

Bear River Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Uinta County Library, Evanston, WY

November 5, 2001

Welcome

River Basin Planner Barry Lawrence welcomed the group and the meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. All attendees introduced themselves, followed by a review of the overall meeting agenda. A sign-in sheet was passed around to record attendance. Future meetings are scheduled for March 18, 2002 in Cokeville, WY and July 15, 2002 in Kemmerer, WY.

Bear River Commission Report

Federal Chair of the Bear River Commission, Denice Wheeler, presented an update of several ongoing issues within the basin:

- The Bonneville Cutthroat Trout has not been placed on the endangered species list.
- The State of Idaho has announced its intentions to not agree to the model for determining groundwater depletions as set by the Bear Lake Settlement Agreement. This issue will be discussed at a meeting of the Bear River Commission on November 13 at 1:00 p.m. in Salt Lake City at the Natural Resources Building.
- The Water Quality Committee of the Bear River Commission has received a \$30,000 EPA grant to perform water studies of the Bear River. A draft RFP is being prepared for a grant coordinator.
- In an effort to reduce drawdown on Bear Lake, additional storage sites being discussed are Smiths Fork, Oneida, and Rocky Point. A point of consensus was that a large facility with storage allocated to Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming would be beneficial.
- A dredging permit for removal of 80,000 cubic feet of sand and sediment for channel deepening in association with Bear Lake has been approved.
- Due to the drought, water ceased to be released from Bear Lake on September 7, 2001 when the lake's water elevation dropped to 5912 feet.
- An upcoming symposium and tour is being considered for Summer 2002. The core sampling currently being performed at Bear Lake would be included in the discussions.

Regional Water System Discussion

Mayor Pete Moesser, Town of Bear River, discussed the need for domestic drinking water in the newly incorporated community. The town has a population

of 441, and most of the homes are served by individual wells. The potential for contamination exists due to the nature of the flood plain and the alluvial aquifer. A Level II feasibility study and well exploration with TriHydro Corporation is ongoing. Discussion then centered around the need for either additional wells and a storage tank or a 10 mile pipeline from Evanston's water supply system. It was noted that the Town of Bear River desires a reliable and good quality water source. City of Evanston Mayor Bill Davis addressed a secure water supply in conjunction with Sulphur Creek Reservoir, and the needs of the outlying areas.

Future Water Use Opportunities in the Bear River Basin

Clarence Kemp of Forsgren Associates distributed a draft Executive Summary of the Bear River Basin Water Plan. Clarence indicated that availability of irrigation water in the late summer months and return flows in the lower reaches would suffer impacts if the upper reaches practiced conservation measures. He further indicated that additional storage reservoir sites, other than the identified Smiths Fork site, had not been a priority as identified by the Bear River Basin Advisory Group. Discussion then followed regarding groundwater and surface water storage.

Break

Water Development Commission Report

Jon Wade, River Basin Planning Administrator, indicated that approximately 65 new applications and on-going projects had been received for the 2002 program. Opportunities in Southwest Wyoming include: Alpine Raw Water, Pinedale Intake, Little Snake River Small Dams Phase II, Bridger Valley Joint Powers Board Raw Water Transmission Line and Storage, Baggs Master Plan, Church Reservoir (Green River ASR), Pinedale Hydropower, North Alpine Water Supply, Viva Naughton Enlargement, and Green River Supply Canal projects.

Barry Lawrence updated the BAG on the status of the plans for the other basins. The BAGs for the Snake/Salt and the Wind/Bighorn Basins met October 8 and 9; whereas the Powder/Tongue and Northeast Wyoming BAGs met October 10 and 11. Barry discussed the status of the four studies, and the schedule for future meetings.

State Engineer's Office Report

Jade Henderson, Division 4 Superintendent for the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, presented an update on the 2001 irrigation season. He indicated that there had been no interstate regulation in the upper division, but that there had been state regulation back to 1880 water rights within the division. Sulphur Creek Reservoir did fill, but Whitney and Woodruff Reservoirs did not.

Water Resources Data System Report

Robin Gray gave a brief overview of the current activities of the Water Resources Data System (WRDS). She also reported that Jan Curtis had been hired as the new WRDS coordinator and appointed by Governor Geringer as the State Climatologist. Additional data now available through the WRDS website includes a monthly climate report, drought monitor/studies, and links to other regional and national data sources. Documents recently placed online include the Green River Basin technical memos and final report, a water conservation directory, and GIS products. Robin indicated that she was also currently updating the State of Wyoming water supply system report. Finally, Robin mentioned two other projects that WRDS were engaged in, including:

- Aquifer characteristics and groundwater quality in the Powder River Basin.
- Online landslide project mapping in Teton County. The second phase in Lincoln and Uinta Counties has yet to be done.

Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Update

Pete Cavalli, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, addressed the September 28, 2001 finding by the US Fish & Wildlife Service not to list the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout as endangered. He indicated that during a 12-month study, 291 populations of trout were found in 852 miles of stream habitat and 70,059 acres of lake habitat. Pete indicated that ongoing problems with habitat degradation and hybridization with Rainbow Trout are being dealt with by federal and state agencies, as well as tribal entities.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.