

**Methow Watershed Council
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2010**

Council Members present were: Chair Greg Knott, Marty Williams, Jennifer Molesworth, Tom Gehring (Town of Twisp), Vice-Chair Vicky Welch, Mike Fort, Char Schumacher (Okanogan County), Bill Tackman, Don Phillips (Alternate: MVID), Coordinator Lee Hatcher, and Alternate Secretary Colleen Storms.

Council Members Absent: none

Guests: Mary McCrea and Richard Karro (Winthrop)

Chairman Knott called the meeting to order at 5:07 pm.

Secretary Storms collected volunteer timesheets from Council members.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Additions: None

Changes: None

Approval of the Minutes from the February 18, 2010 Meeting

Motion:

Council Member Williams moved to approve the minutes of February 18th, 2010 as amended to correct one typo. The motion was seconded by Council Member Tackman and passed unanimously.

Greg Schuler's Report from DOE regarding Instream Flow Rule Revision (IFRR)

Coordinator Hatcher reported about feedback he'd received from Greg Schuler, DOE. Lee said that it appeared all the Watershed funding would be restored in the State budget, so he'd asked Greg about how to prepare for that occurring. He said that Greg told him he needed the MWC to split out the IFRR into two phases. They needed to make one task list and budget with everything they could get done between now and June 30th by Friday. He reminded the Council that Barwin and DOE had said they were willing to entertain an approach where the Council would present the rule change in two phases, the first to move water down to the Towns of Winthrop and Twisp, and the balance in a second change proposal. However, Lee said if the funding is restored he and Greg felt it would be wisest to try to do the rule change in a single effort. Council Member Fort remarked that when DOE approved the plan they signed off on the rule change concept assuming they were committing money to it. He felt it was a commitment on the part of DOE. Greg and Marty recalled this similarly and they agreed it was important to keep in mind.

Lee said that the funding proposed in the latest draft of the budget was for the balance of the 2010 fiscal year and 2011 as well. Schuler told him they needed to know what the MWC could start almost immediately and what could be accomplished by June 30th, 2010.

Chair Knott called for a motion to authorize Lee Hatcher to work with Tim Flynn to develop an IFRR project proposal, as an addendum to the Aspect contract, for proposed rule revision with the

priority of transferring water to the Towns. Lee would be authorized to prepare the proposal in coordination with Greg Knott and then submit it to Greg Schuler, DOE, within the prescribed timeframe. Mike Fort commented that he wanted to see the rule be drafted where it does not preclude using the mechanisms to move water in other reaches. The Council agreed that while the priority right now was to ensure the ability to move water from the Early Winters reach, that the rule language should not exclude other reaches in the watershed. Mike Fort moved and Vicki Welch seconded the motion to authorize Lee to develop the IFRR project proposal as Greg Schuler had requested. Motion passed unanimously.

IFRR STRATEGY

Chairman Knott discussed the fact that the Council needed to develop a strategy to start talking about Rule Revision very quickly; there is a need to have substantive discussions very soon in light of the goal to complete tasks by June 30th. He suggested Aspect could maybe help to get a direction and how to lay out the discussions and decision-making about rule change. He asked members to talk with people in the basin so that the Council can consider the rules the community wants to revise. He sees this gathering of input as the job of the MWC.

A recent Attorney General opinion rendered in response to a DOE request has redefined how much water can be withdrawn under the exempt well exception. The AG opinion says that the water required for watering up to ½ acre of garden or lawn and the stock watering quantity are not included for purposes of calculating the 5000 gallon limitation. This changes some of the assumptions that have been talked about with regards to estimating how much of the 2 CFS set-aside has to be reserved for exempt wells. There was discussion about whether the water used for stock and the ½ acre of irrigation should be considered in the MWC's calculation of water used from the reserve. After discussion, it was agreed that all of the uses had to be considered in calculating how much of the 2 CFS is left of the reserve. Council Member Welch commented that it might be to our advantage to calculate as accurately as possible the reasonable use numbers instead of letting DOE determine that amount. There was a discussion about the original 600 gallons per day that was used in national projections; it was supposed to include inside and outside water use. More discussion around this indicated the Council generally thinks they need to do a domestic study to determine a supportable number for use, inside and out. There was discussion about whether 600 gals per day intended to include stock watering and ½ acre irrigation. Also, per Marty, consideration should be given to those exempt well users who also have access to an irrigation ditch. Greg Knott said he thought having Aspect consider this calculation in their proposed task order would be wise. Lee said he also is talking with Aspect about what the cost might be for them to put together a tracking system for new uses in the County; the annual report deadline should probably be moved back to June 2010.

COUNCIL POSITIONS

Lee Hatcher read into the record the results of the three initiating governments discussion regarding position #5: On March 2, 2010 the designees for the three initiating governments met, Nate Wehmeyer, Okanogan County Planning (via phone), Tim Johnson, MVID and Tom Gehring, Town of Twisp at the Twisp Town Hall to discuss the recommendation of the Methow Watershed Council to appoint Bill Tackman to position #5 (Lower Valley).

Council Member Johnson moved to appoint Bill Tackman to position #5 of the Methow Watershed Council. The motion was seconded by Council Member Wehmeyer and passed unanimously.

USGS CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT

The Methow Watershed has been included in a pilot project for USGS to study the effects of climate change. Lee has been working with them and attending meetings that relate to the work of the MWC. He will bring records of attendance at these meetings to the Secretary to account for additional match hours.


Lee presented a map and hydrographs that demonstrate some of the draft information that is being tracked. The hydrograph models present the historical data, the normal variability of climatic affects on the river, and the result of different climate trend assumptions on that data. The USGS is asking the MWC and other local fisheries agencies what data is important to them so that the results of the study are targeted to the management needs in the watershed. The Council discussed the trend assumptions and results and how future concerns might differ greatly from the current priorities. The local feedback will be taken back and the final drafts of these models will be completed in about six months. Groundwater flow models will be done eventually and these have significant impacts on the 2 CFS reserve and would be important information for the MWC.

Council Member Tackman asked if they will ever stop revising the data and go with it because the science always changes and gets better and more detailed over time. Greg Knott said that the USGS is using the Methow for this modeling because they have been here doing previous studies over quite a bit of time; we're in the tertiary level of testing. He said that they know their groundwater modeling was the weakest part when they reported in the past and intend to make major changes when they revisit that data. Lee agreed that it would be great to have the groundwater modeling done to provide information to back up things like the 2 CFS reserve, which was not ever supported by strong science.

Adjournment


A motion was made by Council Member Williams to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 pm. The motion was seconded by Council Member Tackman and passed unanimously.

APPROVED:



Greg Knott, Chairman

ATTEST:



Colleen G. Storms
Alternate Secretary