basin Study (Study). The focus of this meeting was to review and discuss Domestic, Commercial, Municipal, and Industrial (DCM&I) water needs with development and planning and municipal entities. Meeting attendees are listed at the end of this summary.

Meeting Agenda

Bob Schattin opened the discussion by characterizing the DCM&I assessment from the Draft Needs Assessment.

Roger Warner provided context for the DCM&I water supply situation in Eastern Idaho by summarizing a typical portfolio of water rights, issues related to use of the portfolio, and current status of the groundwater moratorium.

- Municipalities are typically rich in surface-water right as a result of annexation or acquisition of irrigation lands. The amount of water available from those rights through exchange for groundwater is diminished the closer the municipality is to the River due to the groundwater model treatment of river reach gains and losses.
- Municipalities can prepare mitigation plans but would like to be able to develop storage/banking plans
- Municipalities need a legal mechanism to store and recover groundwater
- 1991-1992 trust water areas in effect under the provisions of the Swan Falls Agreement
- 1998 non-trust water (Idaho Falls, Rexburg). This has sunset, but no one has demonstrated no injury to downstream users

Meeting attendees continued the discussion by brainstorming various alternatives that would be beneficial for DCM&I water needs which include the following:

- Annex additional agricultural land
 - Obtain senior water rights
 - Other considerations/limitations would be that you cannot mitigate groundwater in winter for American Falls refill right.
 - Surface water treatment costs are considered too high for municipalities making groundwater sources more desirable.

- Conservation alternatives (both already under consideration):
 - Dual pipe systems (surface water for lawn irrigation, groundwater for potable demand)
 - Metering

The group generally considers that any Study alternative that benefits the larger groundwater user community would benefit municipalities and developers.

Because the DCM&I usage is relatively small the group indicated that it was not likely critical to the Study to refine growth projections or resulting water supply needs contained in the Draft Needs Assessment.

Meeting Attendees

Meeting Attendees included:

- Rebecca Casper – Eastern Idaho Water Rights Coalition
- Roger Warner – Rocky Mountain Environmental
- Dave Richards – City of Idaho Falls Water Department
- Bob Schattin – Bureau of Reclamation
- Mark Bransom – CH2M HILL