

Wind/Bighorn Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Holiday Inn of the Waters, Thermopolis WY
May 14, 2001

Welcome

Facilitators Sheri Gregory-Schreiner and Cathy Lujan opened the meeting at 6:07 pm. The agenda was reviewed and the meeting objectives were identified for the benefit of group. Group members were asked to wait to be recognized, respect all opinions, and stick to the issues at hand. Introductions of all people in attendance then followed, and a sign in sheet was passed around.

Presentations

Doug Beam, BRS – Doug Beam of BRS Engineering began the presentation portion of the meeting by introducing himself as the project manager hired to develop the Wind / Bighorn (WB) River Basin Plan. Doug introduced two other members of his team; Kirk Pendagraff will be working on the economic portion of the plan and Mike Donnell will be providing engineering experiences. Doug went on to relay the importance of this group in the development of a complete and accurate basin plan. He felt that the support and input of the Basin Advisory Group (BAG) will make the plan a better document. One questioner asked if this effort would include the Yellowstone and Clarks Fork sub-basins. Both of these basins will be included.

Mike Besson, WWDC – Mike Besson the Director of the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) was introduced to the group. Mike began his presentation by describing the purpose of the WWDC as described in Wyoming Statutes. The WWDC is charged with water resources related planning for the State of Wyoming. Mike expressed concern for the drought conditions in the area this year and stressed to the group the importance of this process. Mike felt that there would be many “Hot Topics” to come before the group in such a water short year. He reminded them of the importance of the ground rules, specifically the rule stating, No Finger Pointing or Personal Attacks. He wanted the group to understand that they have a difficult job ahead of them, and that there would be disagreements, but that all opinions will be heard and represented in the final plan. Mike concluded by reiterating the importance of this process and the participation of all who are present to ensure the completeness of the final product.

Jon Wade and Barry Lawrence, WWDC - Jon Wade and Barry Lawrence presented an overview of the River Basin Planning process, and discussed the status of the ongoing and completed River Basin Plans. For more information please visit the water planning website at <http://waterplan.state.wy.us/>

Break – 7:15 pm

Role of the Basin Advisory Group

The facilitators introduced this section of the meeting by explaining some of the expectations for the BAG. The group will have bi-monthly meetings that rotate around the basin. This helps minimize the drive time for members in outlying areas of the basin, and enables additional participation by those who are interested in this process and may not be able to drive great distances to every meeting. The facilitators also reminded the group that they were to serve in an advisory role and not in a policy setting role. All group members will receive reference notebooks that are specific to their basin. Reference notebooks contain factual information regarding the waters of the basin. The WWDC will regularly convey updates to the notebooks, which may contain agendas for upcoming meetings, meeting records for previous meetings, and PowerPoint presentation handout slides from prior meetings. Group members were encouraged to read their notebooks and review the updates prior to the meetings. One person present at the meeting suggested that the group share the provided information with members of their community and bring any ideas or concerns back to the BAG for discussion.

Ground Rules

Following in the footsteps of other basin advisory groups, the members present decided to develop a list of ground rules to be used in addition to the three previously mentioned by the facilitators. These rules will be added to the name tents used by the BAG members at each meeting to remind all who are participating of their responsibilities to the water planning process. The rules that were developed are as follows:

1. Wait to be recognized
2. No finger pointing or attacks
3. No long drawn out discussions
4. All sectors and geographic areas need to be represented
5. Participants need to do homework, keep informed, and be committed
6. Start and end on time
7. Participants need to be committed and show up at every meeting; send pre-determined alternate if not able to attend
8. Stick to the agenda
9. Set a time limit for the discussions
10. Meeting locations should be decided on by the BAG
11. Keep all unresolved issues on the table with the goal of finding a resolution (minority opinion as an addendum)
12. Stick to the issues being discussed

Conflict Resolution

The facilitators began this portion of the meeting with a discussion of the four types of conflict resolution. The first type of conflict resolution is voting. This method produces winners and losers, and that is not the intent of this process. Another method of conflict resolution involves the court system. This method does not apply to this group, as they do not set policy. The third option is to simply ignore the problem, however no solutions are reached and nothing gets accomplished this way. The last option is called

informed consent. Informed consent protects the minority opinion and allows all ideas to be heard. Even if all participants do not agree on the outcome, they agree on the process of reaching the outcome. All meetings are open to the public, and all persons can voice their opinions. Everyone is asked to leave their personal agendas and be prepared to talk about the needs of the basin as a whole.

Issues Identification

Next the group identified the main topics to be included in the issues they will develop for their basin. Fourteen issues were previously identified in a statewide survey as being important to all basins. The group added additional issues to the original fourteen, as follows:

1. Agriculture
2. Groundwater
3. Downstream Claims / Compacts / Decrees (sale or lease)
4. Economic Development
5. Water Quality
6. Municipal and Domestic
7. Water Conservation / Reuse
8. Water Rights and Water Law
9. Non Consumptive issues (ex. fisheries) / Commercial Non Consumptive (guides)
10. Water Development
11. Federal involvement / Regulations / Lawsuits
12. Recreation
13. Industrial / Minerals Extraction / Manufacturing
14. Disaster & Emergency Response (drought mitigation and flood control)
15. Tax Base
16. Hydropower
17. Tribal Issues
18. Precipitation Enhancement
19. Land Use

One participant asked if more could be added later. The issues list can be updated anytime the group decides changes need to be made.

Sector Identification

The facilitators next asked the group how they wanted to be represented on the BAG. The group decided that many of the identified sectors should include sub-sectors to ensure representatives were found for all areas without adding to the size of the group. A list of sectors and sub-sectors was developed as follows:

- 1) Agriculture (irrigation districts, etc.)
- 2) Municipal
- 3) Recreation (incl. commercial outfitters and boaters)

- 4) Environmental (incl. non-profit conservation organizations)
- 5) Sub-Basins
- 6) Economic Development (incl. socioeconomic)
- 7) Federal – State – County – (incl. conservation districts)
- 8) Industry
- 9) Tribal

Break – 8:15 pm

BAG Member Identification

The group reconvened from the break to identify individuals who would serve as BAG members. Many of those in attendance volunteered to serve. There were some sectors and geographic regions that were not represented after all volunteers were identified, so nominations were taken to fill those spaces. The planning team will try to contact the nominees before the next meeting, and will provide a preliminary list of members at that time.

Concluding Remarks

The last item on the agenda was to identify meeting dates and locations for the next three meetings. On June 26th the group will meet in Worland at the Washakie County Fairgrounds at 3pm. On August 7th the group will meet in Riverton at 3 pm, and on October 9th, the group will meet in Powell at 3 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.