

Moab Area Watershed Partnership

Draft Meeting Minutes July 21, 2021 from 1:00 - 3:00

Hybrid Meeting

In person at the Moab Arts and Recreation Center

Virtual meeting using Google Meets

Meeting # 81

| Stakeholders Present | Affiliation | Others |
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| In-Person: Dana Van Horn Cash Stallings Sarah Stock Mike Duncan Bob O'Brien Dave Erley Levi Jones Ginger Allen Linda Whitham Mila Dunbar-Irwin Monet Clark Sue Bellagamba Carly Castle Dave Focardi Ryan Guide Daniel Lay Russel Seeley Tatsy Guild Jeff Adams Jeff Mattson John Guenther Dale Weiss Janae Wallace On-line: Lucy Parham Jessica Pierson Ann Marie Aubry John Gould John Weisheit Kara Dohrenwend Karla Joy VanderZanden Mack McDonald Makeda Hanson | GWSSA UDWRi Grand County City of Moab Castle Valley Moab Solutions City of Moab SEUHD TNC City of Moab Herself TNC City of Moab Himself Himself USFS UDEQ Herself CWC Community of Pack Creek Grand County GWSSA UGS UDWQ UDWRe BLM Himself CWC Rim to Rim Restoration CFI San Juan County UDWR | Arne Hultquist, Watershed Coordinator |

| ACTIVITY | DISCUSSION | ACTION |
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| Introductions, Review Agenda and accept May 2021 minutes | Introductions were made as we had enough time. The agenda and May minutes were accepted. | May's minutes and today's agenda were approved. |

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| <p>Watershed Coordinator's Report</p> | <p>There weren't any questions on the Watershed Coordinators report. Arne noted that at the last meeting we tasked Arne with revising the partnership by-laws and that was not on today's agenda due to time constraints. It will be on the next meeting's agenda. Arne also preliminarily asked the group about their feelings on this venue for our meetings. We will discuss it at the end of the meeting under other business.</p> | <p>Arne will continue submitting WC reports. The review of the revised by-laws will be on the September Agenda.</p> |
| <p>NPS Grants and Other Opportunities:</p> | <p>Arne informed the group that the contract for the EPA 319 funded grants that were funded last year has been received. John Weisheit informed the attendees that he was not successful in receiving the Watersmart grant but he would consider applying again next year. Janae informed the group that she did not know the status of the Colorado Salinity Forum grant to help fund the Matheson Wetlands Monitoring Plan for TNC and UDWRi. None of the attendees have heard back on the grants they submitted to The American Rescue Act of 2021. None of the attendees have applied for a National Groundwater Monitoring Network grant at this time. There wasn't any information presented on the Utah Conservation Commission grant opportunities.</p> | <p>Partners were encouraged to consider requesting funding from these entities for projects previously discussed or newly envisioned.</p> |
| <p>Watershed Management Plan (WMP)-Sub Sections of Section 2 review.</p> | <p>The attendees reviewed Section 2.6. Climate of the WMP. There was some discussion on the findings but the section was accepted as presented. The attendees reviewed Section 2.2.2.1 Castle Valley Groundwater It was approved with little discussion. The attendees reviewed Section 2.9.2.2 Castle Valley Land Use. It was approved with little discussion. It was noted that the Town of Castle Valley's Water Committee and Mayor had reviewed and sanctioned the two Castle Valley Sections. An update of a paragraph on stream water diversions written by UDWRi was reviewed by the attendees. It was approved with little discussion. Arne discussed the revising of Section 2.2.2.2 Spanish Valley Groundwater. It needs to be revised with the results of the new studies, papers and reports. The attendees noted that there a currently two differing conceptual models in those reports. None of the partners consider themselves the appropriate entity to write this Section. They asked if Arne could write a summary of the USGS papers and also mention the Kolm report. Arne agreed to do that sometime in the future. Arne noted the Pack Creek Fire was not on our list of resource concerns when we wrote Section 4, Resource Concerns and it was not included in Section 5 Recommendations and Management Implementation Strategies. The attendees agreed it need to be added and assigned Arne to write them sometime in the not too distant future.</p> | <p>The Subsections of Section 2 were approved. The entire plan was approved without a couple of Sections completed. Arne will write up the groundwater section for approval at a later date and Arne will add to Section 4 Resource Concerns and Section 5 Recommendations and Management Implementation Strategies a Sub Section on the Pack Creek Fire.</p> |

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| | <p>Arne indicated he wanted to publish the WHOLE Plan as it is now and add the three sections that are not complete to version 2.1 of the Plan. The attendees agreed with that suggestion.</p> | |
| <p>Environmental Consequences of Groundwater Water Withdrawal:</p> | <p>Sue and John W. lead a discussion on environmental consequences associated with safe yield determination. If safe yield is set the level of recharge and withdrawals reach that level, there could be some unintended grave environmental consequences. Some of the consequences mentioned were the drying up of streams and subsequent loss of riparian area. Another possible consequence is the release of brine water under the wetlands to the Colorado River. John W. mentioned that several examples of grim consequences associated with safe yield determinations are reported in the document: https://morrisoninstitute.asu.edu/sites/default/files/the_myth_of_safe-yield_0.pdf</p> <p>Arne brought up some of UDWRi's issues with setting any limit on groundwater withdrawals. One is UDWRi is not required to develop a groundwater management plan unless the aquifer(s) are over allocated, which UDWRi believes they are not at this time. Also UDWRi is also limited on determining any "safe yield" because the current science on the aquifer(s) isn't comprehensive enough to make that determination.</p> <p>Cash reminded the attendees that the current allocation policy was a result of public input and the current allocation policy could be changed without a determination of safe yield. Carley informed the group that the City of Moab has started out reach to the other water providers in our area and they will attempt to put together a "providers" water management plan. Part of that plan could be a recommendation to UDWRi to change allocation policy.</p> | |
| <p>The Drying up of Mill Creek During the Pack Creek Fire:</p> | <p>Ann Marie informed the group that Mill Creek had dried up downstream of the Sheley Diversion when water diversion to Ken's Lake was increased between June 12th and June 17th. Ann Marie was wondering how and why that happened. Dana responded that she had arranged a less than 3 cfs down the creek during the first few days of the fire. As the fire crews were taking water from the already low lake. The BLM and GWSSA agreed to keep the flow as close to 2 cfs as possible. It turns out that maintaining such a low flow is difficult for the diversion structure and it clogged several times. After realizing that GWSSA was not able to maintain the diversion at that level and that the creek was dry, flows were restored. Also, Marc Stilson and Cash Stallings were in the creek that day visiting an irrigator that was taking water out of priority, which exacerbated the situation. Ann Marie requested pictures from anyone who had them. UDWR also sent a person down to see if there was a fish kill but apparently they went to the wrong place.</p> | <p>Any attendees with a picture of Mill Creek will send them to Arne who will forward them to Ann Marie.</p> |

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| <p>Pack Creek Fire and Proposed Mitigation:</p> | <p>The Hydrologist for the USFS in our area, Daniel, gave a relatively short presentation on the extent and severity of the Pack Creek Fire. I don't want to repeat all of his findings but only 2% of the burn area was severe, 49% moderate and 49% light or not burned. The USFS has a decision making matrix based upon burn severity that determines what actions the USFS will immediately take to protect USFS infrastructure. They will be implementing some practices on Pack Creek to protect the road and the campground from possibly increased flows that would contain burned debris associated with the fire.</p> <p>There was a small discussion on the USFS's responsibilities to property owners downstream of the Forest. Although it is unfortunate, the USFS has no responsibility to protect downstream property owners from aftermath environmental effects due to fire on USFS lands.</p> <p>The NRCS representative, Ammon presented a few slides on the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection program and a few preliminary projects the NRCS is recommending to protect homes and other infrastructure from possibly increased flows and fire debris. Ammon spoke to NRCS's role in designing projects and implementing them. He did not know whether the NRCS would be able to design watershed protection projects in the very near future because the SLC office determines what efforts get done first. He also stated that the NRCS usually has a cost-share program for these EWP projects that require a sponsor (usually the county) to put in 25% of the costs. He noted that these projects usually take about 2 years to be actually implemented through the NRCS and unfortunately at this time the EWP program doesn't have any funding!</p> <p>There was quite a bit of discussion on what could be done in the near future. If any watershed protection projects are performed they are going to need a Stream Alteration Permit from UDWRi. Cash stated it usually take 30 days to get one through his office. He also noted you have to possess a water right to perform any in-stream watershed protection projects. He explained how that hurdle could be overcome and discussed how explicit the projects design needed to be for the permit. He encouraged the Pack Creek Community and San Juan County to take some action as soon as possible. Mack said he was still working with the NRCS to determine what projects would be appropriate and he is working with the Pack Creek Community on how to implement them.</p> | |
| <p>USFS Restoration and Prescribed Fire project:</p> | <p>Arne introduced the USFS proposed Prescribed Fire Project. The attendees are supportive of the USFS concept of fuel treatments to prevent catastrophic fires. Arne had prepared a draft comment letter reminding them of our watershed concerns and attendees were generally aggregable to the wording in the draft. However, the attendees noted that this is a forest wide project description and public participation for individual treatments will not be required for discrete treatments. Attendees agreed to have Bob add a paragraph</p> | <p>Arne will send Bob the current draft and Bob will add his comments. He will send it back to Arne who will have Sarah and Mike review it prior to delivering it to the USFS by Aug. 12.</p> |

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| | that requested the project require an opportunity for the public to comment on individual treatment projects. | |
| Other Business | Most of the attendees were satisfied with the MARC as a meeting place. A few of us had trouble hearing because of the room's acoustics. It was noted that if this many people are going to attend we will need a room of this size. | Arne will review other options for the MAWP meetings. |
| Adjourn | The next meeting will be at 1:00 pm September 21, 2021 and the location has yet to be determined. The focus will be on Project Reports. | |