

Water District 02 Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
03/19/2013

Attendance

Corbin Knowles - IDWR and WD02 Watermaster

Tim Luke - IDWR

Jon Bowling - IPCO

Mark Henslee - Salmon Falls Land & Livestock

Merril Brown - Hammett Farmer

Steve Tarbet - Flying H Farms

Mark Noble - Grindstone Butte

Vic Conrad - JR Simplot Company

Chris Bryan - Black Mesa

Billy Wolf

Charlie Bryant – Midnight Sun

Meeting was called to order by Tim Luke, IDWR at approximately 10:00 AM and was held at the Glenns Ferry City Hall. Introductions were made. Tim offered to take the meeting minutes but suggested that the Committee formally select a chairman to facilitate meetings and other business. Mark Henslee volunteered to be the committee chairman and no objections were raised.

Corbin Knowles provided a summary of the US Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Water Smart Grant application that the Idaho Water Resources Board (IWRB) submitted in January. Corbin and Tim worked on submittal of the application along with IDWR planning staff assigned to the IWRB, particularly Neeley Miller. Corbin provided some handouts of the grant proposal. The grant sought cost sharing with BOR for installation of measuring devices and some telemetry equipment on about 22 total diversions owned by 15 separate entities or individuals. The 22 diversions were identified based on interest expressed by users and/or contacts made by Corbin and Tim to some of the larger diversions, especially within the CJ Strike to Swan Falls reach of WD02. IDWR/IWRB had very limited time over the winter to visit diversions and estimate costs for each site and meet the January 17 application deadline. Fifteen of the 22 diversions serve over 1000 acres each and are considered large river station diversions for which telemetry equipment would be installed. The grant identifies proposed costs for meter and telemetry equipment installations. The total grant proposal was \$341,859, with \$188,022 (55%) coming from diversion owners and \$153,837 (45%) coming from the BOR. The BOR had not approved the grant as of the date of this meeting but BOR advised IDWR that grant approvals would be delayed until early to mid-April.

Corbin also discussed that much of his work in WD02 this summer would be to evaluate whether ultrasonic meters will work on some of the larger diameter pipes or penstocks in the district. Corbin described some of the concerns about conditions and linings found on many of the larger pipe diversions. Corbin also hopes to look at some other opportunities for irrigation system upgrades or efficiency improvements in which systems could be updated and measuring devices installed through other government cost share projects like the NRCS EQUIP program, and he may also look at potential opportunities for energy efficiency by working with Idaho Power.

The next agenda item included discussion and timeframe for IDWR to issue a measurement device order. Mark Henslee solicited input or comments for discussion. Charlie Bryant asked if there might be

an opportunity for other water users to qualify for the BOR grant funding if they were missed on the first grant application if the first grant is awarded. Both Tim and Corbin explained that it was the intent of both IDWR and IWRB to apply for a second grant if the first is approved. The IWRB grant proposal expressed this intent with an objective to seek cost sharing particularly on the remaining large diversions in the district (there are about 30 to 35 large diversions total). IDWR/IWRB would have included more diversions if not for the short grant application window of time. Corbin explained that some of his summer and fall field work would be geared towards visiting additional diversions and preparing for a second grant application. Any user or owner interested in participating in a second grant application should contact Corbin.

Some discussion ensued about measurement methods. Billy Wolf asked if any consideration would be given to installing open discharge measuring devices such as flumes, weirs or gage stations etc. Corbin and several committee members estimated that as many as half of the large diversions have open canals that could accommodate such devices. Corbin identified some of the problems with using such devices, including mossing and related concerns/affects on accuracy, and additional maintenance, but he indicated open channel devices are still an option to consider.

Regarding the timeline for a measuring device order, Tim and Corbin discussed some options for a phased approach. Ideally, if the BOR grant were approved, then the 22 diversions in that project could have devices installed by the 2014 irrigation season. This would provide a good jump start on the process and allow the district to proceed or stage additional compliance with perhaps a second grant proposal and installation of devices by 2015 and then seek full compliance by 2016. Tim and Corbin cautioned that due to limited personnel or staff resources, it would be difficult to try to set a specific year for compliance of all diversions without some staged approach. If we can stage implementation over three years, we will start collecting data in each of the three years and figure out the time required for a watermaster for planning future budgets when the water district funds the district on its own.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that further discussion and decisions on a measuring device order and timeframe for compliance should be tabled to the next meeting and after we receive confirmation on the BOR grant.

The Committee next discussed some questions about potential size or amount of future water district budgets. Tim and Corbin described some of the water districts in the state that may be similar in size and amount of water use. They gave a few examples of districts with similar sizes or operations and described the budgets and expenses in those districts. Mark Henslee suggested that he might work with Corbin and Tim on some water district budget/operation scenarios. Tim and Corbin suggested that they could put together a matrix of budgets from water districts of similar size or operations. Watermaster competencies and skills were discussed – someone will be needed that has good skills, experience, and competencies in water measurement, water rights, data collection, management of budgets etc.

The final item of discussion concerned scheduling the next Committee meeting. Corbin stated that some time should be given for him to inventory/visit some of the large pipe diversions to evaluate the use of ultrasonic meters. Corbin felt that he could make progress on this item through June and early July. A suggestion was made to schedule the next meeting on July 10 at the same location. All members present agreed accordingly.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

Minutes prepared by Tim Luke, IDWR