

# Groundwater Management Plan Committee

September 13, 2018

12pm – 2pm at Festival Hall Rm 1

## **Committee Members in attendance:**

Joe Melling                  Brent Hunter                  Paul Monroe                  Reed Erickson

## **Committee Members not in attendance:**

Spencer Jones              Ramon Prestwich              Paul Cozzens                  Paul Bittmenn  
Rob Dotson                  Paul Nelson

## **Others in attendance:**

Jessica Staheli              Doug Hall

*Joe Melling called the meeting to order at 12:10pm.*

### **1. Review Minutes:**

The committee will look to approve minutes from July meeting at the next meeting. (Due to being short of a quorum).

### **2. Review Draft Groundwater Management Plan:**

Monroe said he has been looking into adjustments on the data portion of the plan. He met with Brad Slaw at USGS about putting in additional monitoring systems. It is quite expensive to put a continuous monitor on wells. We may end the water year below 40% normal precipitation. He stated that recharge has been dry, so it will be interesting to see where those wells are. He said that USGS could possibly add three monitoring wells. Monroe wants to put together some maps of the existing wells and choose which ones they would like to monitor. He discussed how the water data would be reported. He wondered if the committee should encourage agricultural users to meter wells. Hunter said that farmers used to have meters on their well, but it wasn't feasible, when you can use the acreage from a satellite to see the yield and water use. He said a meter would probably be more accurate, but they do not seem to work half the time. Hall said that they can now use sonar to find the outflow calculations. Hunter

said that technology usually just confirms the amount of water that farmers already know they are pumping. The pumps show how much water that should be pumping.

Monroe wondered about talking to the State Engineer about putting the magnet sonar programs on the pipes. Hunter wondered if there was some sort of portable program that someone could go around and use. Monroe said that the water commissioner could possibly do that. Hunter said that it would be more accurate, but it would be a full-time job for someone.

The committee discussed how much acre-feet the State Engineer is estimating on acres when using aerial survey. They wondered if he is measuring off of depletion, efficiency, or historic values. Is he counting the efficient use that some people are using. Erickson wondered how much water is being returned to the groundwater. The committee discussed the difference in diversion and depletion for several minutes. Erickson said that most of that water was depleted. Melling said that USU knows a lot of that information. It was said that there is a higher percentage of recharge under a wheel line. Hunter said that alfalfa needs about 3/10 of an inch of water every day during the summer. They decided that they need to ask the State Engineer how he estimates the water that is being used.

Monroe said that it is possible that the Water Conservancy District would be the entity that would be measuring this water data in some way. Monroe brought up the data loggers that the District is using currently on some of the aquifer projects. Monroe thought that the committee should possibly get a few more monitoring wells to turn over the USGS. Another option would be for the District to hire someone to go around and monitor the wells. Melling said the wells should be monitored between fall and spring. Hunter said that this water issue is not just an issue here in Cedar Valley, it's an issue all around the world.

The committee discussed that the State Engineer will probably use this Groundwater Management Plan as a tool for Cedar Valley to use. If the plan doesn't work then he will come in and cut water rights. That is why the committee needs to figure out how to monitor correctly if the groundwater is improving through plan.

The committee discussed the concept of "the universal model" and how there is possibly ice in the center of the earth instead of magma for several minutes. (12:52 pm)

### **3. Agricultural Incentive Conservation Update**

Hunter said the Soil Conservation District and ag producers are getting ready to install the new systems this winter. Bill Rowntree will be building the piping for the LESA systems. They are working on rating the agricultural producer's systems to see which systems can switch over to the LESA system through the grant. Hunter discussed the LESA system and DragonLines that are being tested on his pivots with USU Extension. Melling said that the grant program needs to be extended after the elections, so that more systems can be changed over to the LESA system. They discussed how Evan Vickers was a help in the grant process. (1:05pm)

Monroe said that we need to be thinking of more questions to ask the State Engineer when he comes next month. He talked briefly about the Water Advisory Committee. (1:06pm)

### **4. Public Comment (Limit to 3 minutes each)**

Hall said that he hopes that the committee is moving ahead and creating a plan that is efficient. He expressed that recharge seems to be going well. Monroe said that Cedar Valley is working well to balance the aquifer.

Joe Melling closed the meeting. (*Meeting adjourned at 1:10pm*)

#### **Next Meeting Date:**

Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup> @ 12pm  
Division of Water Rights, Cedar City Office  
646 N Main St., Cedar City, UT 84720