

Methow Watershed Council  
Meeting Minutes  
June 11, 2009  
Riverbank Building

Council Members present were: Chair Katharine Bill, Greg Knott, Ray Campbell, Vicky Welch, Marty Williams, Tim Johnson, MVID, and Tom Gehring, Council Member Town of Twisp, Coordinator Lee Hatcher and Secretary Jackie Moriarty.

Council Members Absent: Vice-Chair Mike Fort and Nate Wehmeyer, Okanogan County.

Guests present: Lee Bernheisel and Ken Sletten.

Chairman Bill called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 29, 2009**

**MOTION:**

Council Member Welch moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Council Member Williams and passed unanimously.

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

Additions: Council Member Meeting Attendance  
Okanogan County Shoreline Master Plan Update

**MOTION:**

Council Member Williams moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Council Member Gehring and passed unanimously.

**OKANOGAN COUNTY SHORELINE MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Council Member Welch reported on the Okanogan County Shoreline Master Plan Update. Welch reported that a draft is done based on group representative comments. Welch encouraged the MWC to prepare comments, reporting there has not been an official deadline set for the comment period. Chairman Bill suggested that she and Welch work on a draft comment list together to present to the MWC at their next meeting on July 16, 2009.

Chairman Bill postponed the discussion regarding the shorelines until the end of the meeting.

## **COORDINATOR'S REPORT/TIMELINE**

Timeline – June 2009

- 1<sup>st</sup> Draft DIP
- Continue Domestic Use Study Design
- Rule Revision
- Quarterly Grant Status Report
- Define Agriculture Land Protection Intent and Scope
- Update Kurt Danison/Highlands Associates Development Table with 2008 data
- Update Kurt Danison/Highlands Associates Reach Information for 2008

November – DIP Final Draft

## **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PROJECT PLAN – MODIFY WAC 173-548**

The Council with the assistance of Tim Flynn and Bill Sullivan of Aspect Consulting discussed the following:

### **1.0 Summary of issue identified in the Management Plan**

### **2.0 Implementation objective**

#### **Section 2.1.2**

**Question:** Does this apply to existing or all Group A and B? The Council agreed that Group A and B existing and future needs should be met within the reach they are located.

Further Council discussion brought out the need to know if there is enough water in the reserves to satisfy existing Group A and B users, then a plan should be developed for future growth; Council agreed that the water use study and tracking needs to be in place to determine if there is adequate water supply.

#### **Section 2.1.3**

**Question:** Does 1.48 cfs still apply to meet Towns of Twisp and Winthrop needs? The Council discussed the possible needs of each Town and determined that they would need to talk to Winthrop. It was suggested that the Highlands Associates report needs to be refined and a water use study in place.

**Question:** Is it intended to transfer water to both sub-basins mentioned? Council agreed - yes.

### **3.0 Specific data gaps to be addressed to meet objective**

#### **Section 3.2**

**Assumption:** Effect of lag will need to be considered. Mr. Flynn shared that his experience would be that July or August would be the peak consumptive water use period. Flynn shared that a USGS study shows that there is an approximate 1 month lag time before surface water/river is effected. The Council needs water records to determine the highest month of usage.

#### **Section 3.3**

**Assumption:** Report by Highlands (2008) does not identify number of exempt parcels per reach. Council agreed that this assumption is correct.

### **Section 3.4**

**Assumption:** Geographic boundaries reaches se forth in WAC 173-548 are defined. Mr. Hatcher reported that they are still being worked on.

### **4.0 Recommended implementation approach to meet objective, with adaptive management (whether filling data gaps or other).**

#### **Section 4.5**

**Assumption:** This process is separate from the effort to modify WAC 173.548. Mr. Flynn shared that this could be implemented outside WAC 173.548 according to current statue. Council agreed that water transfers should be discouraged but not restricted.

Mr. Flynn reported that an unallocated reserve is not considered a water right until it is allocated. Council agreed that a mechanism for water transfer should be set up separate from revising WAC 173.548.

### **6.0 Implementation responsibilities, coordination, approvals, permits, etc.**

#### **Section 6.2 - Ecology**

**Assumption:** Although the Management Plan indicates the above coordination will occur during DIP development, these tasks will be accomplished subsequently during the implementation process. Council agreed – yes.

### **7.0 Monitoring and data management**

#### **Section 7.10**

**Question:** Should this threshold be equal to 90 percent of the reserve set aside for every reach? Chairman Bill confirmed that according to the plan (on page 20, line 30) the Methow residents would need to be notified.

The Council discussed who would be notified at 90% mark and decided both Okanogan County and Methow residents.

## **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PROJECT PLAN – PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND USES**

### **1.0 Summary of issue identified in the Management Plan**

**Assumption:** This implementation action has two elements. One is a zoning and land use issue and the other is a water right preservation issue. MWC seeks to address the water right aspect of the preservation of agricultural lands issue. The Council agreed – yes. Council Member Knott expressed again that the Council’s function is not zoning.

### **2.0 Implementation Objective**

**Assumption 1:** In the absence of continued use, the MWC should encourage having these water rights temporarily placed into the State’s TWR program to avoid relinquishment and preserve to future use in the basin. The Council agreed – yes.

**Assumption 2:** The primary objective is to “prevent” (changed to “avoid”) relinquishment and (added) “discourage” out-of-basin transfers of agricultural water rights. The Council agreed – yes.

**Assumption 3:** If not already done, a first action will be to identify Family Farm Act water rights which are constrained for agricultural use. Mr. Flynn explained that some

water rights (RCW 90.66 – 1977 Family Farm Act) were issued and must to stay in agriculture or they go away; this special water right relates to a specific size of farm as well. The Council agreed to include the Family Farm Act as an action item in the DIP.

**Questions 1:** What is the extent of this problem i.e. how severe is it known or perceived to be? The Council felt that this issue was very important and that they are worried about not having a plan in place to protect the amount of ag land versus population.

**Question 2:** Has the amount and location of existing Family Farm Act water rights been identified? Those holding these rights need to understand the constraints on transferring these rights. Answered above in Section 2.0 - Assumption #3

**Question 3:** What areas in WRIA 48 are most affected and need attention first? Council agreed all areas.

**Question 4:** What is the priority to actively manage lands for agriculture versus wildlife habitat? Discuss that an argument could be made that ag lands with irrigation provide wildlife habitat; it is a secondary benefit to the valley of keeping ag land.

**Question 5:** To what degree do the following objectives from the Watershed Management Plan relate to the water supply component and how important are these objectives? a. Return state lands to private ownership. b. Lease of state and private lands (including absentee ownership) for agriculture. Council Member Welch stated that land owned by the State is sometimes neglected and that ag land should be sustained or increased.

\*\*Council Member Welch left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

The Council discussed irrigation efficiency and working on an educational outreach to strongly encourage privately or state obtained land remain as ag land. The Council discussed cash crops being changed over to new crops with higher profit margins and crops that use less water. Council Member Knott stated that the Council should encourage growth in the Towns in an effort to preserve ag lands.

## **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PROJECT PLAN – DEVELOP WATER STORAGE**

### **1.0 Summary of issue identified in the Management Plan**

#### **2.0 Implementation objective**

**Question 1:** What is the primary objective: sustainable agriculture supply or enhance in-stream flows? The Council felt that these two things are linked and that the objective is both. Council Member Williams discussed piping the ditches as being detrimental to the flow.

**Question 2:** Is there an interest in using a portion of the unallocated reserve to supply a storage project? The Council discussed ditches, active pumping and irrigation canals; groundwater storage should be investigated also. After research is complete, weed out those that are not beneficial. Allow flexibility in canals to allow for flows. Council would like to see in the DIP a way to explore these avenues.

**Question 3:** Are there differences in the groundwater recharge component of this action and Artificial Groundwater Recharge? Council agreed this is not possible.

**OKANOGAN COUNTY SHORELINE MASTER PLAN UPDATE – Continued**

The Council asked Chairman Bill to contact Council Member Welch and research if there are any items in the Shoreline Master Plan that the MWC should be concerned about and if so to bring a list of comments to the next meeting.

**COUNCIL MEMBER MEETING ATTENDANCE**

Chairman Bill discussed the continual absences by some Council Member and the MWC By-Laws. Council Member Knott and Williams stated that they would contact at least one of the individuals and report back to Chairman Bill.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:**

A motion was made by Council Member Williams to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm. The motion was seconded by Council Member Knott and passed unanimously.

---

Katharine Bill, Chairman

**ATTEST:**

---

Jackie Moriarty, CMC  
Secretary