

**Summary of Meeting between
Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) and
Wyoming State Engineer's Office (WSEO)**

**8:30 (Mountain Time)
17 October 2012
SEO Offices, 510 West 27th St., Torrington, WY**

I. Introductions and agenda review

The meeting was attended by the following (also see attached sign-in sheet):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Tom Hayden	Nebraska DNR
Wray Lovitt	Wyoming SEO
Brian Pugsley	Wyoming SEO
Lyndon Vogt	Upper Niobrara White NRD
Lynn Webster	Upper Niobrara White NRD
Jim Schneider	Nebraska DNR
Jesse Bradley	Nebraska DNR
Jodee Pring	Wyoming SEO
Jim Ostdiek	Nebraska DNR
Sue Lowry	Wyoming SEO
Pat Tyrrell (via conference)	Wyoming SEO
John Harju (via conference)	Wyoming SEO

There were no additions to agenda

II. Review the minutes from prior meetings

There were no corrections or additions to the meeting summaries from the October 21, 2011, meeting or the April 13, 2012, conference call.

III. State Reports

a. Wyoming

Brian Pugsley recently took over Randy Tullis' position with the SEO after Randy retired.

Wray Lovitt reported he received calls that recharge was not returning to wells and many were pumping air. He metered some of the wells to tell the irrigators how much they were pumping but there was no mention of regulation. Wray estimated about 50% of the wells had problems with pumping air. Pumping was probably a quarter more than usual. Many of the wells in the area are not very efficient, which needs to change.

There is not much oil and gas exploration occurring in the Niobrara drainage. There are some temporary water permits associated with a pipeline being built through the Niobrara drainage, for the purpose of testing the pipeline.

John Harju provided some handouts regarding Wyoming's well permits and online database. The first was a spreadsheet showing every permit issued by the SEO from April 1, 2011, through October 13, 2012. The other pages showed the online electronic permitting system and database that was used to generate the spreadsheet. John discussed the steps of the process and other search options. He can be reached at 307-777-6689 if people have questions regarding this.

b. Nebraska

Tom Hayden reported the mean flow for the year at the state line gage was 3.4 cfs; the mean flow of August and September was 2 cfs. At Agate the mean flow for the year was 7.2 cfs; in August and September it was much lower and part of the river below Agate dried up. ~~There was lots of administration for older water rights~~ This summer the field office administered frequently for older surface water rights. Additionally, temperatures were unusually high with numerous days exceeding 100° F, and temperatures for July and August approximated 99.5°F. ~~There were many days with temperatures over 100 degrees. The average for July was 99.5 and August was about the same.~~ Bridgeport precipitation May through August was 8 inches below normal. Mean flow for the year into Box Butte Reservoir was 18.3 cfs.

Lyndon Vogt reported that surface water irrigators called asking if the NRD was going to shut off groundwater irrigators. Many groundwater irrigators in the area were pumping air, but the wells ~~were~~ were not totally dry. The NRD cannot shut off the groundwater irrigators in the middle of the summer, but they do have meters on the wells to monitor pumping. At some point in the future there could be an allocation on groundwater irrigation as the NRDs do have the authority to allocate.

In terms of oil exploration, Lynn Webster reported that four test wells are to be drilled in Sioux County, south of Crawford but he was not sure if they had been yet. There was one transfer with a landowner to use irrigation water to drill wells for exploration. An allocation was placed on the well and the NRD will follow up with the landowner at the end of the year to see what amount was transferred.

- IV. Update on various studies related to the basin
 - a. UNWNRD Conjunctive Management Model Project
 - b. Niobrara River Basin WaterSMART Study

Jesse Bradley reported the since the meeting in April, significant progress has been made on the UNWNRD Conjunctive Management Model Project. The groundwater model is close to calibration and will hopefully be calibrated in the next couple months. DNR is working with outside consultants to develop the operational model to couple with the groundwater model. DNR will work with the NRD over the next couple months to define scenarios to model. A soil-water balance model will work in conjunction with the groundwater model to constrain

[evapotranspiration~~ET~~](#) and recharge. Pumping requirement values generated by the soil-water balance model are being compared to the actual pumping data from well meters. Consultants are working on the groundwater model for the Niobrara River Basin WaterSMART study, which will hopefully be completed by late winter or early spring. Conversations with stakeholders have just begun and DNR is seeking input from the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau will provide downscaled climate projections and is working with DNR on how to put that data into the DNR groundwater model. The Bureau will also provide economic information for different management alternatives after the groundwater model is finished. This information is expected to be completed in April, but that may be pushed back to early or midsummer. The climate and economic data will be provided to the rest of the WaterSMART working group as the DNR receives them from the Bureau.

INSIGHT (Integrated Network of Scientific Information and GeoHydrologic Tools) is a web-based, interactive, statewide database being developed by DNR where much of the data related to models and water supply and ~~use can be found~~[will be available](#). Data from the NRDs and other sources will also be incorporated. DNR hopes to get this launched next summer.

Contact Jesse Bradley or Brandi Flyr at DNR with any questions on the studies.

V. Any needed Compact discussion

The groundwater language of the compact was discussed. Jim Schneider stated that once the model is done, the groundwater language can be examined. They will attempt to summarize the information in the model to fit the language and the compact.

There was nothing new to report on compact litigation in Nebraska since the last meeting.

VI. Future meeting arrangements

It was agreed that the technical group should meet in the spring and there should be some model results to share. The meeting will either be a Go-to Meeting or will be coordinated with the NPDC spring meeting.

There are currently no plans for a WaterSMART meeting, but there will maybe be another stakeholder meeting in the next couple months. Nebraska will let Wyoming know if there will be one and if it can be possibly coordinated with the spring meeting.

VII. Other items

There were no other items to discuss.