



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: George Schneider
Phone: 509-449-2008
Email: georgeschneider2000@gmail.com
Date: May 18, 2018

**METHOW WATERSHED COUNCIL TO HOST PUBLIC MEETING ON THE
PROPOSED WOLF CREEK TWIN LAKES WATER STORAGE PILOT PROJECT**

The Methow Watershed Council (MWC) is pleased to announce an informational community meeting regarding a proposed water project, the Wolf Creek Twin Lakes Storage Pilot Project. The presentation and question/answer session will be held on Thursday, May 31, 6-8 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room at the Winthrop Barn.

Since the early 2000's, the water levels of the Twin Lakes have generally been significantly below historical levels. This has effects on water storage, domestic wells, ground water inflow into the main stem Methow River, and water quality, recreation, wild life habitat and associated community values in and around the lakes. Development of new water storage opportunities to support both instream and out-of-stream uses is a high priority action identified in the MWC's *Detailed Implementation Plan (2009)* for the Methow River Watershed. In line with this, the MWC, along with its funding organization, the Methow Watershed Foundation, have led Department of Ecology funded feasibility investigations to help address this problem since 2015. In addition, the Twin Lakes Aquifer Coalition (TLAC) has been looking into storage options since the early 2000's. Along with the MWC, Ecology, and TLAC, the other project partner in this effort is the Wolf Creek Reclamation District (WCRD).

WCRD has investigated ways to conserve water in their system and operations, and has found approximately 200 acre-feet (AF) of water per year that can be saved and used to help the Twin Lakes situation. The water saving will come from installing water level control automation at the screen box. This water would be conveyed to the vicinity of Twin Lakes using mostly existing WCRD pipes, with some additional pipe needed at the downstream end. Water put into Twin Lakes during the irrigation season would recharge the aquifer, resulting in year-round flow of groundwater into the mainstem of the Methow River.

This is a pilot project, expected to begin before the 2019 irrigation season, and will last two to four years, giving affected parties the opportunity to test assumptions about project operations and make actual observations about conditions resulting from the operations. Results of the pilot will be used to refine lake/aquifer storage volumes and expected instream flow benefits, including quantities available for mitigation of new out-of-stream uses under permanent project development. Monitoring will be conducted during the pilot to help update calibration of a computer model that simulates surface and groundwater behavior. While the pilot project is considered essential for the success of a permanent project, it is not a certainty that a permanent project will result.

The purpose of the meeting on May 31 is to solicit any questions, concerns, or other input from community members. No RSVP is required. More information and a list of Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the “Projects” page of our website, MethowWatershed.com. Please contact George Schneider at georgeschneider2000@gmail.com with questions or to request further information.