

Summary

Project:	UENRD - Voluntary Integrated Management Plan			
Subject:	UENRD Voluntary Integrated Management Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting			
Date:	Wednesday, May 30, 2018 6:00-8:00 p.m.			
Location:	O'Neill Community Center – 501 S. 4 th Street, O'Neill, NE 68763			
Attendees	Kallhoff, Tim	Knight, Kyle	Gdowski, Daniel	Hatfield Edstrom, Katie (HDR)
	Blair, Kevin	Ramm, Jim		Engel, John (HDR)
	Pendlerick, Nick	Kizzire, Curtis		Molacek, Julie (HDR)
	Beckman, Scott	Kaup, Jack		Wiese, Carrie (NeDNR)
	Cemper, Ron	Fix, Scott		Eckles, Beth (NeDNR)
	Kaczor, William	Zuhlke, Alden		Schellpeper, Jennifer (NeDNR)
	Olson, Katie	Harte, Kent		Nevison, Sarah (UENRD)
	Borer, Tom	Paxton, Darby		Schueth, Dennis (UENRD)

SUMMARY

16 Stakeholders representing groundwater users, surface water users, municipalities, agricultural groups, large water users, well drillers, recreational groups, economic development and “others” attended and signed a commitment to be a part of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. (see attached sign-in sheets and commitment letters). Two groups (agencies and large manufacturers did not attend/commit). NRD and DNR will reach out to identify stakeholders from these groups to encourage a commitment.

1. Welcome & Introductions – 5 mins
2. Background on Integrated Management Planning – NeDNR – 20 minutes

Questions:

You say goals and objectives – what is the goal?

Overall purpose is to achieve and maintain a sustainable balance between surface and groundwater use. We identify goals to meet to help achieve the overall purpose.

3. District background – District – 20 minutes

Questions

What data do the stream gauging stations collect?

Some are operated by NDNR and some by USGS.

Collects flow in cubic feet per second and stream level. If you have a question about a specific gauge, let us know and we'll look it up.

4. Stakeholder Advisory Committee Role & Commitments – 5 minutes

Overview of commitment, rules of engagement and schedule; next Stakeholder Advisory Meeting will be held near end of June.

Questions:

After the whole process, which we hope is done by the end of the year, do we have commitments after that?

No. you would be encouraged to stay informed and participate, but there is no formal commitment past the 3 meetings. In some cases, like municipalities, we would like you to make commitments on behalf of your municipality or your company.

5. Issues Analysis Exercise – HDR - 25 minutes

Flip Chart notes:

(1) Monitoring Water supplies

- Existing methods are adequate in my opinion...on the Agriculture side (Groundwater User)
- Do towns or industries participate? (Groundwater User)
- Why are instream flows so high? (Surface Water User)
- Does Drawdown in pumping of recovery more emphasis than spring static level? (Groundwater User)

(2) Monitoring Water Demands

- Are towns or industries monitored at all? (Groundwater User and Agricultural Group)
- Will this plan limit future business water usage amounts in Holt Counts? (Economic Development)

(3) Minimizing conflict between water users

- Flow to Eastern part of the state as their (EWT) draining and usage increase because of population growth – import on Ag (other)
- Recreational use of Elkhorn in Easter part of state (Municipality)

- (4) Future growth in water users
 - Industrial impact of expansion on existing users (Municipality)
- (5) Education/conservation
 - Education on Nitrate levels (Economic Development)
 - Agree on above [nitrate levels education] – especially in town/city areas. ie lawns and golf courses (Groundwater User, Ag Group, Other)
 - Naturally occurring? Geology?? (Groundwater User)
- (6) Other water management concerns
 - Impact of Stormwater flows on receiving streams (Municipality)
 - Nitrate only ?'s quality (Groundwater user)
- 6. Planning process overview – HDR - 10 minutes
- 7. Public Comment – 15 minutes

Questions:

What would be an example of a goal you'd like to see included in this plan?

(Engel's slide, "Purpose of Project/Plan Goals" referenced) Sometimes it's an increase in education on conservation measures. Sometimes there are goals on how to allow new development to occur and not affect existing users. The goals are broader, guidance areas, and objectives will be more targeted to specific items, and action items are the concrete steps to bring about accomplishing the goals and objectives.

Is one of your bottom line goals to put meters on all the irrigation wells?

No. (DNR's response via Jennifer.)

Lower Elkhorn just sent out information that they will be requiring meters.

Lower Elkhorn NRD made that decision locally. It's very much a conversation to be had between stakeholder group and the local NRD's to see what we want to do in our area.

As NRD board member, I'd like to see a goal so that the usage is balanced with the supply so you don't drift into the fully appropriated. Once you drift into fully appropriated, you have a

couple dry years, you slip into over appropriation, and that's when the meters come.

So on a year with drought, how do you police how much water is used?

Jennifer – how the department does it; we administer surface water rights. These are all driven by when you filed for appropriation rights. When you notify us that you're short we send people out to verify that, then turn off "junior" appropriators (those that filed later) to get the "senior" appropriator (filed earlier) to their legal amount. Dennis – a perfect example would be the drought in 2012. We monitor 300 some flow monitor readings. We do not have any regulations in place regarding allocation systems. Once it hits the lowest level, we send a letter out to all irrigators in that areas letting them know we are within a foot of that reading, and then let them know that 10% of irrigation wells need a flow meter on it. Many of you already have that 10% in place. If it goes on another year, add another 10% of flow meters. If we drop 2 ft. below line, 100% needs flow meters. If it continues 5-10 years, then we look at allocation regulation. 2012 really alarmed everybody, but that didn't even touch those 1990 levels.

18,000 users from this area compared to the eastern part of the state (Douglas County) – how does that get balanced out/determined throughout the year? (does eastern part of state draw on the aquifer/drain what's available)

John – Douglas County actually gets a lot of their water from the Missouri river and Louisville well field. Surface water appropriation accounts for that. City of Lincoln draws from Platte. Those appropriations covers the new uses there for now.

If you're a surface water user and there is a drought like 2012 and you have a senior permit from 1975, but someone drilled a well in 1990 that pulls the surface water down, and they start allocating your surface water, how do you balance that between the guy that drilled the well in '90 and the senior appropriator from '75?

John – What we're trying to do right now is manage/balance the number of wells and depletion of the stream to avoid potential conflict. Beth; wells are not

going to go on a priority system. That's not what this is for.

8. Meeting closes – 8:00 p.m.

Additional comments/conversations summary:

- One stakeholder noted he was new and was still learning about water issues. Saw the meeting as a time/place to learn.
- One stakeholder commented at length about water banking, and wants the District to consider dams or reservoirs, even small ones only a few acres in size, so we can hold more water in the District. Thought this was a Large Water User, but Sarah acknowledged she could be mistaken.
- A municipality stakeholder said his greatest concern is minimizing water conflict, and said we need to make ground rules for how we handle and minimize conflict. Sarah thought he meant directly between municipalities/domestic and agricultural uses.
- Sarah Nevison heard more than one comment on nitrates, that they hadn't known there was a nitrate problem in the area. This was new data for some and they were leaning about the issue. One asked questions about the depth of nitrates in wells and geologic features – Sarah noted that we know the screened interval and depth of all the wells but we do not analyze the data in this way (3 dimensional) but rather only the location of the well (2 dimensional).