

**Wind/Bighorn River Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Worland, WY
June 26, 2001**

Welcome

The facilitators for the Wind/Bighorn River Basin Advisory Group, Sherri Gregory-Schreiner and Cathy R. Lujan, of Counterpoise Consulting, Inc. in Cheyenne, opened the meeting at 3:05 p.m. They introduced themselves and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Then the participants introduced themselves by stating where they were located and their affiliation. The sign-in sheet was then passed around the room.

Planning Team Issues

The facilitators let the group know that briefing books as well as planning team contact information would be made available at the next meeting. The next three basin advisory group meetings were scheduled as follows:

August 7th, Riverton, 3 p.m.
October 9th, Powell, 3 p.m.
December 11th, Thermopolis, 3 p.m.

Barry Lawrence, WWDC River Basin Planner, reported on the planning efforts currently underway in the other basins. The Northeast Basin and Powder/Tongue River Basins are on a parallel timeline to each other with plan completion scheduled for the end of the year. HKM Engineering of Sheridan, Wyoming is the consulting firm doing this work. Currently the consultant is finishing up the water use profiles and is busy modeling the basin. Barry then reported that the plan for the Green River Basin has been completed and the task of placing the plan on the website is nearly complete. The review of the draft plan for the Bear River Basin has also been completed and the consultants are finalizing the plan. The Snake/Salt Basin planning process is just getting underway and is on a similar track to that of the Wind/Bighorn Basin. Sunrise Engineering out of Afton has been retained to complete the Snake/Salt Basin Plan. BAG formation for that basin began in May as well.

Consultant Update – BRS, Inc.

Doug Beahm, President of BRS, is currently the engineer for the Washakie Rural Project, Hot Springs/Worland Regional, and the Wind/Bighorn River Basin Project. BRS is located in Riverton with a branch office in Worland. BRS will be the prime contractor on this project. Doug Beahm will be attending all of the BAG meetings accompanied by Jessica Beahm, who will be taking the meeting notes, and Curt Pendergraft, who is a Thermopolis resident and will be responsible for economic planning. Sub-consultants for the project include:

Mike Donnell and Sherman Allred – located in Worland since 1932, knowledgeable in the area of water rights issues in the southern Bighorn Basin;
Montgomery Watson – Responsible for basin planning;
Lidstone and Associates – Hydrology, groundwater and water rights;
TriHydro – On-line compatibility, GIS expertise;
Watts & Associates – Economics and population projections coordinated by Curt Pendergraft; and
Frank Carr – Water rights and adjudication issues.

Doug indicated that goals during the project include: working with the BAG, profiling of water use in the basin, creating a GIS Database, identifying surface and groundwater availability, demand projections and future use opportunities. Doug also indicated that BRS would prepare a base map of the area for the next basin advisory group meeting.

Ground Rules

The ground rules that were discussed during the previous meeting were taken out and reviewed. The group agreed to adopt the ground rules as stated. It was noted that these rules would be printed on the back of the name tents. It was also decided that time for the public to speak will be added to the end of each Wind/Bighorn River Basin Advisory Group agenda. Name tents will be distributed at the August meeting with the mission statement and ground rules on the back of each card.

Basin Advisory Group Membership

The facilitators led a discussion concerning the basin advisory group membership, which included the issue of a balanced sector and geographic representation. This issue will be brought back to the group at the next meeting with a formal membership list that will be prepared by state staff. This list will include the names of those volunteering to serve as well as still others who were nominated by the group and have since indicated their willingness to be a BAG member.

Educational Presentations

The facilitators asked the BAG what types of water related topics and presentations they would like to hear about in future meetings. The following educational presentations were suggested:

- Water Sources (origination, overview, uses)
- Appropriations to Average Flows
- Water Quality
- Past Water Development Projects
- SEO – Water Law and Water Rights
- Discussion on the “Old” Water Plan
- Local Conservation Districts – TMDL’s, etc.
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Conservation

Fisheries
Tribal Issues (possible presentation for the Riverton meeting)
Yellowstone River Compact
Groundwater Supply
Data Availability
Bureau of Reclamation
US Geological Survey
Domestic Water Sources
Review of Water Studies
Powell (extension services of the college)

Basin Advisory Group Mission Statement

After deliberating in four smaller groups the Basin Advisory Group decided on the following mission statement:

Assist in the water planning process for the Wind/Bighorn/Clarks Fork River Basin. Identify water resource issues and concerns relating to sources, development, and present and future uses and demands. We recognize the importance of conservation and beneficial use of water to the quality of life and economy of the Basin.

Issues Identification

Members in attendance began identifying the major issues/sub-issues associated with the water resources of the Wind/Bighorn River Basin. This list will be revisited at the next meeting.

Recreation

1. Fisheries
2. Water for Wildlife
3. Beer ☺
4. Identify Underdeveloped Fisheries (those where sufficient water exists)
5. Sauger

Water Quality

1. TMDL
2. Salinity Loads
3. Water Quality Impairments
4. Runoff Quality

Drought Mitigation

1. Accurate Data on Present Situation

Hydropower

1. Power

Regulatory

1. Federal Regulations – CWA, ESA, etc.

Industry

1. Semi-conductors
2. Oil Field Water

Non-Consumptive

1. Riparian Quality
2. Instream Flows
3. Health of Tributaries

Tribal

1. Tribal Regulations: Water Code/Quality Standards
2. Tribal Water Rights
3. Tribal “Futures Water Development”

Tax Base

1. West Side Irrigation Project

Agriculture

1. Maintenance of Existing Water Delivery Infrastructures

Groundwater

1. Groundwater Use/Supply

Downstream Agreement

1. Out of State Water Rights

Economic Development

1. Marketing
2. Business Development Profits

Municipal/Domestic

1. Population Growth and Water Supply

Water Conservation

1. Irrigation Efficiency
2. Dependency in Shrinking Sources
3. Water Conservation in Irrigation
4. Cost Share
5. Methods to Encourage Adaptation of Water Conserving Irrigation Equipment
6. Encourage More Conservation Practices of Water Use Through Incentives

Water Rights/Law

1. Accurate Quantification

2. Inter Basin Transfer
3. Distribution/Redistribution of Existing Water Resources
4. Present Use
5. Preservation of Historic Water Rights System
6. Out of State Water Rights
7. Unappropriated Water

Water Development/Future Water

1. Water Storage
2. Instream Flow Needs
3. Future Development for Irrigation
4. Enhancement of Existing Resources
5. Future Water Demand
6. Future Impoundments
7. Flow Augmentation
8. Develop Water Projects for Chronic Water Short Drainages That Have Good Soils and Water Righted Acreages
9. Unallocated Water
10. Floods
11. Verification of Unappropriated Water

Other

1. Flood Control

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.