

Green River Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs WY
March 14, 2000

Welcome

Facilitator Joe Lord welcomed the group and the meeting was opened at 1:00 pm. The overall meeting agenda was reviewed, followed by an introduction of all attendees. A sign-in sheet was passed around to record attendance.

Planning Team Issues

The future meeting schedule for the BAG was discussed. The following dates and locations were set:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
April 11, 2000	Pinedale	1:00	Sublette County Library
May 9, 2000	Baggs	5:00	TBA
June 13, 2000	Marbleton	5:00	TBA

A possibility for the July meeting is Wamsutter, located in the Great Divide Basin. Starting in May, all future meetings will be held at 5pm until further notice.

Consultant Update

Pat Tyrrell of States West gave a brief project update. Mr. Tyrrell presented a list of reservoirs that had been compiled as part of the project. While not every reservoir in the basin was included on the list, it was representative of the larger sites in the basin and did include all the major reservoirs. The list included not only reservoir capacities but also corresponding potential gross evaporative losses from the reservoirs. These losses were calculated using an estimate of annual lake evaporation and lake high water line area, for informational purposes.

Mr. Tyrrell also presented a list of Wyoming Game and Fish Department Instream Flow water right filings in the Green River Basin, along with a map of each filing location. Mr. Tyrrell noted there were about 33 applications filed in the basin, of which only two had advanced to the final stage of actually becoming a recognized water right. [*Note: The slides presented by Mr. Tyrrell are considered preliminary work products and will not be distributed at this time.*]

Questions asked of Mr. Tyrrell were as follows:

One questioner wondered if the entire amount of evaporation was charged to users in lakes, such as Fremont Lake, where storage was added to an already substantial natural lake, and the marginal change in surface area for evaporation was rather small. Mr.

Tyrrell responded that he was aware that several lakes in the upper east side of the basin were constructed in this manner, and evaporation should be charged (if “charged” is the right term) only on the basis of incremental evaporation.

A follow-up question had to do with how evaporation is counted against the Colorado River Compact allocated flow for Wyoming. Mr. John Shields indicated that evaporation is charged to the state in the same proportion as flow is allocated to the State by agreement among the upper basin states. That is, 14 percent of the total evaporation from all main stem reservoirs is charged to the Wyoming allocation.

A final questioner indicated he thought the value of 50 inches shown as an evaporative rate for the High Savery Reservoir site to be too high. Mr. Tyrrell said he would look into the issue and see if a wrong value had been used in the table. *[Note: the lake evaporation data in the table came from maps Larry E. Lewis published as part of his Master’s Thesis “Development of an Evaporation Map for the State of Wyoming...”, May 1978. The comment received regarding High Savery Reservoir is valid. One reason these values appear high is they had not been corrected for the effect of rainfall (which would reduce the amounts given by the rough equivalent of the annual average precipitation at each site on the list). The EIS document prepared for the High Savery site used 30 inches for net evaporation (45 inches gross lake evaporation minus 15 inches of precipitation) in its hydrologic analyses, a value that we will use from now on.]*

Municipal and Industrial Uses

Mr. Mike Purcell distributed a handout that provided 1997-1999 water use (depletions) for all towns in the basin. Surface water users showed an average per capita consumption rate of about 101 gallons per capita per day, whereas groundwater users averaged 353 gallons per capita per day. Of the groundwater users, data from Marbleton (787 gallons per capita per day) skewed the average higher. Information from the Marbleton Mayor, present at the BAG meeting, was that their use was high due to winter bleeding of water to avoid freeze problems, the existence of large town parks, and the fact that Marbleton users are not metered.

Questions of Mr. Purcell related to municipal uses were:

One attendee thought the population shown for Green River/Rock Springs looked high, like it may be the entire county and not just those communities. Mr. Purcell indicated that the numbers represent service area populations according to what the municipalities told him. This same questioner thought that the 1997-1999 time frame was just a “snapshot” and may be more valid if compared to other periods of use as well. Mike indicated he’d look into the availability of data for other periods.

Another questioner wondered if Reliance water rates were higher than Green River’s. According to Mr. Ben Bracken, manager of the Rock Springs/Green River Joint Powers Board, any difference in price between Rock Springs (and suburbs) and Green River would be due to debt service incurred independent of the price of the water itself.

A final question arose about the potential tie of storage water in Fremont Lake to the Town of Granger. There was some discussion about the current status of legislation that may have provided Fremont Lake water for Granger at one time. Mr. Purcell agreed to look into the legislative history of such an agreement and provide a summary to the Town of Pinedale.

Mr. Purcell then briefly mentioned that his next goal would be to investigate industrial uses. Responding to one questioner who asked if Mike knew approximately how much industrial use he expected to find, the answer was “not much” in relation to the basin as a whole

Institutional Issues

Mr. Purcell then gave a presentation on institutional issues, including the Endangered Species Act (ESA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Clean Water Act (CWA). Part of this presentation included discussions of how these acts had come into play in other development projects in the state. Mr. Purcell prepared a handout that was distributed to the BAG members in attendance.

Other questions asked of Mr. Purcell included:

Will he look at the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act, which include State Revolving Fund requirements as well as source area protection? Mr. Purcell said yes, the SDWA should be included.

Can the state streamline its approach to the federal requirements? It seems as though other states have more success with federal requirements than we do. There was an overall sentiment that money and congressional representation were common ingredients in getting federal approval for water projects.

Another commenter offered that BLM Resource Area Management Plans will say what types of activities are or are not allowed on federal lands.

Additional Presentations

Source Water Assessment Program

The next presenter was Ms. Kim Parker of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division. Her topic was Wyoming’s Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP).

High points from Ms. Parker’s presentation follow:

- The SWAP follows from 1996 SDWA amendments.
- SWAP is a preventative approach, similar to the Wellhead Protection Program.
- Assessments are voluntary in Wyoming because we do not have primacy over SDWA.
- Source Water Assessments include:
 - Delineation of the area contributing to a well or surface water intake.

- Inventory of sources of contamination in the source area.
- Analysis of susceptibility of sources to identified contamination points.
- Reporting of the source areas, contaminant sources, and susceptibility.
- Benefits of a SWAP for a water supply system:
 - Possible monitoring waivers resulting in lower testing costs.
 - Possible avoidance of groundwater disinfection rule.
 - Prevention of contamination.
 - Use as a planning tool for future water development or local response plans.

Questions for Ms. Parker included:

How is natural contamination handled (i.e. radioactive contamination in the Superior well)? The response was that natural contamination may not be caught by the SWAP program. However, it should be noted in other EPA-required sampling for public water systems.

A questioner wondered how this program was funded. Ms. Parker's response was that it was funded (\$1.2 million) by a 10 percent holdback from the State Revolving Loan fund (EPA).

Comments were offered that voluntary programs often end up being mandatory.

Kim can be contacted at DEQ at (307) 777-7343 or kparke@state.wy.us for more information.

Fisheries Management

The final presentation was made by Ron Remmick of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGF). His topic was managing the native cutthroat trout populations in the Green River Basin and the State of Wyoming in general.

Mr. Remmick indicated there are four distinct subspecies of cutthroat trout in the state, including the Snake River, Yellowstone, Bonneville and Colorado River varieties. Populations of these trout are currently managed using creel and other surveys, habitat enhancement, removal of introduced species (e.g. Brook Trout) and special regulations. The WGF currently does not see the need to list any of these types of cutthroat trout as sensitive or endangered if their management plans can be implemented and existing populations protected.

Questions posed to Mr. Remmick included:

How do you tell the subspecies apart? The response was that DNA testing can be used among other methods. Some hybridization occurs, but pure strains are favored.

Another questioner wondered how important the High Savery Dam will be to the success of the program to protect the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout (CRCT)? Mr. Remmick

said that High Savery will be useful in protecting the species in the Little Snake River basin, but whether or not the reservoir is built their program will go forward.

The chemical used to eradicate Brook Trout in areas where they are to be removed (to reduce competition with CRCT) is called Anamyacin (sp). Is this chemical selective to just brook trout, or is it nonselective? And, how do you control the toxicity of the solution (i.e. how do you not poison reaches downstream not intended for Brook Trout removal)? Mr. Remmick indicated that this chemical is nonselective but loses its toxicity very quickly through natural oxidation, and is more effective than Rotenone. To make sure downstream reaches are unaffected, a technician applies potassium permanganate (an oxidizer) to the lower end of the reach. This oxidizer renders any remaining Anamyacin ineffectual at that point. Observations have shown recolonization by invertebrates lost to the poisoning occurs after about a year.

One questioner asked about whirling disease and whether it was true that birds could spread the disease. Mr. Remmick indicated that yes, while the risk may be low, the WGF assumes there is a possibility of birds spreading the whirling disease parasites.

Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.