

**Wind/Bighorn River Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Riverton, WY
August 7, 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 3:00 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 then passed out the reference notebooks as well as planning team contact information. They also handed out the meeting records from the last two basin advisory group meetings and copies of a presentation given by BRS Engineering in June. Members of the basin advisory group asked that copies of the state's drought management plan be included in the notebook. Water Development Commission personnel indicated that they would make such available at the next meeting.

The next three basin advisory group meetings were then scheduled as follows:

October 9th, Powell, 3 p.m.
December 11th, Thermopolis, 3 p.m.
February 12th, Dubois, 3 p.m.

Update BAG Membership

Barry Lawrence handed out a draft list of basin advisory group members for the Wind/Bighorn basin. Barry indicated that they have been following up nominations made at the last meeting, and the list distributed was draft at this time. Additional individuals in attendance then indicated their willingness to serve on the BAG. WWDC personnel will continue to follow up on nominations and a final version of the BAG membership list will be available at the next meeting.

Review of Issues Identification

The facilitators reviewed the 18 issues and sub-issues that the BAG agreed upon at the last meeting. Several changes and additions were made at this time. The BAG reaffirmed their right to revisit the list as needed. The complete issues list follows:

Recreation

1. Fisheries
2. Water for Wildlife

3. Paddle Sports

4. Identify Underdeveloped Fisheries (those where sufficient water exists)

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
3. **Clean Water Industry**

Non-Consumptive

1. Riparian Quality
2. Instream Flows
3. Health of Tributaries
4. **Wetlands**

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

Education

Economic Development

1. Marketing
2. Business Development Profits

Municipal/Domestic

1. Population Growth and Water Supply
2. **Land Use Planning**

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
2. **T& E Species**

Consultant Update

Doug Beahm, BRS, stated that his team was heavily into the data collection phase. They are focusing mainly on hydrography and topography at this time. Such information will be available through a GIS system. Finally, the potential to add a task in the planning process regarding power generation in the basin, is being investigated.

Yellowstone River Compact and Water Law – Sue Lowry, SEO

Sue Lowry gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Yellowstone River Compact and water law in Wyoming and its enforcement. She began with an overview of the history of the State Engineer's Office's from the territorial times and its responsibility to regulate the waters of the state. She then moved on to the responsibilities of the State Engineer's Office. These duties include permitting and regulatory responsibilities, interstate compact/deed administration, water resource data collection and distribution, and water education. She then covered the basic process of obtaining water rights, how an application is received, reviewed, and sent to the Board of Control. She also gave examples on how water would be regulated and distributed to the people holding water rights under several different scenarios.

Sue discussed the Yellowstone River Compact, how the Yellowstone River Compact Commission is selected, and the allocations set forth for the Clarks Fork River (60% Wyoming, 40% Montana), Wind/Bighorn River (80% Wyoming, 20% Montana), Tongue River (40% Wyoming, 60% Montana) and Powder River (42% Wyoming, 58% Montana). Key to the process are US Geological Survey streamflow gage records being maintained at the following sites:

- 06208500 Clarks Fork Yellowstone River at Edgar, Montana, minus diversions to White Horse Canal
- 06294500 Bighorn River above Tullock Creek, near Bighorn, Montana, minus Little Bighorn River near Hardin, Montana. Adjusted for change in contents in Bighorn Lake
- 06308500 Tongue River at Miles City, Montana
- 06326500 Powder River near Locate, Montana

Sue concluded by talking about the current issues before the commission, which include coal bed methane development, compact administration and tribal reserved water rights. Sue also detailed Wyoming's participation in the Missouri River Basin Association.

Tribal Water Presentation – Gary Collins, Tribal Water Engineer

Gary Collins gave a PowerPoint show discussing the water issues that the tribes are dealing with at present, including the lack of water from runoff, as well as storage issues,

export and agricultural issues. Specifically, he discussed the rehabilitation of Washakie Reservoir and dam, and also indicated that projects were currently underway to look at possible storage areas as well as export opportunities for the tribes. Gary spoke to the issue of the regulation of water on the reservation, and the renovation of their system to get better use from their water. Gary then turned the bulk of the time over to Dave Haire with the Wind River Environmental Quality Council, to discuss the Water Quality Assessment Report done for the area. This 305b report looks at the water quality of the watershed and whether the surface waters of the reservation are meeting their designated uses or not. In its final form, the report will be made available to the public both in hard copy format and online.

Other Commentary

The facilitators lead a discussion on what kind of educational presentations were to be held at the next meeting in Powell. The “old” water plan, USGS data collection activities, and conservation were all suggested. WWDC personnel indicated that they will be putting together the agenda for the meeting in the coming days, and cards would be sent out as to the topics of discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.