

**Bear River Basin Advisory Group
Evanston, Wyoming
Meeting Record
May 8, 2000**

Introduction - The meeting opened on Monday, May 8, 2000, at 6:10 p.m. at the Uinta County Library in Evanston, Wyoming. Joe Lord, the facilitator for the group, dispersed copies of the agenda. The attendance sign-in list was also circulated at this time.

Future Meetings & Locations - Mr. Lord conducted a discussion relative to future meeting locations. It was noted that future meetings are to be held on July 10 in Kemmerer, Sept. 11 in Cokeville and Nov. 6 in Evanston. Meetings will begin at 6pm.

Bear River Tour - John Teichert discussed the Bear River Tour being organized by the Bear River Commission. The tour is planned for Aug. 9th and Aug. 10th. They are planning to tour the Lower Division this year. They are hoping the Upper and Central division residents will plan to attend this tour to learn about the Lower Division. A bus will leave Bear Lake on the 9th and the tour will be completed on the 10th. The tour is by reservation only; anyone interested can contact Jack Barnett at 801-292-4662. There will be a nominal fee for the tour.

NE Wyoming Planning Process - Jon Wade reported on the status of the NE Wyoming Planning Process. Jon updated the group on the BAG process and gave them the direction the meetings will take in the future. The NE Wyoming Bag met in Sundance last month, the Powder Tongue BAG met in Sheridan. The June meetings will be held in Newcastle and Buffalo respectively, with future meetings scheduled on a bi-monthly basis throughout the planning process.

Consultant Update / General - Clarence Kemp, of Forsgren Associates, was introduced. Forsgren Associates has been focusing on economic aspects with Mr. Ed Harvey of BBC Consulting. Mr. Kemp indicated that the Basin Planning effect was about quality of life in the basin. This involves environmental quality, recreation, life style, etc. An essential element of quality of life, of course, is economics.

Basin Economics and Future Use Opportunities - Ed Harvey and Doug Jeavons are with BBC Research and Consulting. BBC is the economic, financial and market research firm preparing the water demand forecast for the Bear River Basin Study. This requires economic and demographic projections. BBC has acquired economic data about the Basin from publication and secondary sources. They indicated they would be in town for the next few days visiting with a number of people in the area and gathering information. BBC presented a number of graphs and information to the Basin group. The topics were Current Demographic Condition, Current Economic Conditions (personal income and employment), Focus on Agriculture, Focus on Mineral and Energy, Alternative Forecasting Techniques, etc. Mr. Harvey and Mr. Jeavons

encouraged BAG members to join the discussion relative to local economic history and trends. They also requested help with additional data sources and contacts in the community.

Some of the public concerns and comments were as follows:

Karen Henry asked why the population was still growing in the 90's. Denise Wheeler suggested that the growth now is from the fact we are the back door to Salt Lake City. Some of the reasons people are moving here are the low cost of living, our tax base, the outdoors access and the beauty of the area. Ms. Wheeler felt that the Olympics coming to Salt Lake City in 2002 would result in many people visiting Evanston and ultimately taking up residence.

Gordon Parks gave a summary of the oil boom and associated economy growth in the area. Ralph Stahley stated a lot of the people have stayed in Evanston because the income base has increased due to this oil boom, and the job opportunity has increased as well. The group consensus was that the number of irrigated acres in the basin will likely remain fairly level due to the marginal economics of single-crop farming. A decrease could come from the available water limitations and higher cost of utilities. The question was asked if the cattle inventory would increase or decrease. Craig Lowham felt there would be a decrease because some of the ranchers are selling their land for high prices and getting out of the ranching business. It was also felt that BLM land availability has a great effect on the number of cattle being raised. The ranchers must move their cattle to summer range in order to produce the hay needed for the winter months.

Break from 8:10 to 8:20

Wasatch-Cache Forest Management Plan -This presentation was made by Steve Ryberg & Charlie Condrat of the U.S. Forest Service. It was pointed out that Forest Plans provide a long-range guide for all natural resource management activities (what) and the establishment of management requirements for implementation(how) on the National Forests. The Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan covers 1.2 million acres including 371,439 acres of the headwaters of the Bear and Green River(North Slope of the Uintas).

Each National Forest is required by law to revise its Forest Plan every 10 to 15 years. The first Wasatch-Cache Plan was last completed in 1985. The Forest Service has been actively involved in revising the Plan for over a year. Many public meetings and mass mailings have been conducted to provide public involvement in the planning process. Some of the decisions to be made in the Forest Plan Revision are the establishment of goals and criteria needed to ensure watershed health and restoration. The plan will also address the kind of protection appropriate for rivers found eligible by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory. Five segments are eligible for wild and scenic status in the Bear River Drainage. The concerns expressed by the BAG were relative to the quantity and time of surface water run off and the impacts (positive or negative) of clear cutting. There was also a question related to the timber take (has it increased or decreased?). The draft forest plan revision will be out this summer, with a final plan scheduled for this winter. Anyone wanting more information can visit the website at www.fs.fed.us/wcnf or request hard copies of current information from Kelli Murray (801-534-3981) or by e-mail to revision/w-c_r4@fs.fed.us

Instream Flows - Mr. John Barnes, Wyoming State Engineer's Office, presented information on Instream Flow Water Rights. The instream flow water right is the only non-consumptive permitted water right. The State of Wyoming is the only entity who can hold an instream flow water right. Another unique aspect of the instream water rights law is that it set up a "three entity process" / "three step process" for approval. First, the Game and Fish Department identifies a stream segment and completes a biological study and modeling effort. They use three different models for evaluation:

- a) PHABSIM
- b) HQI – Habitat Quality Index
- c) Habitat Retention

This information is then given to the Water Development Commission who becomes the applicant and holder of the water right if it is issued. Second, the Water Development Commission then prepares a hydrologic study and report that models the physical and legal availability of water to meet the biological needs. Once the biological and hydrological reports are completed and given to the State Engineer's Office, a public hearing is held to obtain input from the public. This is the only water right which requires a public hearing during the permitting process. After all three steps are complete, then the State Engineer's Office can review the information and make a decision regarding approving or denying the application. Game & Fish cannot condemn or seek abandonment of an existing right to obtain water for instream flows. An instream flow permit also does not grant ingress or egress through private property. A city or town by contrast, may condemn any portion of an stream flow water right for municipal purposes. The State Engineer's Office receives 4 to 6 applications per year for Instream Flow Permits.

Meeting adjourned - 9:45p.m.