

Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition

General Meeting

Thursday, May 26, 2022

10:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

**Agenda**

10 min	Introductions
10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Consultant contracting - Elsa</li><li>○ PL 566 update – Harold</li></ul></li></ul>
10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Press Release sent to media outlets 5/5/2022</li><li>• Plans for second press release</li></ul>
20 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• June 23 in person<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ CBDL – What to expect from work beginning in June</li><li>○ Landaus/GeoEngineering – Project context, need to identify monitoring wells</li></ul></li></ul>
5 min	Follow up task assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Press release draft</li></ul>
5 min	Schedule outreach group meeting
	Adjourn

**Meeting Recording:** <https://wastatecommerce.zoom.us/rec/share/sNOqO7RTTP2nX4T-1d2FU5WebQE900B0tJzfOToKIZ7TIT7HWi8fWqzs-biOj80p.DgrcXvyUlsQWjG4T?startTime=1653584550000>

**Passcode:** !+37p&4K

**Notes**

- Press Release sent to media outlets May 5, will begin working on second press release in the coming weeks. Will work with Outreach Working Group behind the scenes and bring draft to larger group for review.
- If you see the press release in the paper or hear interviews on radio or on tv, please forward to Elsa and Claire.
- East Columbia Basin Irrigators District meeting took place last week, first in person meeting since PL566 approval. Chance for growers to meet funders, regulators, other stakeholders. Outlined roles and responsibilities.
  - NRCS should be able to adopt much of the existing EIS developed by Bureau of Reclamation which should speed up timeline and move group to implementation faster than expected.
  - Next steps: approval of statement of work, hiring contractors.
  - There will be public comment period for EIS, requests support.
  - Farm Bill will fund PL566 process, could also be supported by other legislation like Manchin Bill passed in November.

- PL566 OGWRP group is undertaking larger watershed planning activities that will lead to supplying large irrigators with surface water and taking them off groundwater wells. CBSWC is related to this because municipal well levels are also declining, but they need to stay on groundwater. CBSWC is made up of municipal and small community water systems and seeks to increase well level monitoring for municipal systems to ensure the experiences of small systems is also captured.
- In prep for June 23 in person meeting in Moses Lake from Columbia Basin Development League:
  - Background – CBDL, Gina, Elsa, others jointly wrote a white paper 2 years ago to establish what the Coalition is and what it hoped to accomplish
  - Goal of the meeting will be to lay groundwork for what group wants to accomplish in the next year.
  - Expect an iterative and participatory process.
  - CBDL’s role is to facilitate meetings, provide general administrative support, developing agendas and providing recommendations on steps to take between meetings.
  - CBDL will lead meetings, build stakeholder database, facilitate formation of strategic plan – where do we want to go, identify steps to get there.
  - Create education, outreach, advocacy, annual work plans.
  - “The world is built by those who show up” – expect a consensus based process to build a plan.
- In prep for June 23 in person meeting in Moses Lake from Landau/GeoEngineers
  - Ben Lee and Katherine Ryf will represent Landau; Kevin Lindsey will represent GeoEngineers.
  - Focus areas will be groundwater monitoring and developing a preliminary watershed management plan.
  - Collaboration is important, among consultants, and among stakeholders within the group and efforts within the basin.
  - Goal is to identify additional groundwater wells to monitor over time and fill data gaps
  - First task will be well selection – bring ideas of potential monitoring wells to the June 23 meeting, along with well information or contact information.
  - Developing the watershed managements plan will happen after identifying wells.
- Is there an overlay that shows the GWMA wells so that at June 23 meeting we can look at a map and identify areas not covered by monitoring wells?
  - Could develop maps of study areas for existing projects looking at groundwater data like: OGWRP (irrigation wells), WSU data, LCCD data. Will take 2-3 months to evaluate GWMA wells.
- Clarify “Watershed Management Plan” – we have to call the work we are doing watershed planning but the Coalition is not seeking to establish a federally or state recognized watershed. The Coalition wants to perform monitoring to ensure experiences of municipal
- PL566 is not establishing a watershed, but is the NEPA document and process to implement the OGWRP.
  - The PL-566 "watershed plan" will essentially adopt Reclamation's original Odessa Subarea Special Study EIS. That's how we'll be able to accelerate PL-566 "watershed planning".

- “Watershed Planning” is a term used at state and federal level, and in different laws at those levels, and all mean different things. CBDL will consider developing a definition guide so we are all working with the same terminology.
- Kevin’s first objective will be to find current monitoring wells to identify data gaps.
- Roilene Comes At Night encourages other groups to come to NRCS for funding, interested to know what this group is doing.
- Rep Dye brings up geography of aquifer floors and how monitoring wells help us understand aquifers. “Pool” filling by Othello, also mentions “Mound” of federal water by Pasco. Looking for ideas on how to get access to the mound.
  - Ecology is starting rule making on how to manage groundwater in the “mound”. Joint effort between Bureau of Reclamation and Ecology. Similar to Quincy Basin artificially stored groundwater (QB Permit) program.
- Expect to see emails from the CBDL in preparation for the June 23 meeting.