

Methow Watershed Council
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2008
Twisp Town Hall

Council Members present were: Chairman Katharine Bill, Greg Knott, Marty Williams, Vicky Welch, Nate Wehmeyer, Okanogan County, Tom Gehring, Council Member Town of Twisp and Secretary Jackie Moriarty.

Council Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Mike Fort, Ray Campbell and Tim Johnson, MVID.

Guests present: Tom Tebb and Rusty Post, Department of Ecology (DOE), Mary McCrea, Washington River Conservancy, John Crandall and Colleen Storms, Town of Twisp Clerk/Treasurer.

Chairman Bill called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Secretary Moriarty reported that Kurt Danison, Highland Associates would not be present, but presented a preliminary report to the Council. Council Member Knott asked for time at the end of the meeting to discuss grants.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 21, 2008 MEETING

MOTION:

Council Member Wehmeyer moved to approve the minutes of February 21, 2008 as sent. The motion was seconded by Council Member Welch and passed unanimously.

TOM TEBB, DOE – METHOW VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT AND TOWN OF TWISP WATER TRANSFER – ADENDA ITEM #124

Tom Tebb, DOE was present to discuss water rights and long-term water supply planning for the Town of Twisp. Mr. Tebb went over a brief history of loss of the water rights by the Town of Twisp. Mr. Tebb stated that he is attempting to speak with all groups in the Methow Valley that are actively working with or on water issues. Tebb shared a list of things that the Town of Twisp is currently working on to conserve and reduce their water consumption; fixes at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP); working with an engineer regarding well head corrections; and the Water Comprehensive Plan is being reviewed at Health Department level. Tebb stated that the March monthly pumping record should show a significant reduction in usage.

Mr. Tebb is working towards an Overriding Consideration of Public Interest (OCPI), which is based on research showing that it would be for the greater good of the community to grant the water transfer from the MVID to the Town of Twisp. Currently Mr. Tebb is trying to gather information regarding seasonal flows, winter being the most restrictive season, to determine the effects increasing winter water use would have on the river.

Mr. Tebb explained that after the data is gathered and all agencies have had a chance for input the DOE will make a recommendation to the Conservancy Board. Council Member Knott confirmed the area of the river possibly affected by the OCPI as being on the Twisp River just above the confluence of the Methow and Twisp Rivers to just below the WWTP where the effluent is release back into the river; Tebb confirmed that was correct. A primary study showed that the affect on the river is at an amount so small that it is technically immeasurable. The group came to the conclusion that the “1 bucket in 1 bucket out” theory would have the most positive affect if the “bucket” or the diversion of water from the MVID was decreased up Twisp River as high up as possible.

INSTREAM FLOW RULE REVISION OUTLINE – QUESTION #2 – AGENDA ITEM #123

Chairman Bill began discussion on question #2 on the Instream Flow Rule Revision Outline. How is consumptive water use measured? (is a withdrawal rate of 600 gpd defensible?; how is recharge measured?)

Council Member Welch stated that we needed more data to determine whether 600 gpd is defensible. Council Member Gehring agreed with Welch and advised that metering would give us accurate withdrawal numbers. Rusty Post stated that if usage was solely computed off of the 5,000 gpd allowance, we would likely be out of water in some places. Council agreed that a consumptive, seasonal and irrigation study outside the towns needs to be done.

Chairman Bill discussed the recharge study up in the Arrowleaf area and asked the Council if they felt that another study would need to be done or that was sufficient. Council Member Knott stated that a consultant could identify a recharge study; what kind and how much money it would cost for the Council. Knott stated he felt that the withdrawal data was most important at this time. Chairman Bill suggested that we also may need to get a consultant to research an adaptive measurement process as well. Knott clarified that the main objection regarding the amount of water withdrawn per well will be the amount of lots that can be developed. Council Member Knott explained that if 5,000 gpd is the number used, no more lots would be able to be developed and some people would be happy with no more growth, however if the number is much less, developers could go down to as little as ¼ acre lots with no limit to withdrawals. Knott pointed out that as time goes by the data for each reach will become more important for planning.

The Council felt it was important at this time to develop the consultant list. Secretary Moriarty stated she would work with Rusty regarding the specific needs of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and when completed the RFQ would be sent out to Council for review and comment. The Council discussed a meeting date in May to review the qualifications received and decided to set the date at the April 17, 2008 meeting.

HIGHLAND ASSOCIATES RESEARCH

Secretary Moriarty handed out a spreadsheet provided by Kurt Danison showing updated information regarding development in the reaches. The Council had several questions regarding the spreadsheet and decided they would wait for clarification from Danison at the next meeting.

WATER RIGHTS WORKSHOP WITH WASHINGTON RIVERS CONSERVANCY – AGENDA ITEM #126

Mary McCrea, from the Washington Rivers Conservancy (WRC) was present to discuss the upcoming water rights workshop on April 14, 2008 at the Twisp River Pub. Ms. McCrea passed out posters and agendas for the workshop to the Council. Council Member Knott proposed an addition to the agenda: What do interrupted rights mean?

Ms. McCrea reported that the WRC is currently working on a water rights handbook.

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY UPDATE – RUSTY POST – AGENDA ITEM #121

Rusty Post asked for time to relay a couple of issues to the Council. Post shared that the Methow Restoration Council group which primarily works with water quality issues can be a resource to the Council and would serve as great partners regarding upcoming work in the Methow Valley.

Post then discussed the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) program which would use satellite imagery to provide advanced hydrologic forecasting, stream flow data and climate reduction statistics. They intend to spend a considerable amount of money to provide data to local agencies. Jay Kehne, of the North Central Washington Resource Conservation and Development spoke on the issue at the last Methow Restoration Council meeting.

Jay Kehne is currently covering all areas that may benefit, gathering interest and data. Council Member Knott shared that he would like to see the Council sign on to this idea and have Mr. Kehne address the Council; the sooner the better. Knott also discussed developing a water balance, meaning “a water in water out” theory taking into consideration human need, plant need, environment etc. where’s the water going and who or what is using it.

SPECIAL INVITATION

Chairman Bill asked that Jay Kehne, coordinator of the North Central Washington Resource Conservation and Development be invited to our April 17, 2008 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

A motion was made by Council Member Welch to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 pm. The motion was seconded by Council Member Knott and passed unanimously.

Katharine Bill, Chairman

ATTEST:

Jackie Moriarty, CMC
Secretary