

MEETING MINUTES
Joint Gunnison Basin/Grand Valley Selenium Task Force Meeting
Thursday June 21, 2007 10am – 3 pm
USDA Service Center, 690 Industrial Blvd, Delta, CO

1. Task Force Updates

- a. Phase 3 lateral piping project: UVWUA received a commitment of \$1.3M from the Reclamation Salinity Control Program to pipe 11 miles of the South Canal system. Total project costs are projected to be \$2.0M. UVWUA will be using 319 NPS funds (originally proposed for use in the Selig Canal lining proposal) and BOR write-ins for remainder of project funding (~\$700k). Next steps are: 1) arrange a 319 contract between UVWUA and Co WQCD, 2) select piping alignments, and 3) address environmental impacts. Project to be completed during non-irrigation seasons 2007-09.
- b. Changes in the Selig Canal lining project: Due to a number of issues, it has been decided not proceed with the lining proposal as written. Instead, the 319 funds promised to the project by the State will be used to cost share the Phase 3 project described above. 319 NPS funds will be used to substitute for write-in funds (NIWQP) for the piping of 5 laterals off the Selig Canal that serve part of the Loutzenheizer Arroyo basin, Next step is to complete the project implementation plan in order to secure NPS funding from CoWQCD and start the project in Nov 2007.
Action item: Mark Catlin, Mike Baker, Dave Kanzer, UVWUA will hold a meeting to resolve funding issues and report back to Bonie Pate.
- c. Upper Gunnison Watershed Plan: NPS 319 funding expires on project 6/30/08; no project extensions are available through the NPS program. Plan to be completed when STF Coordinator returns to work in winter 2007.
- d. Shavano Conservation District Pond Lining Program: The SCD program has \$2.1 million in Reclamation salinity program funding to line about 30 wetted acres of existing ponds on the east side of the Uncompahgre Valley at no cost to property owner. 100 pond owners were sent direct mailings about project and ads were sent out via NRCS and SCD newsletters. Very few responses have been received. Broader advertising will be used to educate pond owners about the project availability.
- e. Use of Selenium Priority Areas for EQIP projects: Comments were solicited on the GIS maps. A letter will be sent to NRCS and local planning agencies when the maps are completed to identify lands in the lower Gunnison basin that are recommended as priority areas for EQIP projects.
- f. Conservation Innovation Grant progress report and GIS Advances: The CIG GIS maps for the Delta Conservation District were presented. At present, the GIS map grant only applies to the Delta Conservation District, yet it is hoped that remaining grant funding can be applied to Shavano CD contract data. It was noted by Dave Dearstynne that the maps are general and not specific regarding seleniferous soil locations and concentrations.
- g. Bioreactor Pilot Project plan and funding: The bench-scale bioreactor project has been deemed successful with a high percentage (92-98%) of selenium removed from groundwater captured at a gravel pit near Grand Junction. Funding is needed for a pilot scale project. Project report will be completed by September 2007 by Mesa State College and Golder Associates, Inc.

Action item: Mike will submit a proposal to the BOR Science & Technology Program for a pilot-scale (50x50 foot) treatment cell. Bonie will find out NPS priority cycles for potential NPS funding.

- h. Wise Water Use for Selenium Reduction: Project was interrupted unexpectedly, this 319 project needs a new purchase order from WQCD to start the project, will wait to start the project until STF Coordinator returns to work.
Action item: Dave will work with Bonie Pate as necessary, Bonie will send PO paperwork to Dave to keep process moving.
- i. Wise Water Use Council Water Use Efficiency Improvement Project: The WWUC will target water efficiency measures in the Grand Valley on residential properties ranging in size from 1/4 to 10 acres. Efficiency measures may include elimination of gated pipes, improved sprinkler systems, lining of leaking ponds, proper use of landscaping materials and xeric vegetation.
Action item: The WWUC will apply for a CWCB water efficiency grant for the planning and execution of a water efficiency pilot project. Leigh Fortson and Mike are preparing the application. After a pilot program is completed, the WWUC may solicit additional full scale project funding from the salinity, 319 program or others.
- j. USFWS comments re STF to Recovery Program: USFWS Contaminants Division has sent comments to the Recovery Program about selenium impacts under the current status review period for the 4 listed Colorado River species.
Action item: Barb Osmundson may send a copy of the USFWS comments to STF, Mike Baker will draft a scope of work to request Task Force Coordinator funding from the Recovery Program.
- k. Targeted Watershed Grant Proposal: Grant proposals are due to EPA by Nov 2007. Since selenium affects multiple western states, the Upper Colorado River Commission may be asked to provide support for the proposal. Project scope could include funding for Wise Water Use Council, piping/lining projects, Task Force Coordinator efforts.
Action item: Dave Kanzer will continue to investigate the feasibility of drafting scope for grant proposal and soliciting support.
- l. Sustaining Watershed Conference Oct 2-4: Mark Catlin will provide a “BMPs for Selenium and Salinity” presentation at this conference the afternoon of October 2. STF members offered Mark help in preparing for the presentation.
- m. GVSTF letter to Water Quality Control Commission re: tributary remediation: Task Force Coordinator sent letter to WQCD in May, 2007.
Action item: Eileen List to distribute final copies of the letter to task force members.
- n. Colorado Foundation for Water Education Gunnison River Tour June 26 - selenium/salinity presentation: Dave Kanzer and Mark Catlin are providing salinity/selenium information for the tour.
- o. Devil’s Thumb Residential Development: STF had met prior with developer Kevin Bray to express concerns with the proposed Devil’s Thumb Residential Development in Delta on previously unirrigated seleniferous soils.

Action item: STF needs to send selenium/salinity BMP letter to Kevin Bray listing recommended BMPs/Wise Water Use efficiency measures to apply to the new development.

2. TMDL Development Update: USGS is working with CDPHE to develop a TMDL for the Lower Gunnison River basin which includes sites that correspond to 303(d) List segments associated with the North Fork of Gunnison River, Upper Gunnison River, Uncompahgre River, and Gunnison River from Delta to Grand Junction. The deadline for the TMDL is believed to be early 2008. An example of a TMDL can be illustrated at the Gunnison River near Grand Junction (the Whitewater gage), where the TMDL bases selenium load reductions on 2001-2005 data that indicates an average load reduction of 9,000 lbs of selenium is needed to meet water-quality standards. Previously the STF had estimated necessary load reductions of 5,000 lbs based on 1997-2001 data at the Gunnison River near Grand Junction (as measured at the Whitewater gage). This discrepancy illustrates the need to have a flow-proportioned TMDL to account for variable streamflow conditions (e.g. current drought) which result in yearly fluctuations of selenium concentrations and loads.

Action item: Set up meeting with key STF members and Phil to discuss load reduction concerns after technical review of the USGS TMDL report is completed in August.

3. Scoping of Grand Valley Projects Proposed Under the 10825 Projects: Caroline Bradford, Grand River Consulting, provided a summary of Grand Valley projects currently under consideration to add additional flows of 10,825 required AF for the Endangered Fish Recovery Program in the 15-mile reach during summer low flow periods of July – Oct. The STF was asked to provide input on the proposed 15-mile reach pumpback project regarding modeling of flow and selenium impacts. The 10825 Phase I water supply study can be viewed at www.grandriver.us/10825

Action item: Summarize STF concerns about the pumpback project and send to Caroline by August.

4. Results of the Urban Deep Percolation Study: USGS has completed the Mesa Conservation District/USGS/NRCS study of deep percolation changes that result as lands convert from irrigated agriculture (alfalfa) to suburban residential irrigation (primarily bluegrass). The final report is in review prior to release. Preliminary results indicate that per unit study area, gated-pipe irrigated agriculture uses 77% more water and has 93% more deep percolation and salt loading than suburban residential lands that use sprinkler systems.

5. Preliminary Agenda Items September 20, 2007 meeting:

- STF Update items
- TMDL update
- Review 2007 Action Plan