



January 11th, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The meeting took place at the New Meadows Community Center from 7:30pm (late start due to internet issues) to 9:00pm with 10 in-person participants and 23 virtual participants. Captured minutes are from group discussions and presentations. The recorded presentation is available on the [LSRWC website](#).

Meeting Participants

In person

Sandy Dryden
Dean Dryden
Darrell Clay
Linnea Hall
Vicki Purdy
Aaron Humpherys
Naomi Anderson
Keisha Miller
Wes Keller
Rebecca Levandowski

Zoom

Scott Storms
Arthur Troutner Jr
Mitch Silvers
Ara Andrea
Leigh Bailey
Joyce Loffredo

Zoom continued

John Loffredo
Micki Eby
Hannah
Lance Holloway
Cal Low
Call-in user 1
Lynn Oliver
Stacy Lafay
Wendy Green
Darren Parker
Christa
Adrianna Cardoso
Clinton Daniel
Carly
John Leavell
Gary Thompson
Johanna Stangland

Purpose Statement

Since the last meeting, members of the collaborative have drafted a revised purpose statement for the group. The aim is for the revised statement to be more focused and include the diverse perspectives of the collaborative.

Revised Purpose Statement

The goal of forming the Little Salmon River Watershed Collaborative is to improve water quality and quantity in the Little Salmon River watershed through:

- Engaging stakeholders across disciplines and land ownership boundaries
- Discussing comprehensive issues affecting water quality and identifying projects that will help the LSR meet state water quality standards

- Incorporating existing landowners to pursue implementing water efficiency measures while preserving their water rights
- Identifying ways to conserve land and mitigate impacts of future development on river health
- Crafting potential solutions to guide restoration on public and private lands in the Little Salmon River Watershed

The end product of this collaborative effort includes identifying a list of specific actions, interested parties and resources to improve water quality and quantity in the Little Salmon River Watershed.

Participants show their level of agreement to a given proposal by the number of fingers they hold up:

1. Finger: Endorsement (I like it)
2. Fingers: Endorsement with a Minor Point of Contention (Basically, I like it)
3. Fingers: Agreement with Reservations (I can live with it)
4. Fingers: Formal Disagreement, but Willing to Go with Majority (I want my disagreement noted in writing, but I'll support the decision)
5. Fingers: Block (I won't support the proposal)

Responses to revised purpose statement:

Ara Andrea - 1

Scott Storms - 1

Lynn Oliver - 1

Stacy Lafay - 2

Micki Eby - Abstain

Leigh Bailey - 2; Add best available science and restoration of wetlands, riparian areas and floodplains for water storage

Sandy Dryden - 5; Does not agree with the quantity focus specifically. Water naturally fluctuates seasonally and yearly. Sprinkler irrigation will lower ground water and increase all TMDL issues.

Vicki Purdy - 5; Has farmed in the area for decades and has not seen benefits in converting to sprinkler irrigation. Where farmers have converted to sprinklers in Idaho, it has been depleting ground water levels and drying wells. Agriculture is not an issue downstream and it feels like there is a huge assumption that there is even a problem at all. The 2008 TMDL has not been followed closely and testing has not occurred in a long time.

Sandy Dryden: Do we have a graph or resource to see where the water quality currently stands?

Lance Holloway: The Department of Environmental Quality is trying to come up next season to do a focused study on the watershed. There are definitely information gaps including the biological origin of the E. coli. Need to decide if the WAG should be brought back together to provide needed information.

Naomi Anderson - 3; Does not have other suggestions but likes where it is heading.

Darrell Clay- 5; The current statement reads as though it is only private landowners problem.

Sandy Dryden: Putting pivots in is not good for anyone. The wells will dry up, and gravity irrigation will be mostly impossible after they are installed. For such a short irrigation season, it doesn't make sense to install the infrastructure. Pivots will help in the labor market, but labor is a lot cheaper.

Wes Keller: There are many types of restoration that can work on peoples' land. Our goal is to continue showcasing various options to private landowners and providing connections to resources to implement strategies on their land.

Dean Dryden: Flood irrigation is a natural way compared to pivots which is an industrial way. We are already very efficient.

Adrianna Cardoso (Source Water Protection Specialist, Idaho Rural Water Association): It seems like the irrigation topic could be tabled until there is more information.

Gary Thompson: What we may do instead is take 2-3 meetings for our purpose statement alone. It can be a lot of information to come into and vote right away on, and some people may not have the opportunity to attend every meeting. This process is ongoing and we want to include as many voices in this statement as possible. Would anyone be willing to join the team to help draft another statement?

- Adrianna Cardoso

Summative statement of how we are moving forward.

Administering Minimum Streamflows in Idaho with Voluntary, Market-Based Water Transactions: A Primer in Idaho Water Law and 20 years of Water Transactions in the Upper Salmon Basin

John Loffredo, Idaho Water Transaction Program, Idaho Department of Water Resources

Water Transaction Tools:

- Source Switch
- Landowner Agreements
- Subordination
- Water Supply Bank - Lease/Rental
- Water Right Acquisitions or Donations

Prior Appropriation Doctrine Governs Idaho Water Law:

- Designed for practical uses of late 1800s
- First in time, first in right
- Priority Date
- Beneficial Use

In 1965, the Constitutional Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) was founded to implement programs that enhance the sustainable management of Idaho's water.

Common Misconceptions:

- A Target Flow or Maintenance Flow is a certain amount of water necessary for safe passage of fish species
- There is no legal protection for this flow if a senior water right holder needs it

Idaho Water Transaction Program:

- Low stream flow is a limiting factor for salmonids at multiple life stages
- Competition between instream flow for fish and irrigation
- Missions: support innovative, voluntary, grassroots water transactions that improve flows to tributary streams and rivers

Source Switch Projects/Administrative Agreements

- Reconnect tributaries
- New Point of Diversion via Water Right Transfer
- New irrigation structure
- 20 yr Administrative Agreement

Annual and Permanent Subordination Agreements

- Annual Subordination = \$90 per CFS per day for 100 days MAX/yr
- Permanent Subordination = one-time \$10,000 per CFS for up to 100 days MAX/yr
- Water Master is also compensated annually for administration of subordination agreements

Water Supply Bank Lease/Rental Agreements

- Must be renewed every 5 years
- Idle irrigated acres to increase flow, primarily to connect tributaries to mainstream habitat
- The landowner must provide evidence of beneficial use for previous 5 years
- Rental payments: \$20-57/acre of idled ground
- The transaction requires the IWRB approval if longer than 5 years; advertised for public comment

Water Right Acquisition or Donation to IWRB

- This process is typically used through conservation easements

Successes

- The Sawtooth Valley saw an increase in hydrologic connectivity to the main stem of the Salmon River leading to increased spawn distribution of fluvial bull trout
- An increase in steelhead red fish populations was also seen in the Lemhi River through a new Point of Diversion
- Removal of P-9 Cross Ditch on the Pahsimeroi River increased the rearing habitat of Chinook redds by 246%

Permanent and Annual Subordination Agreements

- Approximately 32 CFS is protected in the lower Lemhi River for 100 days a year during the irrigation season
- Address chronic dewatering issues caused by lawful irrigation withdrawals that typically dewatered the lower Lemhi River for weeks to months in July to September yearly
- By protecting the water right, Chinook redds have been able to access an additional 60 river miles of habitat

Developing Transactions

- Discuss your plans with regional Idaho Department of Water Resources office, water district, and watermaster early on
- Develop a monitoring plan - is a continuous streamflow gauge necessary?

Questions

Q: When a new user gets a water right and starts irrigating in your basin, do you give them information on best practices or is it only up to the water user to irrigate how they see fit?

A: It is up to the water user to irrigate how they fit best. We pick projects based on many factors including ecological as well as funding opportunities.

Q: Do new industrial or mining water rights take precedence over minimum instream flow?

A: No, new rights are subordinate based on the appropriation date.

Q: Who would someone talk to if they are interested in water transactions?

A: First step is to prioritize goals and then go review the water rights in the area.

Working with the most downstream user is the most beneficial since saved water is not inherently protected as an instream flow right.

Action Items

#1 Little Salmon River - What is the current status of its water quality?

#2 Request more participants on the purpose statement.

#3 Summative statement - graph of efforts to date.

Next meeting **February 8th, 2022, 11:00am-3:00pm MST** at the New Meadows Community Center or on Zoom (time selected for our next meeting based on poll results). Please RSVP Gary if you plan on attending.

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<https://littlesalmonriverwatershedcollaborative.com>