

Meeting Minutes
Gunnison Basin Selenium Task Force
Steering Committee Meeting: January 18, 2006
Region 10, LEAP, 300 N. Cascade, Montrose

I. Coordinator Updates

- A. *The GBSTF Year End Report*: The report summarized task force budget and grant status, major accomplishments, and areas in need of action. Minor editing was suggested. The report will be revised and emailed to Task Force members via email.
- A. *EPA Targeted Watershed Grant*: Contrary to what the Task Force thought, it appears from the latest letter received from Celeste Cantu (CA Water Resources Control Board) that CA will not be sponsoring/taking the lead on writing the Targeted Grant. The letter referred the project back to Tom Peltier and Tom has indicated that there will likely be difficulties tapping lower Basin states for match funding. In addition, Tom indicated that he wasn't aware that many of the concepts proposed were a duplication of effort of the Gunnison Basin and Grand Valley Selenium Task Forces.
- B. *GB Watershed Plan Update 319 NPS Grant Application*: Dan Beley indicated that our proposal had been conditionally approved. Proposal concerns brought up during the review included: 1. We didn't ask for enough money to do the update. The commission will be making final decisions on the grants by February 13th.
- C. *Coordinator Fund Raising*: Discussion tabled until February meeting.
- D. *Oil & Gas Stormwater Rulemaking Hearing*: Stormwater from oil and gas construction sites was a concern to many task force members as a source of potential selenium loading. Dan Beley (Watershed Coordinator, WQCD) gave an update to the task force. The Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) ruled in favor of continuing to regulate stormwater permits for oil and gas construction sites.
- E. *Rulemaking Hearing/Regulation #34 & #35*: Dan Beley updated the task force on issues related to the Rulemaking Hearing for the Gunnison and Dolores Rivers which will be held in Cortez in June. Dan spoke with the Assessment Unit at the WQCD and they are on board with proposing extensions to the temporary modifications for selenium. The task force will determine whether they want "party status" around the 1st of February when official notification is out. The task forces (GV/GB) may want to consider issuing "responsive pre-hearing statements" stating that we support the WQCD proposal to extend. The Coordinator will work with Dan on possibly giving a short 5 minute update to the WQCC on what the task forces are doing.
- F. *NRCS CIG Grant Application for 2006*: Rick Isom brought a copy of the latest CIG grant application to the meeting and briefly reviewed the requirements and deadlines. The Task Force will look more closely at this as a potential funding source in the near future.
- G. *Olen Lund replaces Jan McCracken as Delta County GBSTF committee member*: Jan announced that Olen Lund (Delta County Commissioner) has expressed an interest in serving on the GBSTF. Every year the Commissioners divide up responsibilities for serving on committees. Mr. Lund will also be replacing Jan on the Painted Sky RC&D council. Thanks for your years of service and input Jan! Mr. Lund, we're looking forward to working with you.

II. GBSTF Planning

- A. *Action Plan*: The Coordinator presented a revised version of the GB Action Plan. Comments, editing, and suggestions were taken. A revised draft will be presented at the February technical meeting for review and comment.
- B. *Project Grant Subcommittee Assignments*: This task will also be addressed at the February meeting where the Coordinator will have a list of grants, grant summaries, and corresponding fits to task force projects.
- C. *USBOR Technical Assistance to States (TATS)*: Mike Baker (USBOR, Planning Team Leader) developed a draft preliminary list of possibilities for areas in which the GBSTF might wish to use TATS funding (35 days). No additional suggestions were made. Mike suggested that the GBSTF address priorities for TATS projects at the February meeting.

III. GVSTF Planning (continued)

- A. *GBSTF Coordinator Planning*: The Coordinator presented budget and task outlines for the Western Slope Wise Water Use Information & Education 319 NPS and the Best Management Practices for Non-Agricultural 319 NPS grants. The I & E grant extends until December 31, 2007 while the BMP grant extends until June 2006. Some minor changes were made to the task outline clarifying target audiences. The task force commented that the tasks in both grants appear to be targeted, complimentary, and in-line with the GBSTF proposed action plan.

A note was also made that the coordinator would need to approach the City of Delta again about the potential of doing Se Control Facilitation Projects given the recent departure of Rich Sales (Acting City Manager). The Task Force doesn't anticipate any problems, but it was mentioned that Olen Lund may be able to help facilitate the discussion with the City Council and City Managers. The coordinator will speak to Andy Mitchell (City of Delta) and Olen Lund. Jan McCracken also noted that she had recently spoken to a potential Devil's Thumb Residential Developer and shared the contact information.

- IV. Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program RFP (Mike Baker, USBOR): Mike presented the 2006 RFP to the group and outlined and emphasized deadlines and proposal requirements including requirements that the proponent notify USBOR that one intends to submit a proposal. The USBOR will possibly be providing assistance to Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association with a proposal to continue piping irrigation laterals. The Shavano Conservation District (Fred Fisher) plans to submit a proposal for pond lining on the east side of the Uncompahgre Valley. The GBSTF discussed the potential for the pond lining proposal to be funded: i.e. would the proposal be able to meet salt reduction requirements and still be competitive. Mike indicated that Fred and Del Smith are still working on it, but that if it didn't then the GBSTF/GVSTF might explore trying for CRBSCP Discretionary Funds.

- V. The GBSTF discussed the issues associated with ponds in the Gunnison Basin. Issues/concerns noted were:

- A. *Se loading contributions from unlined perched ponds*: The USBOR conducted a pond study in cooperation with NRCS in Montrose in 2004. Selenium loading from unlined perched ponds was

estimated to be approximately 7% of the loading from the lower Gunnison Basin (study details added by Coordinator post meeting). The biggest concern noted by the Task Force was that:

Efforts to reduce Se loading (e.g., irrigation delivery system piping) are negated.

The Pond Study also indicated that in the Uncompahgre Valley, the number and acreage of new ponds was growing at a rate of 15 acres/year or 5% per year (study details added by Coordinator post meeting).

- B. Some ponds are constructed illegally. The concern over illegally constructed ponds was also brought to the attention of the GBSTF by the State of Colorado Division of Water Resources at a meeting in September 2004).

The coordinator was asking for guidelines as to the position of the Task Force on ponds. The response given was: The GBSTF supports the need for education and outreach regarding the impacts of selenium loading from the construction of un-lined perched ponds. Specifically, the GBSTF “discourages the construction of un-lined perched ponds”. The Task Force can be educating the public that notification to the Division of Water Resources is required on all ponds (Ponds built for irrigation/stock purposes are legal. Ponds built for aesthetic or industrial reasons are not legal). They can also be educating folks in the lower GB that the basin is already over appropriated and that all ponds should have augmentation plans approved by the Division of Water Resources. The construction of ponds for aesthetic purposes is not wise water use.

The Task Force noted that we should be sharing the data and information from the 2004 pond study with the general public and elected officials.

Mike Baker (USBOR) noted that Reclamation would like to expand upon the 2004 pond lining study by for example; extending the GIS pond inventory, identifying perched ponds from non-perched, conducting soil analysis, etc.

It was suggested that the Task Forces organize a field trip in March for the Joint Task Force Meeting to try to gain a perspective on the pond issue. The Coordinator will work with a subcommittee to try to arrange this.