

MINUTES
Gunnison Basin / Grand Valley Selenium Task Forces
July 30th, 2009

Attendees: Barb Osmundson (FWS), Dennis Murphy (BLM), Sarah Sauter (UWPP & STF WQ Monitoring Assist.), David Brown (USGS), Mike Baker (USBR), Eileen List (City of GJ), Pete Jacobson (CSSGA), Ed Warner (USBR), Steve McCall (USBR), Ed Settle (GJ Pipe), Charles McMurdy (MCFB), Fred Fisher (SCD), David Kanzer (CRWCD), Denis Reich (CSU CE), Ken Leib (USGS), Kevin Bray (Bray & Company), Andrew Madison (UWPP), Barb Sharrow (BLM), Grady Harper (NFRIA), Sonja Chavez de Baca (Coordinator GB/GVSTF)

I. Coordinator Updates

a. Project Updates

- *Watershed Plan (Coordinator):* The Coordinator continues to work on elements of the watershed plan and will have a draft of the completed sections to the watershed plan subgroup for review and comment by mid August.

b. Fund Raising Updates

- *Walton Family Foundation (Coordinator):* Dave Kanzer of the River District has met with Ms. Anya Schoolman, a private subcontractor for the Walton Foundation, to give her an educational tour of parts of the Lower Gunnison Basin. They discussed issues of importance regarding the health of the Lower Gunnison and Colorado Rivers including selenium. Dave and Sonja are working on writing a "letter of interest" to the Walton Foundation to determine their level of interest in receiving a formal grant application for selenium.
- *Co Healthy Rivers Grant Application Status (Coordinator):* Sonja was informed by Chris Sturm (Co Water Cons. Board) that grant award decisions would not be available until the end of August.

c. Outreach Updates

- *Uncompahgre Ag Forum (Coordinator, Sarah Sauter (UWPP)):* A conference call was held with individuals interested in holding an agricultural forum. Ideas were discussed for the forum format (half-day) including educational presentations, lunch, and field tour of irrigation technologies. Feedback received from Se Task Force (STF) members were that there really weren't any new technologies to see that farmers haven't already seen (One potential is Mr. Dwayne Homeward, active farmer in the area, who installed a GPS fertilization and irrigation controlled system). The STF indicated that they hadn't had a Selenium Forum/Conference since 2005 and that partnering with the UWPP could be a great opportunity to educate land use planners, farmers, and the general public about a number of issues including water conservation, the Aspinall EIS, the Lower Gunnison PBO, the Se Management Plan, etc. Fred Fisher indicated that it would be a good idea to put some focus on the 5-10 acre hobby farmer too. Sarah was very open to all ideas and indicated that the forum could focus on selenium related issues. The Coordinator will continue to discuss options with Sarah and will report back to the STF.
- *STF Logo (Coordinator):* As recommended by the STF, Sonja has chosen a logo for the task force and will proceed with getting it on the website (Three overlapping waves with brown, green, and blue to represent ag, soil, and water profile).
- *Website (Coordinator):* Sonja received input from STF members on related selenium links to put on the "Other Resources Links" web page. STF members also suggested that she send out an email requesting relevant links.

d. Planning Updates

- *Draft Programmatic Biological Opinion (DPBO) for the Lower Gunnison River (Steve McCall and Ed Warner, USBR)*

Steve reported that they received comments from about a dozen people on the DPBO which they will send to the FWS. Examples of comments received include: 1) reservoir reoperation was too aggressive or not aggressive enough in terms of endangered species, 2) there was a question on how adverse the effects were from selenium, 3) most thought the SMP was adequate to address the selenium issues, and 4) there were comments on the aggressiveness of the timeline for developing the SMP. USBR still hasn't heard from the State of Colorado and don't know if they will. USBR hopes to get comments to FWS by next week. They hope to have final Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) by October/November.

- The Environmental Impact Study (EIS) won't be finished until they have a PBO. After receiving the PBO, a Record of Decision (ROD) can be developed. The final PBO will determine the timeline for the EIS and ROD. Biggest issues are finalizing the approach to the SMP and getting a final understanding of how National Park Service right fits into the EIS.

II. Discussion of critical components of the Selenium Management Program (SMP) required under the Gunnison River Basin PBO (Mike Baker, USBR): Discussion of preparatory activities needed as we proceed toward the development of the SMP (i.e. pre-SMP planning activities). Three tasks were identified for accomplishment in the meeting:

1. Identify potential stakeholders for initial outreach: USBR was looking for input from the STF for creating a list of stakeholders to contact for initial outreach on the development of the SMP. It is expected that Memorandums of Agreement (MOA's) or some similar document will be signed with the major stakeholders to assure their participation and input as we proceed toward the development of an SMP. The initial list of stakeholders developed by the STF included:

- State of Colorado
- Cities/Counties – elected officials, land use planners, planning departments, planning commissions, etc.
- Associated Managers of Growth and Development (Eileen List will help us get contact information for this group in Grand Junction)
- Bostwick Park Water Conservancy District
- Crawford Water Conservancy District
- Co River Water Conservation District
- North Fork River Improvement Association
- Orchard City Irrigation District
- Fire Mountain Canal Company
- Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
- Co State University Cooperative Extension
- Recreational Water Users / Groups
- Environmental Groups (e.g. Trout Unlimited, High Country Citizens Alliance)
- Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association
- Realtors
- STF Membership

- Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g. Co Env. Coalition, Western Co Watershed)
 - Tri-County Water Conservancy District
 - Project 7
 - All Conservation Districts (Shavano, Mesa, Delta, Gunnison, etc.)
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Natural Resource Conservation Service
 - Farmers
 - Sand and Gravel Companies
 - Federal Land Management Agencies (e.g. Forest Service?)
 - Roundtable members
 - Legislators
2. Development of a SMP Technical Work Group: A technical work-group is being established to assist with some early pre-SMP planning tasks. The work group will meet in Delta at 10 am on August 26 at the First National Bank (Gunnison River Drive). The STF identified the following potential members:
- Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association – Steve Fletcher
 - US Geological Survey – Ken Leib and/or David Brown
 - Fish & Wildlife Service – Barb Osmundson and/or Rick Krueger
 - Colorado River Water Conservation District – Dave Kanzer
 - STF Coordinator – Sonja Chavez de Baca
 - Irrigation Companies (operating in higher selenium loading areas)
 - Bureau of Land Management – Dennis Murphy
 - Natural Resource Conservation Service – Dave Dearstyne
 - US Bureau of Reclamation – Mike Baker
 - City of Grand Junction – Eileen List
 - Colorado State University Cooperative Extension – Denis Reich
 - Shavano Conservation District – Fred Fisher
 - Colorado Water Conservation Board – Randy Seaholm or Steve Miller

3. Identification of initial tasks for the SMP technical workgroup: Initial tasks will likely include: 1) assisting in development of a study plan for the SMP 2) identification of expectations to incorporate into an MOA (maybe stakeholders can't come forward with dollars but can pledge their commitment), 3) initial outreach process for all stakeholders in the Lower Gunnison, and 4) development of a broader public outreach program for the general public with significant media attention, 5) review of the remediation options from the July 2006 report entitled "Evaluation of Remediation Concepts for the Lower Gunnison and Uncompahgre Rivers".

III. (11:30 to 12pm) Discussion on formalizing the Selenium Task Force as we proceed toward the development of the SMP (Coordinator):

- a. Request to establish a "guidance committee"
 - The STF was supportive of the coordinator having a "guidance committee" to provide daily feedback and input as the SMP process is being formalized.
- b. Discussion of formalizing the STF as a non-profit entity or other: The Coordinator asked the STF if formalizing the group seemed like a logical step as the SMP is being developed. She noted that formalizing the group would make it easier for the STF to apply for and receive grant

funding, membership dues, and to manage different projects. Many STF members questioned whether formalizing the STF by establishing it as a non-profit was a good decision. Many questions came up including: 1) How do federal entities (e.g. USBR) vote on a board of directors or are they non-voting members? They encouraged the Coordinator to look at the Recovery Program model or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 2) Is a non-profit subject to or more open to lawsuits?, 3) If the USBR was helping to fund the Coordinator position, federal funding could not be used for lobbying, 4) Administrative costs will increase greatly (e.g. a board of directors has to be insured against lawsuits), and 5) the STF has never been successful in their attempts to move forward with establishing or requesting membership dues to help support the coordinator position and they didn't see that as changing.

IV. (1pm to 1:45pm) Discussion with Bray and Company regarding Devil's Thumb Golf Course Residential Development (Kevin Bray, Bray & Co):

- a. Future Devil's Thumb Golf Course residential development: Kevin Bray handed out a map of the DTGC area and a handout summarizing Bray and Co's understanding of the selenium issues in the area and suggested BMPs to address selenium. Land identified in yellow on the map is land Bray has contracted for development with the City of Delta (i.e. The City of Delta owns this land). Anyone wanting a copy of the map can contact Sonja.
- b. Potential BLM White Ranch Land Exchange with the City of Delta: Kevin Bray and Barb Sharrow (BLM) discussed the potential proposal for a land exchange with the City of Delta. There is a 120 acre parcel of BLM land that the City of Delta is interested in acquiring through the land exchange process near the DTGC area with similar soils to that of the DTGC. The City would be interested in developing the area. Barb Sharrow indicated that the BLM met with the City and Mr. Bray and talked about the potential exchange a couple of months ago. In that meeting, Ms. Sharrow indicated that the BLM would be looking for feedback from the Selenium Task Force on the issue of selenium loading potential for the project. She indicated that the exchange process is very work intensive (2-3 years start to finish) and that BLM would be hard pressed to go forward with the process if the Selenium Task Force didn't support the project due to selenium loading concerns.

The STF asked Mr. Bray about water sources for the development. He indicated that they have a lease in place for 50 acre feet of raw water from the pond/reservoir which supplies irrigation water to DTGC and would be used for common area landscaping for the residential development proposed. Bray and Co envisioned an HOA controlled and maintained irrigation system with minimum turf and xeriscape (Note: Mr. Bray noted that Bray and Co have done similar types of xeriscape type development in the area north of the airport in Grand Junction "Summer Hill" development). Mr. Bray indicated his desire to work with the STF to come up with a list of recommendations for minimizing selenium loading. Members of the STF noted existing problems in working with HOA's on irrigation issues, problems with enforceability of watering restrictions, etc.

One of the major concerns that came out of this discussion was the STF's need to have an a discussion regarding their policy on giving input on development. This will be added to the list of agenda items for the next meeting.

V. (1:45 to 2:30pm) Lower Gunnison Basin Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordination (Dave Kanzer (CRWCD), Sarah Sauter (STF Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator), Ken Leib (USGS), and USBR: Sarah Sauter gave an update to the STF on the water-quality monitoring program. Final

coordination steps were discussed and the sampling program will begin within the next two weeks. Anyone seeking more information on the details of the sampling program should contact Sarah directly.

- VI. (2:30 to 3pm)** Colorado Water Quality Control Division Processes: 303(d) listings, Humphries Backwater Listing (Party status, relationship to Co River mainstem, data requirements, STF course of action), TMDL Update: The City of Grand Junction and CRWCD will be requesting “party status” and will oppose including the Co River mainstem segment listing as part of the Humphries Backwater 303 (d) proposed listing. It is the opinion of the STF that the existence of a non-compliant backwater area doesn’t mean that the whole segment is impaired. In fact the Co River segment included in the Humphries listing is below the State 4.6 ppb standard. The STF will likely be submitting a letter of comment to the WQCC and providing public testimony at the hearing.

Other announcements:

Mike Baker (USBR) announced that \$5.3 million dollars of Salinity Funding was awarded to pipe 10 miles of the Grandview Canal system in an area just west of Crawford. This was a joint on-farm and off-farm project. It includes about 900 acres that will be converted to side rolls and center-pivots. Not much selenium in this area unfortunately. This is good news in terms of receiving more interest for getting salinity reduction projects in the Lower Gunnison Basin other than the Uncompahgre area in that USBR hopes to have more people coming forward in areas with selenium and salinity.

Denis Reich (CSU CE) – A Dr. Winsten at the University of Vermont manages a program on water-quality issues that relate to agriculture. The program relates to creating incentive-based programs. If we’re looking for getting a coordinator to bring together on-farm and off-farm projects in the Lower Gunnison, Dr. Winsten’s program could be a source of assistance. The STF indicated their interest to pursue discussions further with Dr. Winsten. Denis will try to get Dave Kanzer, Sonja, Sarah Sauter, and Tom Grett on conference call with Dr. Winsten to discuss his program and how it might fit into our efforts.

Next meeting of the STF: October 22nd, 2009

SMP Technical Work Group Meeting: August 26th, 2009.