Hood River Basin Water Planning Study

Meeting Minutes: March 6th, 2013

# Call to Order

Niklas called to order the Hood River Water Planning Group Meeting at **2:00 pm** on **March 6th, 2013.**

# Attendees

The following were present:

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| **Name** | **Organization** |
| 1. Hugh McMahan | At Large Member |
| 1. Jason Keller | At Large Member |
| 1. Chris Brun | Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs |
| 1. John Buckley | East Fork Irrigation District |
| 1. Jer Camarata | Farmers Irrigation District |
| 1. Les Perkins | Hood River County |
| 1. Mike Benedict | Hood River County |
| 1. Mattie Bossler | Hood River County/ East Fork Irrigation District |
| 1. Steve Stampfli | Hood River Watershed Group |
| 1. Bonnie Lamb | Oregon Department of Environmental Quality |
| 1. Rick Craiger | Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board |
| 1. Gary Asbridge | U.S. Forest Service |
| 1. Niklas Christensen | Watershed Professionals Network |

# Planned Business

Niklas began the meeting with introductions. The majority of the meeting was spent reviewing the status report.

## Introduction

1. Mike announced that Niklas had ended his employment with Herrera Environmental Consultants and now is employed with Watershed Professionals Network (WPN). The County ended their contract with Herrera and signed a new contract with WPN which amounted to the unused funds and incomplete tasks from the contract with Herrera.
2. Niklas presented and reviewed the schedule for Consultants, the Bureau of Reclamation, and Hood River County working on the Water Planning Study on page 3 of the 3.1.13 Status Report to clarify any confusion with previous versions of the schedule. He announced the majority of the tasks for each party were on schedule with exception to Climate/Hydrologic Modeling being performed by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau is at the calibration stage with the DHVSM model.
3. Niklas also reviewed two overall considerations (see pg. 4, 3.1.13 Status Update): the need for extending the historical record for the flow data used in the DHVSM model, and the need to better calibrate the model to produce results more representative of observed data. Niklas said he planned on meeting with the Climate Impact Group at the University of Washington and the Bureau on 3.7.13 to discuss how to remedy these issues.

## Groundwater Modeling

1. Niklas summarized the Bureau’s progress on Groundwater Modeling (see 3.1.13 Status Report).
2. Niklas presented some overall considerations from the Bureau’s Groundwater Design Document; They found in their preliminary level of analysis that the Basin has a lot of clays and fine grain soils with low permeability which will limit recharge and ultimately groundwater availability.
3. Niklas also mentioned the need to potentially reevaluate the level of USGS involvement after the groundwater webinar being held on 3.13.13. It’s possible the USGS may not need all the money remaining in their contract, and if so, some of that money could be shifted towards working on the DHSVM calibration. Mike responded and said he didn’t see any problem and could prepare a contract amendment to decrease the amount of the USGS contract.

## Climate Change Analysis

1. Niklas summarized the Bureau’s progress on Climate Change Analysis (see 3.1.13 Status Report).
2. Niklas presented the Bureau’s progress in developing the DHVSM model by going over the DHVSM plots in Figures 1-4 of the Status Report. Figures 2 and 3 show modeled flows from DHVSM and observed streamflows from Hood River at Tucker Bridge and the West Fork Hood River, respectively. Modeled streamflow is under simulated in August and September for both sites. The under simulation is actually greater than what it appears in the figures, as the modeled flows need to be compared to naturalized streamflow (removes affects of diversions and regulation). Naturalizing the Tucker Bridge gauged streamflow adds roughly 330 cfs to summer flow and 70 cfs to winter flow. Niklas has analyzed this in the Water Needs Assessment and passed on the naturalizing data to Reclamation. Figure 4 presented the model’s underestimation of Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) when compared to observed SWE as well. Niklas thought these results identified the need for more funds to improve the DHVSM model as mentioned in Item 3 of Groundwater Modeling section above.
3. Chris wondered if these flows could be modeled at the mouth of the Hood River. Niklas responded by saying that the model could route flows to any point in the Basin (e.g. IFIM locations) but that they were focusing on locations with stream gauges at this point for calibration.

## Water Storage Assessment

1. Niklas summarized the Bureau’s progress on the Water Storage Assessment (see 3.1.13 Status Report).

## Water Resources Modeling

1. Niklas summarized the Bureau’s progress in the water resources modeling portion of the study (see 3.1.13 Status Report). He was impressed with the level of spatial detail in the model. Some items in the model do not accurately represent the Basin yet (Lawrence Lake, potable water districts, and groundwater recharge/discharge are excluded), but these items will be worked through in the coming weeks.

## In-Stream Flow Assessment

1. Niklas summarized Normandeau’s progress on the IFIM Study (see 3.1.13 Status Report).

## Water Needs Assessment

1. Niklas summarized his progress on the Water Needs Assessment (see 1.16.13 Status Report). He passed around a draft Water Needs Report.
2. Niklas still is having issues collecting enough data from potable water districts. He has not received any information from Parkdale and Oak Grove Water Company and some potable water districts do not have water use reports. He has also received limited information from Mt. Hood Meadows.
3. Mike wondered how the group would sign off on Niklas’ Water Needs Report. Les responded and said each of the water users would need to review sections of the document with their information and he said he could also review the report. Niklas also mentioned Bob Wood should review the document as well.

## Water Conservation Assessment

Niklas said that Conservation Assessment will begin after the Water Needs Assessment.

## Interactive Map of Hood River Basin (Google Earth or Arc Explorer?)

1. Niklas presented two options the County could use to store the spatial data from the Study: Google Earth or ArcExplorer and asked the group for feedback on what software would be more appropriate.
2. Bonnie mentioned that the Crooked River Watershed Council has utilized Google fusion tables with their water quality data and said the map incorporated attribute data easily with spatial information
3. Jer wondered if the spatial and attribute data from this study could be incorporated into the County’s web-based interactive map. Niklas thought that was a possibility.
4. Ultimately the group decided Niklas should correspond with Mike Schrankel and ask him what software he would prefer.

# HRC Update

1. Mattie summarized the work she has completed with establishing the Groundwater Monitoring Network and assisting Niklas with the Conservation Assessment (see 3.1.13 Status Report).
2. Bonnie wondered if what water quality parameters well owners were interested in testing. Mattie responded and said well owners were mostly interested in testing for bacteria and nitrates.
3. Mike wondered if quarterly groundwater level measurements were sufficient to provide enough data. Jason responded and said a quarter was a standard timestep used in groundwater models.
4. Chris mentioned that another article could be written in Ruralite magazine and he has used the publication as a contact platform for past projects and received a lot of response. Hugh said he knew the contact for the Ruralite and he would be happy to write another article about the program.
5. Niklas also mentioned that with a volunteer monitoring program some administration would be required and asked if the Watershed Group or SWCD would be able to store equipment and make it available. Steve responded and said that the HRWG could likely house equipment, and perhaps participate in other aspects of the program.  He also stated that availability of program funding would not necessarily result in the HRWG deciding to adopt the program, given office and staffing limitations.

# Budget for OWRD Holdback Funds (10% of Overall OWRD Budget)

1. Niklas stated the possibility for allocating the remaining $25,000 of the OWRD grant funds to be spent after 6.1.13 (see page 18, 3.1.13 Status Report).
2. Mike mentioned that the County plans on only spending $223,500 of the $225,000 and the remaining funds could be added to the holdback funds available after June 30th.
3. Niklas reemphasized the need to spend more funds on improving the DHVSM model by potentially reallocating funds from the USGS contract. Jason wondered if it would be useful to use the remaining funds from the USGS on conducting seepage funds. Niklas responded and said the cost to conduct seepage runs is more expensive than amount of remaining funds available.
4. Niklas asked Rick Craiger what grant opportunities the County could pursue with OWEB in regards to groundwater monitoring. Rick said that the regular grant program could be used for monitoring and the small grant program could not be used for monitoring. He also said in past years their funds used to be split for two purposes: one for monitoring, watershed studies, and education and the remaining funds were used for technical assistance on projects. He also mentioned these rules could change because the funds are now combined and OWEB is looking into the possibility of allowing monitoring as an option for the small grant program.
5. Rick also mentioned that the OWRD grant program is modeled after OWEB and said that a grant extension is required if funds are used after the grant availability date. He recommended making an amendment to the grant agreement to secure the funds and allow funds to be spent after the grant availability date.
6. Mike mentioned his concerns with securing funds from the OWRD 10 percent holdback because the allocation of the funds would be contingent on a complete final report. OWRD would likely require results from the Bureau’s final report to be included the County’s final report. The exact date the Bureau’s final report is complete might not be concrete and potentially completed after the grant availability date set in a grant amendment with OWRD. Les responded and said based on his understanding, the Final OWRD report did not have to include results from every part of the Study so the Bureau’s results could be potentially excluded. Mattie mentioned she would look into the exact requirements of the OWRD final report.
7. Niklas also wanted a decision from the group as to whether or not funds could be reallocated from the USGS contract or the 10 percent holdback to improve the DHVSM model. Les gave his support to reallocate the funds from either option. Mike said he preferred to allocate funds from USGS. Jason wondered if the USGS would be able to review the OWRD groundwater model with a smaller contract. Niklas responded and asked Jason how long it would take to review the model. Jason thought about eight hours would be sufficient to review the model and Niklas said the USGS contract costs $680 per day of work. Niklas said he would discuss the remaining level of effort required with the USGS after the groundwater webinar on 3.13.13.

The group decided to skip the April meeting and meet again in May. The meeting was adjourned at **4:10 pm.**

# Action Items

1. Provide flow measurements taken from two points along the Dee Irrigation Ditch (Les).
2. Provide Draft Groundwater Design Document to Bonnie and Hugh (Mattie, already completed).
3. Correspond with Terrence Conlon about potentially changing the County’s contract with USGS (Niklas).
4. Correspond with Mike Shrankel on whether or not he would be able to maintain the spatial and attribute data from the project using an interactive web-based map (Niklas).
5. Consult Bob Wood and Marc Norton if a certification is required to measure groundwater levels (Mattie).