

January 9, 2015

Mr. John Stulp, Chairman  
Groundwater Technical Committee

Dear Mr. Stulp,

The Town of Gilcrest respectfully requests that the Technical Committee take action at its meeting on January 12, 2015 making a recommendation to the South Platte River Basin Roundtable group for its meeting on January 13, 2015. We request a recommendation to institute emergency measures immediately to help relieve the high groundwater levels in the LaSalle Gilcrest areas. This issue is of an urgent nature to the Town of Gilcrest and needs to be addressed immediately.

As you are all aware, the Gilcrest wastewater treatment plant has been severely damaged by the rising groundwater, due to curtailment of area well pumping, and is in need of immediate repairs and replacements. We have been somewhat successful in mitigating the groundwater at the plant location the past few weeks through the efforts the Town has always had in place to disperse storm water due to the fact that Gilcrest is located in a low lying area. History tells us that as soon as spring comes and full augmentation and recharge begin again we will lose the ground we have gained. Additionally ditch irrigation water will begin running in irrigation ditches subsequent to April 1. The Town intends to begin construction of the repairs and replacements in the summer of 2015 and that area needs to be dewatered to a level that will allow that construction to proceed. We are not hopeful that continued inaction to address the damaging groundwater, caused by an overfilled aquifer, will assist us in that effort. The work that will be starting in 2015 is at a cost of \$1,191,000 to the Town of Gilcrest. We have applied for partial grant funding however will not have a decision on any grants until late spring.

The \$1,191,000 work at the treatment plant does not include money already spent, \$425,000, to repair a transmission line that collapsed due to high ground water levels. The project also does not address continued infiltration into our collection system and lift stations or further degradation to the collection system or the potential for deterioration of potable water lines. All these issues are a result of increased water table levels that have occurred because of curtailment of well pumping combined with over augmentation and recharge policies. All these issues together are a real and serious threat to the water quality in the entire aquifer.

Gilcrest was incorporated in 1912 and has experienced storm events over the years. The Town has spent considerable funds to build detention ponds and a discharge pumping system to address that situation. At no time, since 1912, has the Town been subjected to this level of groundwater inundation. It is our belief that the actions taken to curtail well pumping and over augment and recharge the aquifer, although well intended, is the direct cause of the damages occurring in Gilcrest. The Town is aware of 12 homes that have been severely damaged due to this issue. Some of that damage includes the presence of mold that homeowners are not having success eliminating. The solution those people have been given is to install sump pumps and perimeter drains; to pump and drain the water where? Does

spending upwards of \$20,000 to install these systems in a home that has a market value of \$160,000 seem equitable to any of you? Remember, Gilcrest is a town of 1,034 people, 356 residences, with a median annual income of \$42,000. These homes have existed here anywhere from pre 1912 into the 1970's with NO HIGH GROUNDWATER ISSUES. We have some homeowners who are considering walking away from their homes because there does not seem to be a solution to this problem. We believe there are many more who have just not reported their issues to us.

The Mayor and the Board of Trustees wishes to thank all of you who have taken your time to tour our area and to make yourselves aware of our issues. We all understand that this is not an easy problem to resolve and that there are downstream considerations that you need to protect. We do not, however, understand how the damages being done to our Town and to our neighbors in the agricultural community can continue to be treated as a problem that has always been present, even before extensive well pumping began. That is simply not the whole story. The whole story is that in an effort to correct a wrong an overcorrection was committed and another wrong is now being committed on our communities. We support future efforts to study and understand all of the factors influencing this problem; however, we need to have the Committee and the Roundtable groups support immediate, emergency efforts to begin a program to address our high groundwater. Those efforts need to be in place and operating no later than April 1, 2015 to allow the Town to be successful in addressing the needs at the WWTP. Emergency efforts also are needed to give some relief to the homeowners in Gilcrest who are in danger of losing the quality of life, if not their homes, to this issue.

We implore you to take action NOW to begin making this issue equitable for all water users.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Mayor and Board of Trustees  
Town of Gilcrest