

Gunnison Basin Selenium Task Force: Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2004

- I. **New Business:** Fred Fisher brought new photos of Poplar Trees after 4 years; Aung Hla distributed new CFWE publication
- II. **Action Plan:** being turned over to Coordinator; high priorities for next 6 months identified. They include with comments/recommended actions from TF members:
 - I.1A. Piping of laterals – approx 14-15 miles piped
 - I.2A. Funding for piping? – We need a standard letter that we use to support efforts to obtain funding.
 - 1.B. Pressurized Piping – We’ll see more interest if there is a cost share. EQIP funding criteria is difficult. East side parcels small or inconsequential.
 - 1.C. Implement canal lining demo – We need to include NRCS as a partner so that they can provide soils information to help identify best locations for remediation.
 - 1.D. Expand canal lining demo – get NRCS to meet w/BOR & UVWUA to identify “best” site for reducing seepage based on soils information. Some members of the TF felt we need to focus on obtaining \$ for doing monitoring to quantify effects of Se load reduction. Mike Baker (BOR) feels that the Montrose Arroyo demonstration project has already looked at monitoring and that we have a good idea about how much Se is reduced.
 - 1.2C. Request funding in future Salinity Program RFPs – Mike Baker and Dave Kanzer would like to expand Salinity Control Program. Greatest benefits for \$ spent appears to be in on-farm projects which reduce Se and salinity.
 - 2.1B Seek incorporation of BMPs into development requirements – TF needs to focus on developing incentives for making people think they really want to do something.

TF quickly went through the rest of the Action Plan to identify lead responsible party (ies), deadline dates, and priority status of remaining action plan tasks.

- III. **Comments on BMP Technical Guide** – moved off the agenda, will be given through email. In general, several members commented that Technical Guide was not what they were expecting to see, but rather members expected to be reviewing a BMP brochure. Technical Guide thought to be too technical and not meant for the general public.

LUNCH BREAK

- IV. **Pond Study Results (Del Smith/Mike Baker – BOR): September 2004 Draft Report distributed “*Lining Ponds to Reduce Salt and Selenium Loading to the Gunnison River*”**

Coordinators Notes: study looked at pond seepage more than they looked at lining. Ten ponds studies. Results show that:

- Ponds that are allowed to dry up seasonally initially can have a large flux of water lost upon filling until clay soils swell.

- From 1993-99 there was an increase in 15 acres of ponds per year in the study area
- Seventy-five percent of the ponds don't have NRCS involvement
- Between Delta & Montrose County there are approximately 700 acres of ponds. Of those, 450-500 acres of those ponds are seeping. As compared to previously irrigated soils, un-irrigated soils may be contributing up to 34 times the Se load.
- Every 12 years we'll see a doubling in the # acres of ponds.

Bruce Betram noted that there was recently a discussion (Delta County) about the importance of wells which recharge groundwater vs. encouraging lining which prevents recharge. Any feedback that the TF could provide was welcomed.

Lynn Bixler noted that ponds were used for irrigation in many subdivisions or situations. Dave Dearstyne noted that using ponds as water supply reservoirs for irrigation usually means a concentration of Se and salts.

Dave Kanzer asked if there were any other water rights implications when we pond water for irrigation use. Frank Kugel, Colorado Division of Water Resources (CDWR) noted that the UVWUA can be affected by the increase in pond development and that water calls could be impacted. Frank was interested in receiving GIS inventory from BOR on ponds. In addition Frank noted that proper procedure is to notice CDWR before building a pond because there are water rights implications and potential effects from dam/pond failure to downstream folks. According to CDWR, if ponds are built they must be used for stock water or irrigation purpose. If some other uses also occur or are proposed (e.g. recreation) even if that use is greater than stock or irrigation purposes then they can't do anything. Other notes regarding tail water include: 1.) Tail water from your own property can be collected and used to extinction, 2.) Collected tail water from another property (neighbor) must be filed for.

Mike Baker noted that we could save 1000 ac/ft of water for every 20 miles of piping that we do.

Dave Kanzer noted that the TF needs to acknowledge and address that for every new subdivision built on previously un-irrigated lands there will be an increase in Se and salt loading.

Del Smith concluded that "yes" ponds are a significant source of deep percolation.

Final conclusions to the discussion were that: 1.) TF will support further pond studies, 2.) TF will encourage the lining of ponds (BMP), 3.) TF should discourage the # of ponds being built, 4.) TF should encourage proper design, 5.) TF should recommend that perched ponds be lined, 6.) TF will request TATS funding to address pond issue, and 7.) TF should try to develop demo projects for new ponds which feature BMPs for controlling Se and salinity.

Adjourn