

**Wind/Bighorn River Basin Advisory Group  
Meeting Record  
Riverton, WY  
March 22, 2005**

**Welcome**

The facilitator for the Wind/Bighorn Basin Advisory Group opened the meeting at 3:05 p.m. After a brief introduction, the agenda for the meeting was reviewed. Participants introduced themselves by stating their name, place of residence, and affiliation. The sign-in sheet was then passed around the room. The next basin advisory group meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> in Thermopolis at 3 p.m.

**Planning Team Issues**

Barry Lawrence, WWDC River Basin Planner, distributed copies of past presentations to be added to the basin advisory group reference notebook. He then updated the group on the status of the planning processes for the Bear, Green, Snake/Salt, Powder/Tongue, Northeast, and Platte River Basins. He detailed the activities in each, as well as the invited BAG speakers, and consultant work in progress (if applicable). He concluded his remarks by discussing the past legislative session and pending new projects in the basin, and the retirement of John Jackson, WWDC Deputy Director.

**Owl Creek Master Plan Level I Study – Frank Grimes, Nelson Engineering**

Mr. Grimes began by discussing the objectives of the study. He described the study area through a series of visual displays and characterized the basin runoff amounts. He went on to discuss other issues associated with the drainage, including Anchor Reservoir, lower (Lucerne) water supply, irrigated lands served, and an inventory of diversion structures. Potential storage opportunities were discussed, including a list of 18 reservoir sites that have been evaluated. Mr. Grimes indicated that six sites have survived the initial Level I evaluation and have been recommended for further study. He concluded his remarks by discussing their recent investigation into possible fixes for Anchor Dam. A considerable amount of discussion followed Mr. Grimes presentation.

**Wind River Weather Modification Program Recommendations – Tara Jensen, National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR)**

Ms. Jensen discussed the findings of a recent WWDC Level II Feasibility Study, which looked at targeting the Medicine Bow/Sierra Madre and Wind River Ranges for winter snowpack augmentation through cloud seeding. It was noted that the technology recommended for deployment should not be viewed as a “drought-busting” tool as it works best in normal, or near-normal weather conditions. Rather, it should be viewed

as a long-term water management strategy. Ms. Jensen went on to discuss the climatology of the target area and the potential for a 10% increase in snowpack, equating to approximately 135,000 ac-ft per year of additional run-off from the entire Wind River Range. Factoring in the cost for the 5-year pilot program, Ms. Jensen indicated that an initial cost benefit analysis showed a cost of approximately \$7.60 per ac-ft. It was noted that such numbers compared very favorably to other more traditional water development projects within the state. Ms. Jensen continued her presentation by discussing project design considerations, operational criteria, seasons of operation, and tools to be used. The presentation was concluded by stressing the importance of the strong independent scientific evaluation being proposed as part of the project. Methods of evaluation will include both physical and statistical analyses of the seeding events. Discussion followed the presentation.

### **Wyoming Research Potential – Sue Niezgoda, UW Department of Civil & Architectural Engineering**

Ms. Niezgoda began by introducing herself to the basin advisory group as a new assistant professor in the Department of Civil & Architectural Engineering at the University of Wyoming. She further detailed her background, research interests, and purpose for addressing the group. She discussed possible research projects and encouraged the attendees to contact her with other potential research topics that could be addressed. Ms. Niezgoda may be reached at 766-3120, or via email at: [niezgoda@uwyo.edu](mailto:niezgoda@uwyo.edu)

### **Wyoming Drought Update – Jan Curtis, Water Resources Data System (WRDS) & State Climate Office**

Mr. Curtis went through the current drought conditions across the state while also focusing attention to the Wind/Bighorn Basin. He presented numerous viewgraphs depicting long-range forecasts from a variety of sources. He went on to assert that he believed that the drought was “ebbing”. Considerable discussion followed this presentation; including questions regarding his production of forage biomass projections, which are being used by various agency resource managers.

### **Upper Wind River Water Distribution – Loren Smith, Wyoming State Engineer’s Office**

Mr. Smith gave a presentation entitled “Dividing the Waters”, which looked at the tripartite agreements in the Upper Wind River. He went on to discuss current administration issues as relates to the agreements and the interpretation of state water law in the matter. He concluded his remarks by talking about the drought, exchange problems, and the recently concluded legislative session. A brief discussion followed.

### **Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments at this time. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.