

Bear River Watershed Council Meeting

Attendees

Christie Hansen	Lewis Chandler
Connely Baldwin	Riggin Holmgren
Trevor Nielson	Jeff Hardy
Carl Mackley	Burdette Wilson
Steve Griffin	ValJay Rigby
Nate Daugs	Brad Parry
Ann Neville	Tyler Pugsley
Jake Serago	Todd Stonely
Laura Vernon	Claudia Cottle
Casey Snider	Kirt Lindley
James DeRito	Rowdy Jensen
Joe Wheaton	Lara Gale
Andy Rasmussen	Hollie Wood

Welcome

- Sign-in sheet: put your affiliation – the state watershed council requested this
- Motion to amend bylaws to have initial term lengths as 2 and 4 years
 - Instead of 1 ,2, 3, and 4 so less time is spent during meetings determining term lengths (especially since meetings are only quarterly)
- Christie report on state watersheds council presentation for application
 - Thanks to all who showed up to show support at this meeting
 - Most questions asked by the state council were about the changes to bylaws and organizing document
 - Next State Watersheds Council Meeting: July 13th
- Laura Vernon, Todd Stonely, and Jake Serago from Division of Water Resources are in attendance today
- Jake is the area planning specialist for this area and can act as liaison to bring information to the council from the division and to the division from the council

New Information and Updates

- Nate Daugs – Bear River Economic Study
 - study will be completed by November – tool to use as we work with legislature – still looking for funding
 - Cache Valley Daily article that just came out was pretty accurate
 - Deliverable will be available November
- Carl Mackley – Water Rights Appropriations Policies in Bear River watershed
 - Bear River Basin, Cache County, and Box Elder County (rich county not included for now)
 - public meetings were held February 6th and 22nd – new data to share for upcoming public meetings

- Past meetings and submitted comments can be found on the Division of Water Rights home page – tab “meetings”
- Can those public meetings be sent out to this group from Carl or Christie or someone?
- Casey Snider – political pressures affecting Bear River watershed
 - House District 5 in Utah legislature – has been in this position for 5 years
 - Significant investments on water issues and GSL
 - 200 million on agricultural water optimization
 - 50 million on water use and desalination
 - 15 million in metering
 - 12.5 million on GSL
 - Water is just as important as transportation for growth
 - GSL will continue to be the focus
 - Will need close participation with agriculture
 - Feels bear river project and reservoir in White’s Valley will hurt this district
 - Urban conservation will be big focus
 - Additional conservation measures during next legislative session
 - Many legislators visited Israel and brought info back and anticipates this will influence future legislation
 - Q&A
 - How can we monetize or include value of agriculture when talking with legislature?
 - Provide additional data
 - Current narratives are not founded (current narrative such as the GSL going dry because of agriculture, etc...)
 - Need better and more accurate narrative
 - Nate Daug’s study in part adds to this data and correct narrative
 - Agriculture is foundational industry in the state – agriculture’s success lends to state’s success
 - Investments to Ag’s efficiency should help ag be more profitable and get a better rep
 - How is White’s Reservoir still being considered with all the “GSL going dry/sky is falling” focus in the legislature?
 - Long term lake level trends are going down – we need to adjust this with practical and pragmatic approaches to help GSL maintain and increase water levels
 - Bad data makes good legislature harder
 - Move forward with good data
 - Talk of extra water in bear river – this isn’t correct
 - Paper water vs wet water
 - Paper water could largely be supporting this conversation
 - Is your opinion that storage compensation should be different or that this act as a whole is not viable?

- If we can reasonably prove that water is available, we should not be discouraged from using our appropriation as small counties
- Consider long term cost of losing downstream value
- Storage and development should also consider long term and downstream impacts (downstream impacts can create long-term impacts for upstream)
- Comment from Jake Serago: division is working on Bear River Act – some details are specified in act and some aren't
 - Some of the issues come from the division's implementation and planning and some come from the act itself
 - Division had a hard week responding to all of the recent legislature – highlighted need for GSL Basin plan – Laura Vernon (in attendance) is the manager for that basin plan
 - Annual land use and water related use mapping
- Urbanization within Cache Valley
- Conservation easements can be used to preserve these lands
- What talk is there of urbanization taking over all ag land in Cache Valley?
 - Local bond
 - Worked with Joel Ferry to revamp Lee Ray Macalister fund – funds must be used for open space
 - Other counties in the state don't face the same pressures, so this conversation gets tricky and doesn't always have support from other areas outside of Cache and Box counties
 - Find ways to make Ag more profitable to keep ag families in ag
- Any discussion for holding water in Bear Lake?
 - Must be considered with impacts to GSL
 - Untoward affects if GSL goes dry – so that's first priority
 - Also don't want federal regulation to come into the equation and make it more difficult – need to keep it viable to where they won't interfere
 - Bear river compact protects water users
 - Part of problem, but better than having nothing and protects from higher powers
 - Includes multiple states
 - Facilitates conversation that otherwise would not happen
- New laws that came out very quickly from this last session, lots of work to do with these laws. Councils such as this one would like to be at front end of these so we know what is coming down the line. How would you like us to interact with the elected officials in this process?
 - Water development commission
 - Pay attention and be engaged with what is coming up in the summer

- Don't just react – present ideas and make phone calls with elected officials ahead of time

Administrative Business

- These meetings are posted on public website
- Term lengths as follows:
 - 4-year term
 - Christie Hansen
 - Carl Mackley
 - Lara Gale
 - Nathan Daus
 - Jeff Hardy
 - Trevor Nielson
 - Riggie Holmgren
 - ValJay Rigby
 - Ann Neville
 - Brad Parry
 - Jeannie Simmons
 - 2-year term
 - Steve Griffin
 - Tyler Pugsley
 - Jim DeRito
 - Connelly Baldwin
 - Lewis Chandler
 - Burdette Weston
 - Kirt Lindley
 - Mark Hurd
 - Stan Summers
 - Matt Yost
 - Motion to approve these terms – made by Jeff Hardy
 - Motion approved and passed
- Motion to accept organizing document as amended
 - Alternates: for this council, cannot appoint proxy
 - GSL and State council representatives: can appoint proxy if they cannot attend those meetings
 - Motion to approve made by Carl Mackley and seconded by Nate Daus
 - Motion approved and passed
- Elect GSL Council representative
 - Nominations
 - Trevor Nielson
 - Move to suspend rules and vote in by acclamation made by ValJay Rigby and seconded by Riggie Holmgren

- Motion approved and passed
- Do we need non-profit status for documentation?
 - State Watersheds Council is delegated to post minutes and agendas online
 - Can turn to them for additional support in this regard
- Do agency liaisons need to be appointed and approved by a motion?
 - State and federal agency liaisons can be appointed by the watershed council
 - Motion to appoint Bear River Basin Area planning specialist as DWR liaison – motion made by Carl Mackley and seconded by Trevor Nielson
 - Motion approved and passed

Optional Discussion

- Melissa Early
 - Traveling today but wanted to inform the council of the DNR's beaver relocation program
 - Can contact her if any beaver relocation is needed
 - Would like to present on wildlife, habitat, and economics of hunting and fishing in the Bear River watershed at future meeting

Roundtable and Public Comment

- Claudia Cottle - Gaps and limits to things state lands can do according to comprehensive plan – need to figure out do things need to be tweaked or changed to be able to do more and fill those gaps
 - Institution of Land water and air is involved with that
 - USU and Brian Steed just started working with fire forestry and state lands - just started preliminary stages of this study
- Trevor Nielson – BRCC and BRCD getting ready to launch PL566 effort
 - Notice of intent to do EIS published in next 60-90 days
 - Still space to participate if anyone is interested
 - Speak to Trevor or Carl or Andy if interested
 - Lead agency is NRCS, with JUB doing design and Langdon Group doing PR/PI
- Lara Gale - Bear River Celebration
 - June 10th in morning at Willow Park in Logan
 - USU sponsors in coordination with Logan City
 - Nonprofits and educational institutions and cities can engage with the public about what they do with the water (booths)
 - Free fishing, music, and family activities
 - Reach out to Lara if interested in participating

Conclusion

- Meeting occurrence/next meeting

- Next meeting agenda items
 - Melissa Early's presentation
 - Nate Daug's study
 - Entities represented within council members to give a briefing on their interest/affiliation to gain better understanding of each other
- Next meeting: **September 21st at 2pm at Bear River Water Conservancy District**
 - Two meetings in first quarter – before and during legislative session
 - First week of January should be completely remote
 - Second meeting (middle of February) at the capitol and invite legislators
- Motion to adjourn made by Nate Daugs
 - Motion approved and passed