

# Groundwater Management Plan Committee

June 19, 2018

12pm – 2pm

Division of Natural Resources

646 North Main Street Cedar City, Utah

## **Committee Members:**

Joe Melling	Brent Hunter	Paul Bittmenn	Paul Cozzens
Ramon Prestwich	Rob Dotson	Reed Erickson	Paul Monroe

## **Committee Members not in attendance:**

Paul Nelson	Spencer Jones
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## **Division of Water Rights Staff:**

Kent Jones	James Greer	Kayla Bulloch	James Reese
Teresa Wilhelmsen	Nathan Moses	Locke Hahne	David Jones

## **Others in attendance:**

Jessica Staheli

*Meeting called to order at 12:11pm (By Joe Melling)*

### **1. Review Minutes:**

The committee will vote to approve minutes from May at the next meeting.

### **2. Utah Division of Water Rights:**

#### **A. Present/Discuss Modifications to Draft Policy**

##### **a. North/South Subareas-Possible Change to Location of the Boundary**

##### **b. Enoch Restricted Area**

K. Jones said that their office found a new possible alternative to changing the Highway 56 boundary. They have been looking at the moving it north to the Iron Springs Road. Greer said that they had looked at some of the current water rights between Iron Springs Road and HWY 56. Most of the rights show that about 6,000 acre/feet are of municipal status, and about 1,000 that are not municipal. Cedar City's well field is above and below the line. K. Jones said that he wanted to move the boundary, but wanted to get input on moving it up to Iron Springs Rd.

Monroe said that from an aquifer standpoint it makes sense to change the boundaries, but Cedar City might be concerned about not being able to transfer water into this area. Bittmenn stated that with the present set of rules Cedar City cannot move the rights across Hwy 56. He stated that the existing wells aren't the current conversation, the conversation should be where the next well would go. He suggested a section in the policy that allows the movement of a water right from an existing well to a new well. K. Jones said that if the State Engineer must make cuts, the laws will allow changes by bringing in a senior water right in place of a junior water right. (19:00)

Dotson said that the proposed restrictions around Enoch City would push Enoch to go somewhere outside to gain water, instead of preventing it from using too much water. The committee and DWR staff discussed for several minutes how these boundaries could affect the aquifer. Greer said that this would be a policy that goes in conjunction with the Groundwater Management Plan.

The committee discussed for several minutes about moving water rights in conjunction with recharge and recovery projects. To move water rights with this policy, the rights would have to be south of Iron Springs Road.

K. Jones and Greer said that with the Iron Springs Road boundary, water rights can still be moved from south to north, but not north to south. In the Enoch area, rights can only be moved out of the boundary. Dotson said that before creating the boundaries around Enoch, there needs to be more data. Dotson was not sure that the policy, with the current data, would necessarily help or hurt the Enoch area. Monroe said that the boundary is basically an attempt to try and to protect Enoch City from itself.

The committee discussed agricultural use, and how people are starting to put in new pivots and use water rights that were not currently in use.

Reese said that none of these boundaries are going to bring the water line up, but it will help spread the water evenly through the valley. The committee discussed what would have to happen to change the boundary in the future. They also discussed the impact that the HWY 56 boundary has had on the valley.

K. Jones talked about the importance of committees coming together to create Groundwater Management Plans. Monroe said that the committee has discussed many options that aren't in the draft that they gave the State Engineer. He said that the

committee has discussed creating a bank of water rights, among other solutions. Administratively making decisions becomes very daunting. K. Jones said that the main ability the State Engineer has is to evaluate water rights based on priority. He wants to be respectful of the Groundwater Management Plan.

Dotson said that there needs to be a lot more information gathered before Enoch boundaries can be set. K. Jones said that they will not set the boundary now, but maybe in the future. Greer said this boundary could be a separate policy than the Groundwater Management Plan. K. Jones said they will just adjust the plan to be more flexible with the policy changes. Dotson said that it could be an option for the future, but he doesn't want it to change currently. (55:00)

K. Jones said that to adopt these policies a public process would be held. The policy would then be adopted and there would be a 60-day period before it would go into effect. During that 60-day period the policy is appealable. Bittmenn said that this would give land owners time to protect their interests.

The committee discussed for several minutes regarding moving the HWY 56 boundary to Iron Springs Rd. The State Engineer will most likely wait for the Enoch Boundary, but move forward with the HWY 56 boundary.

Cozzens talked about many of the projects and ideas they are using for recharge in Cedar City. (1:13pm) The committee again discussed the water rights and who owns the recharge and recovery water.

### **c. Terminus Lakes**

K. Jones said that when there is available water, people should be able to use it. He said that people can apply to use the water if it doesn't go against the rights of others. The State Engineer must protect those rights. (1:22:40) He doesn't want to make the situation worse or discourage recharge. There is a water problem, and water users need to be protected. A more stable basin needs to be created.

### **3. Aquifer Recharge Projects**

Monroe went over some charts he created for aquifer recharge, snow pack changes, and volume of recharging. Last year the basin had an early snow melt and it was put

into the western rock recharge pit. In January and February, the basin ended in the normal precipitation rate. The basin recharged 1000-acre feet, which is not a lot. It was not a large volume because there was not a large snow pack. Prestwich said that Coal Creek peaked very early this year.

Cozzens said that at the water user conference he was told that the basin would see less snow pack and possibly more monsoons. Cozzens said that an option would be diverting storm water to a big lake and then down to Quichipa. The committee continued to discuss spring water flow. The large surges of water need to be utilized in some way.

#### **4. Agricultural Incentive Conservation Update**

Monroe said that the Water District received a \$220,000 grant through the department of Agriculture to convert pivot systems to LESA/LEPA. This could be a 30% increase in water efficiency. The Water District also partnered with Rocky Mtn. Power for VFDs for agricultural producers. The Water District and local Soil District just started to get the word out for the grant. The priority ranking goes off current efficiency. There is field day is on Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The committee talked about water savings that Tom Baker is seeing from the LESA pivots he has installed. Baker said that he had around 10-20% water savings at least.

#### **5. Groundwater Management Plan**

The committee and DWR Staff discussed the draft of the Groundwater Management Plan. K. Jones said that him and his staff would take time to look through it and give suggestions. He stated that there should be a public meeting around September, and in the meantime, he will send comments to the committee about the plan. He wants to be able to monitor water based from the Groundwater Management Plan.

Joe Melling closed the meeting. *(Meeting adjourned at 2:15pm)*

#### **Next Meeting Date:**

Thursday, July 12<sup>th</sup> @ 12pm

Festival Hall

105 N 100 E, Cedar City, UT 84720