

## **Grand Valley Selenium Task Force Meeting Minutes for August 18, 2005**

**Attendees:** Lori Martin (CDOW), Julie Constan (Mesa County), Barb Osmundson (USFWS), Ken Leib (USGS), Mike Baker (USBOR), Dan Beley (WQCD), Sonja Chavez de Baca (GVSTF Coordinator/Facilitator).

I. **Concept Paper for a Targeted Watershed Grant for the Colorado River (Mike Baker):** Tom Peltier (former Coordinator for the Selenium Task Forces) is working for the California Water Resources Control Board. The concept paper for an EPA Targeted Grant focuses on Gunnison Basin/Grand Valley Source Control. The grant requires 25% match (\$300,000). The thought is to have match come from CA, CO, NV, AZ, etc. Possible that a large part of it could come from CA. Some of the basic concepts include:

1. Joint selenium/salt reductions projects. \$900,000 could be used to facilitate cost share for joint se/salt control projects.
2. Joint Outreach – using BMPs and incentives for development
3. Working with agencies on non-agricultural water conservation projects (ex. discounted piping)
4. Liaison – some person to be a liaison. Tom hopes to be that person.

Funding would come to Mesa, Montrose, and Delta Counties. The Selenium Task Forces were supportive and felt as though this was a worthy effort. The GVSTF suggested that we (Selenium Task Forces) have an equal partnership in this project so that we can have a direct role/tie. The GVSTF suggested that the TF Coordinator be the Colorado Liaison. The GVSTF suggested that we get Governor Owen's support of the project (i.e. not sponsorship, but a letter of support). As soon as we have something from Tom, Dan Beley can talk to the Colorado Water Conservation Board to find out who the contact is at the Governor's office.

After Mike reviewed Tom's concept paper, he gave him some feedback which included his suggestion that Tom come to GB/GV Se Task Forces to present his concept paper so that he could receive feedback from all the stakeholders.

II. **TATS Funding Update:** Under existing TATS funds the GVSTF is trying to finish two activities

1. Tributaries Report
2. Sequel Study (Tributaries Remediation/Off-set projects): In this study, the GVSTF has decided to continue our efforts to further remediation alternatives to off-set selenium impacts. Alternatives include types of habitat improvements or remediation options on tributaries. Mike will have a 4 or 5 page report on this exercise (late Sept 05).

Future Agenda Item: Mike/GVSTF go through NIWQP alternatives one by one again and see if they are still applicable/not applicable for incorporation into Sequel Study.

Brent Uilenberg and Carol DeAngelis have both seen the Planning Assistance letter written by the Task Forces. They have tentatively o.k.'d Mike committing 60-70 hours to both Task Forces (35 hours each). This is consistent with what we've gotten in the past. The initial USBOR commitment is still contingent on the federal budget passing. At a later time we will need to figure out what our priorities are. TF needs to follow up with a thank you letter.

- III. Testifying at Rulemaking Hearing (Dan Beley):** The Water Quality Control Commission needs to recognize that we are continuing to plan. We want commission to recognize that Task Forces are working together and anything we find/learn regard the tributaries in the Grand Valley can be transferred to the Gunnison Basin.

Note to Mike Baker: Dan would like to place on USBOR's Future Task Force TATS priorities for the Gunnison Basin "adapting what we learn on tributaries hear in GV to GB."

- IV. EPA Comments on Grand Valley Selenium Task Force Planning (Dan Beley):** Dan held a meeting with the EPA to discuss our planning and what was going to happen with the eventual TMDLs. Present at the meeting were Dan, WQCD Assessment folks, Dave Moon (EPA), John Ruthel?). Dan presented the draft Tributaries Report written by Mike Baker (USBOR) and wanted to get feedback from EPA to see if they felt we were heading in the right direction.

The outcome was very good and very interesting. The EPA folks were very impressed with work planning/roadmap concept that the GVSTF had done. They were very open to "creative ideas on how to deal with standards for selenium in TMDLs". One way they proposed is "to focus on a performance-based plan or "narrative" with an implementation plan that we develop versus focusing on a number or standards type plan." This would likely involve keeping temporary modifications while monitoring to measure success. In general they said "they don't want the cure to be worse than the disease." The EPA understands that this isn't a black and white situation and they understand there is no easy answer. They're looking for a good faith effort and they think we are showing that as demonstrated by our planning.

Specifics they talked about on tributaries included:

1. Some type of trib by trib plan (analysis of tribbs separately vs looking at them as a whole). Look at each trib at the standard level and don't pool the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for all the tribbs the way the Division currently does it.

Task Force Question to Dan: Do we have a time-frame for TMDLs on the tributaries? Dan said no, not at this time. But the TMDL for the Gunnison will be done sometime in the spring 06.

- V. Bioreactor:** Mike Baker distributed copies of his final grant application to the USBOR Science and Technology Program for funding the bioreactor bench scale study. The proposal included in-kind match from the Grand Valley Selenium Task Force. Ken Leib noted that USBOR/Golder Associates might want to consider putting the bioreactor drums in the ground to more accurately mimic field conditions. Mike said that he would keep it in mind and would talk to Golder about it should the proposal be funded.
- VI. Future Funding and Operating Scenarios for the Grand Valley Selenium Task Force:** The Coordinator noted that with the recent collaboration between the two Task Forces (GB/GV) that both groups are seeing: 1.) Efficiencies in the number of projects completed that benefit both Task Forces (i.e. correspondence with Salton Sea, NRCS, USBOR, etc.), and 2.) Efficiencies in the utilization of 319 funding. The Coordinator noted that she is seeing a drop in the request for time/topics on the agenda which to her indicates that a monthly meeting may not be needed. The coordinator has a significant amount of work to be done and can utilize the additional time (not spent on traveling, developing agendas, etc.) to complete tasks. The Coordinator requested that the Grand Valley Selenium Task Force consider a bi-monthly meeting schedule with the flexibility to schedule additional meetings when needed. All members present agreed. Sonja will solicit feedback from the rest of the Task Force through email.

Sonja and Dan Beley met with Dr. Andres Aslan (319 Project Director) and Cindy Lueb (Sponsored Programs Director) of Mesa State College this morning to discuss grant reporting concerns. Until recently, Mesa State's Sponsored Programs department consisted of only one person, Cindy Lueb, which led to the GVSTF getting behind on 319 reporting and billing requirements. Dan reviewed invoices from Mesa State to clarify to Cindy the reporting requirements. Sonja has reviewed the Mesa State invoices and has commented on missing documentation of in-kind match on the request for reimbursement forms (August 22, 2005).

Sonja and Dan also spoke with Andres and Cindy regarding possibly transferring the grant to another sponsor (potentially the River District given the number of recent grant applications being sponsored by them and the benefits to having a single entity to report to). Andres was very supportive and felt that we should do whatever benefits the Task Force. Cindy acknowledged her work overload and was also supportive of transferring the grant. Sonja and Dan thanked Andres and

Mesa State for being a willing participant and volunteer. Sonja, Dan, Andres and Cindy discussed a logical possible ending date and the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, 2005, was proposed given that this is the date of our next semi-annual report. Dan is going to check with Laurie Fisher about the details to make sure it won't be a problem. Members of the GVSTF present were supportive of a possible grant transfer.

- VII. Conservation Innovation Grant:** Sonja wanted to update the GVSTF regarding the recently awarded CIG grant (NRCS). The project will take place in Delta County and will hopefully serve as a pilot project that can be applied to Montrose and Mesa County. The complete proposal will be made available to the GVSTF via the next "Se Tidbits" update.
- VIII. GV SE Assessment 319 Watershed Plan (Dan Beley):** Dan Beley asked Julie Constan (Mesa County) to update him on the status of the 319 Watershed Plan required as part of the 319 NPS Grant for the Grand Valley Selenium Assessment. Julie informed Dan that Mesa County was considering hiring SC Environmental, LLC to complete the Watershed Plan and that she was going to be looking into County insurance requirements.
- IX. Update on the Long Term Monitoring Wish List proposed by GV/GB Selenium Task Forces to the State WQCD:** A few months ago the GVSTF and GBSTF were asked for input on developing a "monitoring wish list" through the WQCD Monitoring Unit. The monitoring would involve sampling for a basic chemistry suite including selenium in FY 06 (four samples per year). With the help of the USGS, USBOR, etc. the Task Force developed and had approved the following list of sampling sites: Cedar Creek, Loutzenhizer near mouth, Kannah Creek at mouth, Montrose Arroyo south east of Montrose, Leach Creek at mouth, Adobe Creek at mouth, Indian Wash at mouth, and Whitewater Creek at mouth.

The Task Forces would like to continue to monitor for these items beyond FY 06 so that we get trend info. The GVSTF is hopeful that the WQCD will continue to play a role and help with the monitoring.

Ken Leib suggested that he would like to coordinate with WQCD to make sure that they are sampling at the right locations (Jess Van would likely be the contact at WQCD – Dan will check on this). Ken can send maps and GPS coordinates for the USGS sampling sites.

Ken and others also noted that it would be important to sample twice during the irrigation season and twice in the non-irrigation season (i.e. Dec 1 and March 1; June, and late Aug./early Sept.) Lori Martin of the CDOW would maybe like to coordinate with Division so that both are sampling at the same site and the same time.

### **Lunch Break**

- X. Macroinvert Sampling (Dan Beley):** Additional feedback was given to Dan regarding the question of “would the GVSTF like financial assistance to carryout macroinvertebrate sampling?” State will provide funding for 10 sites. Will analyze (stad quantity; diversity).

Russ Walker indicated that Mesa State and his students are interested in collaborating with a GVSTF member to carry out macroinvert sampling. Lori Martin of the CDOW will be out sampling fish, water chemistry, and could use more macro info. Lori has coordinated with Russ Walker and his students in the past. She will coordinate with him again on the possibilities of accessing the State funds to carry out the macroinvert sampling. She asked that Dan please keep her on the list of interested.

On a side note: Barb Osmundson (USFWS) has some unanalyzed fish tissue samples that could use some funding help to complete the analysis which would be a benefit to the Selenium Task Forces.

- XI. DARCA (Ditch and Reservoir Company Alliance) Convention Feb 23/24<sup>th</sup> in Montrose (Mike Baker):** DARCA is lining up its guest speakers for its 4<sup>th</sup> annual convention and asked Mike if he would be willing to serve on a “local issues” panel in order to give the members a sampling of what’s going on in this part of the state. Phil Bertrand (Grand Valley Irrigation Company) suggested Mike might want to talk about the whole selenium issue. Mike feels that the presentation would be better received if the GVSTF Coordinator gave the presentation and that we might be able to reach a wider audience outside of the state and to find out more about selenium issues outside of the GV on Colorado River. Dave Kanzer added to the conversation via email (August 23<sup>rd</sup>) that the River District is supportive and that they would also like to see other local water users included on the agenda (e.g. Marc Catlin introduces the topics and Marc introduces GVSTF Coordinator to present the selenium issue). **Note: talk to Dave K. quickly about his comments to Mike on Pete Casper??** Task Force thought this was a great opportunity to speak about the whole “wise water use” message.

Mesa County: has received grant from DOLA to help build a wastewater treatment plant for the town of Whitewater. Julie will let us know when things start to move. Grant sitting and waiting.

Side Note: Julie mentioned that Eileen List (City of Grand Junction) is going to contact gravel companies and WWTP to see if they can develop remediation options for mitigation on behalf of point source dischargers. Possible trading discussion might entail the WWTP trading with gravel pit companies to treat selenium. The gravel pit companies may want to see our sequel study for ideas for off-sets. Gravel pit folks may also be interested in bio-reactor proposal – our idea to use abandoned gravel pits for larger scale studies should the smaller bench scale study get funded and work. According to Julie (based on her conversation

with Eileen), the gravel pit discussions that had been occurring regarding remediation seemed to be a kind of “recovery program for water quality”. The Coordinator will ask Eileen to tell us more about it at the next meeting.

**XII. Issues Formulation Hearing (Dan Beley):** Dan had initially recommended to the Task Force that they ask to have temporary modifications for selenium removed on the mainstem. Dan initial thought this direction would say to EPA that we are continuing planning. After thinking about the issue he’s realized that doing so may impact point source dischargers, specifically gravel pit companies. The GBSTF thought that the temporary modifications should stay for the Gunnison. The Grand Valley Group agreed and felt that going back to the standard wouldn’t solve anything but may lead to conflict. Barb Osmundson will check with Al Pfister and Rick Krueger to get their opinion on both scenarios: removal of temporary modification and leaving temp modifications and positive/negatives. Lori Martin will get feedback from CDOW.

**XIII. Back to the Discussion on What We Can/Should be Doing to Address GVSTF Coordinator Funding:** The GVSTF discussed the yet unfinished proposal to use remaining Phyto funds to complete our wise water use education and outreach plan. The TF has identified this as our number one priority the next month. Sonja will send the latest draft to Mike Baker so that they can work on it together possible with the Wise Water Council. Sonja will also go back and look at Laurie Fisher’s comments. We need to incorporate some time for Sonja to try to work with the Wise Water Council to develop a wise water platform and funding foundation.

Other education and outreach opportunities in the wise water arena include:

1. Water Topics Course: 4 nights for \$15 for the general public;
2. Small Acreage class at Mesa State

**XIV. Two Potential Wise Water Use Grant Proposal**

1. Rooks Communications (MEG) Grant: To provide marketing assistance to organization needing environmental marketing assistance.
2. CWCB – Water Conservation Planning and Water Efficiency Planning Assistance Grants.

**XV. Potential to Move Sept 21<sup>st</sup> Joint Meeting to Delta:** The Gunnison Basin Selenium Task Force asked if the Grand Valley Selenium Task Force would be opposed to moving the Sept Joint Task Force meeting to Delta if NRCS (Frank Riggel and Travis James) could joint us for a site visit to Meeker’s farm. The GVSTF was not opposed and felt it was a good idea to invite them anyway given that they were going to be in town. Mike Baker noted that Frank Riggel and others have been to the Meeker farm on more than one occasion and likely would not be interested in coming again.

Coordinator Update: Mike Baker has spoken to Travis James and he was enthusiastic about attending the Joint Task Force meeting. Frank Riggel was out of town so Mike will continue to try to follow up with him.

**XVI. Joint Task Force Agenda Ideas for Coordinator to follow up on:**

- A. Presentation of the Remediation Plan for the Gunnison (Mike Baker – tentative).
- B. Coordinator's Presentation to the Water Education Foundation (Selenium Summit in CA).
- C. Invitation to State NRCS to attend Joint Meeting – Do we want to have them speak to our group on a certain topic? Do we want a question/answer period?
- D. Presentation by Barb Osmundson on her Fish Studies
- E. Brief presentation by Andy Mitchell and/or Bruce Bertram on Devil's Thumb lining, etc. Photos from Start to Finish?
- F. Issues Formulation Hearing: Time to hear from both Task Forces at a Joint Meeting on the issue of temporary modifications. Do we leave them? Do we remove them? Pluses/Minuses.

**ADJOURN 3PM**