MINUTES

Selenium Management Program Work Group Meeting
April 16, 2015
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Conference Call Line: 1-866-541-2318
Passcode: 6191202

Attendees: John Sottilare (Reclamation), Lesley McWhirter (Reclamation), Jenny Ward (Reclamation), Paul Kehmeier (Farmer), Ken Leib (USGS), Mike Baker (Interested Party), David Brown (USGS), Steve Schrock (No Chico Brush), Theresa McGovern (NRCS), Judith Thomas (USGS), Barb Osmundson (FWS), Jedd Sondergard (BLM), Sonja Chavez de Baca (Selenium Task Force), Wes Boyce (NRCS), Mike Collins (NRCS), Steve Miller (CWCB) call-in

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10:00 – 10:15 **Introductions and Discussion of Agenda**

10:15 – 11:30 **General Updates**

- Salinity Program 2015 FOA
  - The FOA will be released May 1, possibly sooner, and will be funded by both, the Basin States and Basinwide Programs. Projects funded by the Basin States Program may have on-farm delivery components. A workshop will be held at the Bill Heddles Recreation Center in Delta on Wednesday, May 13 at 1:00 PM.
  - The FOA application deadline is July 17th.
  - An email will be sent out to announce the availability of the FOA.
  - New salt numbers will be available by May 1st at the latest. Contact John Sottilare to get the salt load reduction values.
- Critical Conservation Area Designation & Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Application
  - The River District is working on getting a Primary Funding Agreement with NRCS under the RCPP. It's currently at the national office in its 2nd week of review. Hopefully it will be finalized the week of April 20th, so money will be available by May 1st. The River District will need sub-agreements with individual project proponents.
  - The River District was informed that individual watershed plans would be required in each of the four Lower Gunnison RCPP priority areas as a requirement for receiving Watershed Authority (PL-566) funds. They did not know these were required. It will take a significant amount of money away from the project to complete all four

watershed plans. Because there is a lot of existing watershed and environmental documentation on the Uncompahgre basin, that plan may be done in 6 months, but it could take 1-3 years to get the other plans completed. Watershed plans are viable somewhere between 7 to 10 years.
    - One of the goals of the watershed planning process is to set up each individual priority area to move forward with future RCPP watershed projects should they decide to go through the RCPP process again. RCPP funds must be used within 5 years.
    - Reclamation will have an MOA meeting with the River District in Denver April 29th.
    - Each individual RCPP focus area will develop their own plans, with significant help and input from NRCS and the River District.
    - There is a lot of duplication of effort with regard to watershed planning and NEPA compliance, but this is just the first year of the program. Hopefully in the future, things will be more streamlined.
    - The River District will have an RCPP Coordination Team.
        - Project Management Assistance.
        - Part-time position out in the field with farmers.
    - The River District will set up a management group to make sure we are keeping up with the workgroups and the Salinity Coordinator.
- Salinity Program Field Coordinator Position
    - Five well qualified candidates were interviewed, and Beth Karberg with the Delta Conservation District was selected. She started a couple weeks ago, and works under Jim Currier.
    - She works exclusively with salinity control.
- CWCB Grant for Engineering Support in 2015 FOA
    - Steve has received 14-15 applications, some of which are collaborations. He hasn't figured out how to get money out to them. The awardees will get an email identifying the terms/conditions and then Steve will have them send him an invoice.
    - North Delta (one of the project proposals) will not receive money because they've already received ~$80,000 for engineering help.
- Selenium Task Force Items
    - Sonja has a new contract with the River District that covers both her work with the STF and other duties as assigned. Sonja has been working on the RCPP solely for the past few months. Other project activity updates can be found under the Science and Education/Outreach updates below.

11:15 – 11:30 **Technical Team Updates**

- The Technical Team still does not have an NRCS participant.
- It was proposed to combine the Technical Team and the Science Team like it was originally. No one opposed this, but we wanted to discuss this idea with

Dave Kanzer before anything was finalized. There is a question as to who would be the lead for the combined team.

- Sonja is working on finalizing the EC Lateral Lining Project final report.

11:30 – 11:45 **Education and Outreach Updates**

- There were three articles written/published in the UVWUA newsletter focusing on piping/lining, the RCPP, and hydroelectric accomplishments. This newsletter went out to 5,600 shareholders in January 2015.
- The Education and Outreach Team is working with the RCPP on developing education and outreach materials, such as a website.
- Tri-County is planning on publishing an article in their newsletter this spring.
- Sonja will email copies of the newsletters to the SMP.

11:45 – 12:00 **Science/Research Team Updates**

- There was a call on soil sampling in early February. Unfortunately, the proposal the SMP submitted with local and regional NRCS staff to get assistance with soil sample analyses from the Lincoln Nebraska lab was not supported at the higher level of the State NRCS. The decision appears to have been made partly on erroneous information and Sonja and Dave Kanzer are working on a letter of response. In the meantime, they think they can go forward with the transect component of the sampling, but the Mancos member sampling is held up for the time being.
- The USGS reported that the 3rd Montrose Arroyo report is available online. The general take-home of the report is there is a new site above the golf course, which had significant decreasing trends for both selenium and salinity. The ag conversion to residential is seeing downward trends, which we are not sure is the result of efficiency, less area, less use of water, etc. Ken will email the link to this report to the SMP.
- FWS has collected some pharmaceutical samples. The Science Team will discuss these samples and put together a presentation. The samples were of surface water, and also looked at pesticides. The results are parts per trillion, and pharmaceuticals are biologically active at these levels. Grand Junction has two wastewater treatment plants discharging water into critical habitat, which brings up questions regarding altered hormones in endangered fish.
- Samples show that selenium is decreasing at a faster rate than salinity on the Gunnison River at Delta, which may be attributed to salinity control projects. The USGS thinks they are typically over-estimating real-time selenium load because the equation is based on historical levels and selenium is now lower.
- Meaker expects to receive the big guns in the next couple weeks. The automation technology originally chosen isn't going to work well with the Nelson guns, so other options are being explored. This project will be highlighted in the Tri-County newsletter as an example of projects the RCPP is hoping to fund. Once the project is up and running, we are hoping to do an outreach/field trip.

12:00 – 1:00 **LUNCH**

1:00 – 1:15 **Discussion - Potential GW Infiltration into Municipal Sewer Lines**

- Treatment options for the plants are very expensive, and it's difficult to determine a proof in reduction. It also doesn't address the source of the problem. Not sure if this is worth addressing or if we should table it for future discussion. The SMP reviewed an April 10, 2015 email John received from Eileen Gers (City of Grand Junction) concerning this topic.

1:15 – 1:45 **Reclamation GW GIS Layers and GW Map**

- A book of old paper maps depicting the location of Reclamation groundwater observation wells installed during the 1970s, along with existing wells that were inventoried during that period, was discovered during Reclamation's move. Francisco created a GW well GIS layer from this map that could link to corresponding water level and water-quality data collected by Reclamation during this period. Jude helped in the process by converting the data files from a text format into an excel format.
- Jude discussed the 30 well network. They currently have irrigation and non-irrigation season samples from January 2014 – December 2014. Ideally, they would like to get those same samples again for all 30 wells.
    - Information being collected includes major ions, trace elements, nutrients, and dissolved organic carbon
    - The benefit would be enhancing the data set. The older data lacks trace elements and organic carbon.
    - It would cost about $140,000 to sample all 30 wells for one event, and they would like to sample 2 events (irrigation and non-irrigation).
    - They also need to maintain their pressure transducers. They have funding to continue this through December 2015.

The next SMP Workgroup meeting: A doodle poll will be sent out in the next couple of weeks to help schedule the next meeting, anticipated to be around the end of July.