

WILLARD SPUR WORKGROUP COORDINATION MEETING

FROM: Jeff DenBleyker/CH2M HILL

DATE: December 16, 2010

The following is a summary of key discussion items during the meeting:

1. Chris Bittner/DWQ asked for an update from the workgroup on efforts to locate existing data.
 - a. Howard Browers/USFWS indicated that they were still looking into the old Bureau of Reclamation gages at the Refuge. He had spoken with Tyler Allred and obtained information and a model from him but has not had a chance to determine if the information/model is useful.
 - b. Theron Miller – Theron has LANDSAT images of Great Salt Lake extending from 1970's to as recent as 2010. Satellite takes images every few weeks but only images from clear days are saved. Images include infrared signatures. Theron also has photos of Willard Spur from the D-line dike and from a flight he was able to take. Theron will be placing all of these images onto one web or ftp site so others can access them. Theron showed examples of the imagery to the group. Of note, is that there appears to be a subtle rise in the lakebed that separates Willard Spur from the rest of Bear River Bay. Water needs to "spill" over this rise to exit to Great Salt Lake. It was also noted that Willard Spur is very dynamic; fluctuating from ponded water to completely dry between years.
 - c. Dave Naftz/USGS indicated that he has been working on ground truthing potential gaging sites for project. Looked at old Bureau of Reclamation sites on Refuge. Sources of water to Willard Spur include Willard Creek, Willard Bay, Refuge, Harold Crane, GSLM, Flying J ditch, and Perry ditch.
2. Discussed relative importance of Parry Willard discharge as compared to other discharges to Willard Spur. The largest discharge is from Unit 5C of the Refuge. Theron Miller made the observation that phragmites seem to grow better where fresh water has "flushed" the sediment and salinity is lower. Is there a benefit to discharging to open water (existing canal on south side) vs. to a playa environment? There might be benefits to relocating discharge point because it would eliminate a constant source of fresh water from the playa that could attract phragmites.
3. Jeff Ostermiller summarized actions by the Water Quality Board at their last meeting. The Board has approved \$1.5M as a set aside for the research program. They approved \$160,000 for project management by CH2M HILL. Modified UPDES discharge permit was reviewed. The POTW has been asked to optimize the new treatment process to remove as much phosphorus and nitrogen as possible with 1mg/l as a target goal for phosphorus concentrations in effluent. The permit is as protective as possible given that DWQ cannot list a numeric limit for nutrients. The requirement of an optimization plan and schedule will help ensure protection of Willard Spur.
4. Scott Archibald/Sunrise noted that they intend to start discharging water from the new POTW in mid February. Theron Miller noted that sampling should start now to characterize baseline conditions before the discharge begins. All agreed that sampling should begin as soon as possible. DWQ will look into mobilizing its monitoring crews the first part of January. Jeff Ostermiller noted that USFWS has been collecting water samples at the Refuge as part of the Bear River TMDL since early 2010.
5. Leah Ann Lamb/DWQ summarized status of MOU with USFWS. The USFWS has regulatory authority over discharges within the refuge. The MOU is intended to protect the Refuge while allowing the discharge. Leah Ann noted that most of the conditions of the MOU have already been met.

6. Jeff DenBleyker/CH2M HILL presented a summary of the proposed approach for the Willard Spur research program. Key takeaways are as follows:
 - a. Current handouts are draft; for discussion purposes. Please submit comments/changes/improvements to Jeff DenBleyker by January 6, 2011.
 - b. The Science Panel will report to the Steering Committee who will report to DWQ. DWQ will oversee the entire process. A change was recommended to the organizational chart to make this clearer.
 - c. Discussed the selection of study contractors. The Science Panel will be asked to define the required studies, prioritize them and determine a timeline. Contractors will be required to start immediately to capture the 2011 field season. Much of this work will likely be sole-sourced to state and federal entities. Having more than one contractor involved will likely result in more management effort and coordination for the team.
 - d. Suggestion was made to summarize lessons learned from the Great Salt Lake selenium program (2004-2008) for use by the new Willard Spur steering committee.
 - e. DWQ has been talking to various stakeholders to identify representatives from various Willard Spur interest groups. Formal invitations will go out shortly.
 - f. The proposed schedule is very aggressive. Invitations to the Steering Committee are going out shortly. Each member will be asked to identify an alternate, to commit to engage to a very busy few months, to begin identifying potential nominees for the Science Panel, and begin identifying key issues/questions/objectives they would like the research program to address. Proactive communication and engagement by all participants is needed to avoid missing the 2011 field season.
 - g. Science Panel will likely start with 5 members and be composed of local/national experts. Potential conflicts of interest will be defined. Each panel member will be required to issue written recommendations for any changes to water quality standards.
 - h. Additional conference calls and meetings may be required to meet the proposed schedule. Late May is a deadline that must be met to avoid missing the 2011 field season.
 - i. Jeff DenBleyker is to be the primary contact for all questions, comments and requests for information.

Jeff DenBleyker, P.E.
CH2M HILL
215 South State Street, #1000
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
Ph: 801-350-5215
Email: jeff.denbleyker@ch2m.com

7. Chris Bittner/DWQ noted that the Willard Spur Workgroup will now be replaced by the Willard Spur Steering Committee. There will be no further meetings of the workgroup.

ACTION ITEMS

1. DWQ to send invitations to proposed Steering Committee members. Each member will be asked to identify an alternate, identify Science Panel nominees, and identify issues/questions/objectives that should be addressed by the research program.
2. All stakeholders should provide nominations for Science Panel members by December 31, 2010. Nominations should clearly define area of expertise and potential conflicts of interest and include a CV. Submit to Jeff DenBleyker.
3. All stakeholders should provide comments on handouts to Jeff DenBleyker by January 6, 2011.