Upper Salmon Water District
Steering Committee Minutes

September 13, 2005, Challis

The meeting commenced at about 7:02 p.m.
Tim Luke, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) opened the meeting and made introductions of other Department staff, and asked for each person present to introduce themselves and the area they represent.

Tim asked Bob Foster of IDWR to keep minutes, and offered Mary McGown of IDWR to help with facilitation of the meeting, keeping flip chart notes, ideas and suggestions.

Steering Committee Structure
Some of the early discussion at the meeting was about how the steering committee should be structured, who should be on the committee and who should be able to vote.

The meetings are open to the public, so people who are not on the committee may still come and participate. Tim invited representatives from each sub-basin, existing water districts, and key water right holders to be on the committee.

Opinions were expressed by several committee members that many diverse viewpoints are needed in the water rights discussions. There was general agreement that all five sub-basins need to be represented in the discussions.

Another major point of discussion was who should have voting rights on the committee. Some committee members said that committee members who do not pay an assessment should not have a vote. A suggestion was to have voting committee members who pay an assessment and "at large" members who have an advisory role, but do not vote.

Jim Hawkins expressed some concern about a lack of representation from the Pahsimeroi Basin (Water District 73). Tim said he would contact Ted O'Neal (the current designated representative), or others from the basin and work towards designating an alternate and assuring that the area is represented at future meetings. Katie Breckenridge offered support for this approach but stated that future meetings and work should not be delayed or stopped if users or representatives from certain areas fail to make the meetings or participate.

The general agreement was to try for consensus at committee meetings with whoever participates. All five basins should work together on developing the Upper Salmon Water District.

Bob Loucks suggested there are two issues that need to be addressed:

1. Identify the organization of the Upper Salmon Basin administration of water: who pays, where is the watermaster located, etc.
2. How do basins 71 and 72 organize under the structure of the umbrella water district?

Dave McFarland suggested that the group proceed with the meeting agenda and that IDWR give its presentation about the Wild and Scenic River Agreement.

Wild and Scenic River Agreement

Tim Luke gave a presentation about the Wild and Scenic River Agreement. This agreement between the federal government and the State of Idaho, which was approved by the Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA) District Court, includes a provision for creation of a water district in the Upper Salmon Basin. The agreement is posted on the IDWR website (copies of the agreement were also made available at the end of the meeting).

http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/Wild%20and%20Scenic%20Rivers%20Act.pdf

Tim will send a copy of his presentation to committee members before the next meeting. The presentation outlines key elements of the agreement, including water district requirements and a timeline. The Upper Salmon Water District (initially basins 71 and 72) must have an annual meeting in early spring 2006 to elect a watermaster, to set a budget and to adopt resolutions regarding operation of the district. As part of his presentation, Tim explained that the Director of IDWR, Karl Dreher, has committed to providing watermaster services at the department's expense for the first two years of operation, 2006 and 2007. Under this offer, the Director would provide a Department employee to serve as watermaster. This would benefit basins 71 and 72 for two years, and basins 73, 74, 75 for one year. There were some individual comments made that the watermaster should be located locally but in general there were positive comments from several about having the watermaster at least initially be a Department employee.

During and after the presentation, there were questions about how to structure the basin-wide water district. What will happen to existing water districts under the new structure? What will be the new responsibilities for sub-basin watermasters?

Tim explained that existing watermasters might have new or additional responsibilities, including reporting requirements. There are 21existing districts, some not currently active, that will be brought under the Upper Salmon Basin umbrella district. Additionally there may need to be created additional sub-districts in areas currently not covered by an existing water district especially in Basin 71. There will be one Upper Salmon Basin watermaster and each sub-district can still elect its own watermaster and adopt it's own budget and resolutions regarding collection of budget assessments and operation within the sub-district. Tim suggested that consideration could be given to consolidating several existing tributary water districts into one sub-district within a sub-basin (example: several small tributary streams in the Lemhi could be consolidated as one separate sub-district.

Bob Loucks suggested that the Upper Salmon watermaster should be responsible for training the sub-district watermasters.

Tim gave some explanation, as suggested by Allen Merritt, about how sub-districts work and function within Water Districts 120 and 130 of the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

The general agreement was to create the umbrella structure first, and then the sub-districts could organize knowing the overall structure under which they must operate.

Certain committee members said more information is needed before being able to make specific decisions about budgeting or organization. They requested water right data by basin before the next meeting so as to assess how any budget would be distributed among the water users.

Tim will send water right data to committee members before the next meeting: the rights and water users on each creek, with rates of diversion and acres per right, and total rates of diversion and acres per creek, drainage or basin water source.

Several issues were raised that will need to be addressed in resolutions at the annual meeting.

1. High spring flows are an issue. Not all users filed on spring flows. Traditionally, people have diverted high flows over the amount of their water rights. It was stated that aquifer recharge from spreading high flows has benefits to the streams later in the year by adding to base flow. IDWR indicated that rights would be regulated to their diversion rates. Users need to file on claims for high spring flows and obtain a decreed right through the SRBA if they historically have diverted the higher flows and intend to do so in the future.
2. Lockable gates may not be the best choice on all diversions, especially where diurnal flow fluctuations are great.
3. Users should be cautious about adopting comprehensive resolutions about installation of measuring devices and headgates. Some flexibility is provided by the agreement.

Tim will send sample resolutions from water districts 120 and 130 before the next meeting. The samples will cover some of the issues that will need to be addressed in formation of the Upper Salmon Water District. Tim offered to add a resolution regarding the issue about headgates and measuring devices.

IDWR proposes to hold a public meeting towards the end of October to inform the public of the Wild and Scenic River agreement, the Upper Salmon Water District formation and timeline, and to provide information about the steering committee's charge and progress. Holding a public meeting in advance of the formal hearing will give the public an opportunity to obtain information and time to prepare testimony at the hearing

if they wish to provide testimony. One committee member said that some idea of assessments for basins 71 and 72 should be determined before the public meeting.

A hearing will be held in November to take public comment on the formation of the Upper Salmon Water District. Both the public meeting and the hearing will be held in the basin.

Committee members directed that minutes and requested information should be sent to all meeting participants before the next meeting. The notice for the next meeting should emphasize the need for participation from all the sub-basins and districts.

IDWR provided a draft document to meeting participants of Minimum Standards for Operation of Water Districts. Tim asked participants to review the document prior to the next meeting.

Next Meeting
Oct. 4, 7 p.m., tentatively at the USFS office in Challis

The goals of the next meeting are:

- Further discuss and/or begin reaching consensus on structure of Upper Salmon Water District in relationship to sub-districts
- Summarize water rights data
- Review resolutions from existing umbrella type water districts, Districts 120 and 130, located in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary McGown & Bob Foster, IDWR
October 3, 2005

UPPER SALMON WATER DISTRICT STE RING COMMITTEE MEETING 09/13/2005
SIGN IN SHEET

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UPPER SALMON WATER DISTRICT STE[illegible]ING COMMITTEE MEETING 09/13/2005
SIGN IN SHEET

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