

Water Transfer Working Group Meeting Minutes Monday, November 6, 2017, @ 1:00 PM

Attendees:

Chuck Garner, Chris Lynch, Stan Isley, Kurt Walker, Trevor Hutton, Stuart Crane, Tom Ring, Jonathan Kohr, Tyson Carlson, Seth Defoe, Larry Martin, Erin Moore, Vern Redifer, Don Gatchalian, Joel Freudenthal, and...

On the phone: Jessica Kuchan, Jeff Slothower, and Bill Clarke.

[NOTE: The call-in number on the meeting agenda is activated and available, and will remain available through the April 2, 2018 WTWG meeting.]

[That call-in number is: (303) 445-3914, password 1245.]

- Approval of Minutes:
October 2, 2017 – The group approved the draft meeting minutes posted on the website.

Previous Business:

- None

New Business:

- 2017-76 Uhrich, G4-35639 Water Right Permit: Kurt presented this proposal. The proposal is for one existing well (groundwater permit) to supply 1 domestic use and 500 ft² of lawn and garden irrigation, mitigated by the Trailside Bank's former Pasco water right (CS4-02223CTCLsb2@1) from an unnamed spring in the Spex Arth Creek drainage, with a 1903 priority date. NOTE: This is a correction that Kurt offered. The project description incorrectly stated the Trailside Bank's former Newton water right was the mitigating water right. The new domestic use is located 0.5 mile east of upper Spex Arth Creek, with pumping impacts to Spex Arth Creek and the Yakima River. This proposal does not require use of the Exchange Storage Water Contract. Non-irrigation season pumping impacts will be mitigated by continual release of stored water from a small pond (<10 acre-feet) on the Pasco property from October 1st through March 31st. The group foresees no fish concerns. **Thumbs Up.**
- 2017-77 Surprenant, G4-35692 Water Right Permit: Kurt presented this proposal to the group, which is very similar in nature to 2017-76. This proposal is for one existing well for 2 domestic uses, with 1,000 ft² total (500 ft² each) of outdoor irrigation, mitigated by the Trailside Water Bank's former Pasco (Easton Subbasin) 1903-priority water right. Stan reported a very minor math correction: total outdoor irrigation water use should be 0.043 af/yr (not 0.046 af/yr); making outdoor consumptive use 0.039 af/yr (not 0.041 af/yr); and making total consumptive use 0.274 af/yr (not 0.276 af/yr). The place of use

is along Spex Arth Creek, with pumping impacts to Spex Arth Creek and the Yakima River. This proposal does not require use of the Exchange Storage Water Contract. Non-irrigation season pumping impacts will be mitigated by continual release of stored water from a small pond (<10 acre-feet) on the Pasco property from October 1st to March 31st. The group foresees no fish concerns. **Thumbs Up.**

- **2017-78 Ackerlund, G4-35905 Water Budget Neutral:** Kurt presented this proposal to the group. This proposal is for one WBN well for 1 domestic supply and no (i.e., 0 ft² of) outdoor irrigation, mitigated by the Kittitas County Over the Counter Water Bank's former Amerivest 1874 priority Manastash Creek water right. The place of use is 5 miles SE of Ellensburg on the north flank of Manastash Ridge, with pumping impacts to the Yakima River, situated below the KRD canal, utilizing KRD irrigation water. The group foresees no fish issues, and Exchange Storage Water Contract use is not needed.

Thumbs Up.

- **Upper Kittitas Suitability Map Updates (Information Only):** Kurt and Trevor both described Ecology's recent update to the Upper Kittitas County Water Bank Suitability Maps, with handouts: 1) the previous Upper Kittitas County Yakima River Mainstem mitigation map from 2009, and 2) the 2017 update of the Upper Kittitas County Yakima River Mainstem mitigation map. The Department of Ecology has removed all of the publicly-owned lands from the red and yellow areas, leaving them as a neutral color on the map, since those lands will not likely be the subject of new well approval requests. The green area has been expanded to reflect better hydrogeologic knowledge now available to Ecology and increased mitigation bank options that have become available. The new maps show a more realistic picture of mitigation water availability for potential future development. There's a separate suitability map for each water bank. Larry mentioned he'd like to have one map that showed mitigation water availability from all water banks for all areas of upper Kittitas County, and Erin said that that information is available from the Kittitas County OTC website. Water bank suitability maps are also available on Ecology's website. The group briefly discussed why Gold Creek and Fowler Creek/Peterson Creek are yellow areas, not red areas, and noted that Tillman Creek is properly a red area. Kurt explained that Ecology's red/yellow color determination hinged primarily on water availability, and Tom noted that Tillman Creek is a red area because of fish concerns. Trevor said the area designations are a work in progress, and will be refined as needed into the future. The group thanked Ecology for the information.
- **Yakima County Groundwater Mitigation Program (Information Only):** Vern and Joel and Don presented this summary of the new Yakima County Groundwater Mitigation Program to the group. The county commenced working in 2012 on this mitigation program for pumping impacts to be caused by prospective new wells, culminating in the scheduled implementation of this new Yakima County Water Utility in January 2018.

Yakima County recognizes the relationship and connection between surface water and groundwater, and the need to protect existing rights. This Utility is acquiring pre-1905 priority water rights, and will change those water rights to municipal water rights, not subject to relinquishment. The Utility will be able to mitigate for 98% of the county's existing lots, with the remaining 2% of the lots being within the Forest Reserve zone. Yakima County's Technical Analysis breaks the county up into groundwater 'domains' as opposed to surface water watersheds, and defines well depth and location requirements for new wells in each domain, with the objective of shifting pumping impacts to the Yakima River mainstem, and away from the local tributary streams. This Utility will allow for new wells to be developed without risks of curtailment of use from priority calls by senior-priority surface water rights. Water use will be metered with an increasing fee rate structure that will encourage minimal groundwater usage. Yakima County can mitigate for anticipated new wells for the next 8 to 10 years with the water rights it has already purchased. The Technical Report estimates a 26% consumptive use of the domestic groundwater pumped by the new wells, but that jumps to 90% consumptive use when pumping exceeds a defined pumping quantity threshold. Yakima County is not planning at present to develop mitigation for existing rural domestic wells in the county. The group thanked Yakima County staff for the informative presentation.

- WTWG Efficiencies: Trevor and Kurt offered the group another preliminary discussion of Ecology's desire to explore efficiency improvements in the WTWG review process. Trevor suggested that today's meeting was running too long, and he proposed to bring this discussion back to WTWG at the next meeting on December 4th, 2017. Trevor offered to compile some of Ecology's thoughts and suggestions and send those out to the WTWG mailing list prior to the December 4th meeting, and he hopes all interested WTWG participants will attend that December 4th meeting and provide ideas and input. Ecology still supports the WTWG review process. Trevor assured the group that Ecology would still bring major water right transfer proposals and water bank creation proposals to WTWG for review and discussion. Ecology is seeking a more efficient and less staff-time-consuming process for review of small-quantity WBN-type proposals. Possible process streamlining ideas include: small-quantity transfer proposal review on an Ecology webpage (instead of individual reviews of each of those proposals at WTWG meetings); more Kittitas County Over-the-Counter Water Bank-type advance approvals for specified areas; continuing to update 'yellow-zone' maps and reduce the amount/area of yellow zones, etc. The group agreed to table this discussion until the next WTWG meeting (on December 4th).

Next Meeting:

- December 4, 2017, Monday @ 1:00 PM, YFO Conference Room.
- New Proposals in to Ecology (Trevor Hutton) by COB Monday, November 27, 2017.

- **IMPORTANT DISCUSSION:** Trevor and Kurt want the group to have a broad discussion on December 4th, with good attendance by all interested WTWG participants, about WTWG's future – an introspective review of WTWG and its review of water transfer proposals. For example: What is the desired future role for WTWG? Should individual water budget neutral (WBN) well proposals continue to be reviewed by WTWG? Would WBN-type small-quantity proposals be better (and more efficiently) reviewed by a process of posting proposals on an Ecology webpage? Does WTWG want to continue to offer preliminary vetting, advice, and suggestions, to proponents of speculative transfers before they are formal proposals? Is WTWG still operating 'within the box' or expanding its scope of review? Should WTWG continue to meet monthly? Is the WTWG review process valuable, and should WTWG continue to operate? Trevor and Kurt are looking for efficiencies, and suggestions for streamlining the WTWG review process. Ecology will bring updated 'yellow-zone' maps for Kittitas County, and a list of suggested WTWG review process streamlining ideas, to WTWG's December 4th meeting for review and discussion.

2017 & 2018 Future Meeting Schedule:

- December 4, 2017; January 8, 2018; February 5; March 5; April 2; May 7; June 4; and July 7, 2018, all on Monday @1:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned.