

DRAFT NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS
UPPER NIOBRARA WHITE NRD IMP ANNUAL MEETING

October 23, 2019, 9:30 a.m. Mountain Time
Panhandle Research and Extension Center
Scottsbluff NE

Attendees (Attachment A):

UNWNRD:

Pat O'Brien
Lynn Webster

WSEO:

Jeff Cowley
Rick Deuell
Brian Pugsley
Wray Lovitt

NeDNR:

Jeff Fassett
Carrie Wiese
Melissa Mosier
Jim Ostdiek
Jeremy Gehle
Tom Hayden
Beth Eckles

Public:

Bill Wilson

Agenda Items:

1. Introductions.
2. Review of agenda (Attachment B).
3. Carrie Wiese reviewed the NeDNR report
 - a. Pat O'Brien: Is the Hat Creek site out?
 - i. Hayden: It was out for a while due to construction of a new bridge, but is back in now. Site might be moved slightly.
 - b. Carrie Wiese reviewed current studies:
 - i. HDR has completed the aquifer absent study in 2018, and the report is available upon request.
 - ii. In 2018 NeDNR signed a contract with HDR, Inc., to conduct Groundwater recharge potential study. Also to prioritize potential recharge sites within the UNWNRD. Area of the study includes in Dawes, Box Butte, and the northern one-third of Sheridan and the northern two-thirds of Sioux County. The report is complete and is available upon request.
 - iii. Pat O'Brien stated that the study area in Dawes and Sioux Counties is pretty limited.
4. Lynn Webster reviewed the UNWNRD report.
 - a. Lynn provided the municipal report to go with last year's UNWNRD report.

- i. Includes Crawford's data – which they were waiting on.
 - b. In 2018 had 11 replacement well permits. No permits for other uses. Did receive some variance requests, that were acted upon in 2018 (p.2 of UNW report).
 - i. These included requests to modify existing wells or field boundaries, but no new acres or wells.
 - 1. One unique situation where an irrigation well had been converted into a livestock well was then converted back to an irrigation well.
 - c. UNW GW Rules were updated to provide for an application process allowing an additional 1300 groundwater acres in subarea 3.
 - i. UNW did have a request to add additional acres. Total requested in three applications is 265 acres. Have not issued the new well permits until the conservation planning is completed. Lynn did indicate that one applicant is pumping surface water through a natural lake appropriation in addition to the new well.
 - d. Crawford.
 - i. Has two small municipal wells and a White River surface water permit. They have a wastewater treatment system and its discharge is subtracted from their use. 2018-19, their discharge was higher than their inflow and thus shows a negative number for water use in 2018. UNW will discuss with the Crawford muni staff to confirm the negative value.
- 5. Information and Education.
 - a. No date set yet, but sometime in February the UNW plans to have their water users meeting. They are working on an agenda, and ways rebrand it in an effort to boost producer attendance.
- 6. Other IMP topics.
 - a. What about voluntary IMP work plan?
 - i. We need to review of where we're at. Had collaborated on a list of potential stakeholders.
 - ii. Potentially, could plan to have an initial stakeholder meeting around the water users meeting.
 - iii. Lynn will be pretty busy through the end of this year. Could get going pretty quickly beginning of 2020.
 - iv. Noticed errors in certification database. Not gigantic errors, but have been going through this to clean it up. Name changes, field boundaries. Will share with assessors. Following this effort, would be a good time to start on the VIMP stuff.
 - 1. Biggest issue has been trying to keep up with changing landowners.
 - 2. Will also need to get change of ownership info over to NeDNR.

- v. Overall, a February timeframe looks like it could work.
7. The Upper Niobrara River Compact. The next meeting will be at 10:30 a.m. today in this room.
 8. Public Comment.
 - a. Bill Wilson indicated he hadn't returned his certified acres form yet. Part of the reason why was its hard to figure out whether to use assessed acres, because they differ from UNWNRD numbers of acres, and FSA numbers of acres. Every county does it a little differently.
 9. Action items.
 - a. Recirculate list of potential stakeholders and touch base.
 - i. DNR contact UNW in about a month.
 - ii. Contact stakeholders in January.
 - b. Need to have a discussion about the HDR recharge report. DNR will schedule a conference call, or this can be worked-in next time UNW is in Lincoln.
 10. Discussion of Upper Niobrara River Compact.
 - a. Will wait to see when the next Niobrara Compact/NPDC meeting dates are planned to occur in the fall of 2020.