

In cooperation with:



Idaho Water
Resource Board

&



Henry's Fork
Watershed Council

Henry's Fork Basin Study

Meeting Summary:

Workgroup Meeting, April 10, 2012

1. Schedule and Agenda Review (*Bob Schattin, Bureau of Reclamation*)

Bob Schattin began the meeting with an overview of the study schedule, including milestones achieved to date, the topics to be covered at this meeting, and the schedule of work going forward to completion of the reconnaissance phase planning effort. The substance of Bob's presentation is reflected in the PowerPoint file for this meeting, posted on Reclamation's Henry's Fork study web page (<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/studies/idaho/henrysfork/index.html>).

2. Alternatives Evaluation (*Mark Bransom and Brian Drake, CH2M HILL*)

- Status of Technical Memos, Schedule, Review Guidance
- New Surface Storage Evaluation Highlights
- Market Mechanisms Highlights

Mark Bransom and Brian Drake reported on the status of work to complete reconnaissance-level study of alternatives. Mark specified (1) which alternatives were under review at this meeting (new surface storage options and potential water market mechanisms), (2) the type of input on these alternatives needed from the Workgroup, and (3) the schedule for completion of this same work on remaining categories of alternatives (including expansion of existing surface storage sites, groundwater recharge, and conservation alternatives).

Brian presented the draft study results for the five new (vs. expansion of existing) storage site alternatives. Mark presented the results for the market mechanisms alternatives. As above, the substance of these presentations can be reviewed via the PowerPoint file posted on the project website.

A summary of the group Q&A/discussion which followed Mark and Brian's presentation is provided in section 4, below.

3. Decision Analysis System & Process (*John Petrovsky, CH2M HILL team*)

John Petrovsky provided a "work in progress" report on the decision-support tool being developed to assist in comparative analysis of alternatives and decisions on which actions or combinations of actions will be carried forward into the next phase of study. Given the in-development status of this product, a copy of the associated Excel file John used in his presentation will not be posted on the project website or otherwise distributed for review. John indicated that the tool will be completed and in use for the next Workgroup meeting.

Following is a summary of the Q&A/discussion which followed John's presentation.

- **Q:** Will Workgroup comments be incorporated in technical memos and needs assessment? **A:** Yes, to the extent relevant. Under any circumstances, Workgroup input will be recognized in the meeting summary.
- **Comment:** Explain the point scoring process/system used in this tool. **Response:** John provided an explanation of how the point scores are developed in the tool. Of particular importance is the

fact that no preference or judgment is used in the basic system. Weighting of factors to reflect varying relative importance can be done if desired in a decision-making process.

- **Q:** Is there a technical memo that explains the why/how of point scoring? **A:** Such information will be included in the Interim Report.
- **Q:** What point in or period of time is reflected in a resource designation (for example, wildlife habitat)? Does information presented represent the current situation or historical? **A:** As much as possible, present conditions are reported.
- **Q:** Need to relate “scoring” to basin needs. Would it be more appropriate for volume score to be normalized/compared to needs rather than volumes of other alternatives? **A:** The planning team is currently exploring options for additional, more informative criteria by which to judge the merits of various alternatives. This includes potential benchmarks or criteria based on the Draft Needs Assessment report.
- **Q:** Why is dam raise scoring on a different sheet than surface storage? **A:** Alternatives for new surface storage vs. expansion of existing reservoirs are separated at the moment simply for convenience in organizing the analytical work. As comparative analysis is conducted and the study report is prepared, storage options at existing and new sites will be reported together.
- **Comment:** Add notes on bar charts to show which alternative is associated with graph.
Response: Yes, this will be done.
- **Q:** What are the individual components of bar heights? **A:** In the example shown, the teal color represents the score shared by all sub-alternatives related to legal constraints (i.e. all sub-alternatives have the same score for that factor). The various shades of maroon added above the teal show the varying cost associated with the sub alternatives, overlaid on top of one another.
- **Comment:** Post units of measurement for criteria used. **Response:** Yes, this will be done.
- **Comment:** Need to relate how alternatives meet ESPA needs. **Response:** Yes, this will be done.
- **Q:** Where are environmental impact sources documented? **A:** Information sources will be identified in the study report, in narrative, with figures or in the sources inventory, as appropriate.

4. Facilitated Discussion to Receive Factual Feedback on Surface Storage & Market Mechanisms TMs and Needs Assessment

(John Petrovsky, CH2M HILL team)

Surface Storage TMs (new locations; TMs addressing expansion options at existing facilities to be discussed at next Workgroup meeting)

- **Q:** Does surface storage analysis account for seepage and evaporation? **A:** No. Water budget losses will be examined during the next phase of study.
- **Comment:** Conveyance losses could be substantial and should be accounted for. How much actually would be impounded? **Response:** As indicated above, losses would be accounted for during the next phase of study.
- **Comment:** An analysis of water rights should be included, specifically local availability.
Response: Accounting for detailed, site-specific water rights is beyond the scope of the reconnaissance study, but it may be possible to examine downstream locations (like Milner Dam), where water potentially available for storage in the Henrys Fork basin may be estimated.
- **Comment:** Besides Milner, analysis of potential available water would need to consider American Falls and existing site-specific basin rights. **Response:** The Study Team will discuss how to incorporate Milner and American Falls into the water rights discussion (possibly in the constraints section).

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

- **Comment:** The discussion of fishery impacts is “coarse” and may need to be refined more. Also, the absence of cutthroat trout is not necessarily the best/only indicator of the impact to fisheries. **Response:** CH2M HILL will coordinate with IDFG to refine the fishery discussion.
- **Comment:** In general, there is no more availability of water rights during the irrigation season. Spring/peak flows offer opportunity. **Response:** Any new water right for new or additional storage would have junior priority. The hydrologic analysis assumed that water used for new or additional storage would be diverted from supply sources (streams or rivers) to the reservoirs during peak spring flows.
- **Comment:** Any new water right will have a 2012 priority. Water that flows over Milner Dam would be available for storage. **Response:** As indicated above, the Study Team will discuss how to incorporate.
- **Comment:** Looking at flows past Milner Dam is a good place to start; work backward from that point to the site under consideration. **Response:** See response above.
- **Comment:** State and agency plans define existing constraints. Information will be provided again for incorporation in TMs. **Response:** CH2M HILL will review and as appropriate incorporate any new information provided by the agencies.
- **Q:** What about the infrastructure for delivery works? How does water get from storage to use? **Response:** Distribution systems to convey water from storage locations to points of use would be evaluated during a later phase of study or left to the end user to provide.
- **Q:** How does Lane Lake benefit the North Freemont region? What about a detailed operation plan? **Response:** Any cross-basin transfer of water will be specifically noted, but detailed operation plans and distribution systems to points of use are beyond the scope of this study (as indicated above).
- **Comment:** Some sites within the basin may have current regulations restricting hydropower development. **Response:** The Study Team welcomes comments on specific alternatives that could be incorporated into the TMs.
- **Q:** Can costs be amortized over life of the project to provide a more reasonable comparison? **Response:** The Study Team will discuss the most appropriate time period for cost comparisons.

Market Mechanisms Highlights

- **Comment:** Memo was well written and clear. **Response:** N/A
- **Comment:** Recent water auctions in Northern Colorado were won by oil and gas drillers, rather than farmers, to be used in fracking. **Response:** N/A
- **Comment:** Tech memo should address water needs. **Response:** The memo references both irrigation demands and ESPA needs and is intended to provide a framework to describe mechanisms that could be implemented under certain conditions, many of which do not currently exist in the Henrys Fork basin. It is beyond the scope of the reconnaissance evaluation to attempt to quantify possible outcomes resulting from implementation of one or more of the described mechanisms.
- **Comment:** Desired ESPA demand reduction is for groundwater, not surface water. **Response:** Noted.

Needs Assessment

- **Comment:** Wants to ensure this Study undergoes due process, which is difficult when Needs Assessment and TMs are developed concurrently. Also doesn't feel like needs of certain regions (Upper Teton) are addressed. **Response:** The Interim Report will tie the pieces together. The Study Team welcomes comments on specific deficiencies in the TM(s). The Needs Assessment

has been developed throughout the Study process and the Draft has been well commented on. While there are many needs within the Basin, the workgroup has been fairly consistent in what the major needs are. It is not anticipated that there will be a major change in the understanding of the Basin's water needs.

- **Comment:** Looking at a combination of alternatives or multiple storage sites is a good idea. Need to look at impacts for various needs. **Response:** Noted
- **Q:** Will water stored be used in-basin or out of basin? **Response:** During this level of the study, the evaluation is intended to indicate where water could potentially be used. More detailed operations will be considered during future phases of the study. Based on the conclusions of the Draft Needs Assessment report that in- and out-of-basin needs exist it is assumed water stored in-basin could be used to meet those demands.
- **Comment:** More storage will provide all users with increased flexibility. **Response:** Noted.
- **Comment:** Available water would allow the region to attract businesses. Recent example was an agribusiness looking to locate to the region and in need of 2 cfs, but water right could not be granted. **Response:** Noted.
- **Comment:** We are water short. Creating more flexibility will not keep water up here. Worried that additional water will only be used to enhance security of senior rights holders. **Response:** Noted.
- **Comment:** We can't create water. In abundant years we would have the ability to store water. This will increase flexibility. First look to our own needs (in-Basin). **Response:** Noted.
- **Comment:** On average about one million acre-feet flow over Milner dam annually, so we're not managing our water resources as effectively as possible. **Response:** Noted.
- **Comment:** Additional supply does not affect the most senior (they always get water) or most junior (they will never get water) water right holder. It is the people who are in the middle who will benefit the most from additional supply. **Response:** Noted.
- **Comment:** Need to note Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) designations in reference to environmental flow needs. **Response:** The Study Team will update the Needs Assessment and/or TMs accordingly.