

Green River Basin Advisory Group  
Meeting Record  
Desert School Gymnasium, Wamsutter, WY  
July 11, 2000

**Welcome**

Facilitator Joe Lord welcomed the group and the meeting was opened at 5:10 p.m. 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**

Jon Wade provided a rundown of the upcoming meeting schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
August 8, 2000	Lyman	5:00	Courthouse
September 12, 2000	Kemmerer	5:00	TBA
October 10, 2000	Green River	5:00	TBA
November 7, 2000	Farson	5:00	TBA
December 12, 2000	Rock Springs	5:00	TBA

Mr. Wade briefly discussed how the BAG would be able to review technical memoranda. The Planning Team (WWDC, SEO, and WRDS) will review first drafts of the memos. After review and editing, the memos will be made available for review by the BAG. Exactly how the memos will be made available is not yet defined.

Mr. Wade briefly discussed the NE Wyoming BAG meetings. A slide was presented showing the structure of the two BAGs in NE Wyoming, contrasting them to our own Green River organization.

Mr. Wade then introduced Bruce Brinkman to describe the State's position on Riverware, as promised at the last BAG meeting. Bruce described the Riverware model as a program somewhere in between the spreadsheet model currently being constructed for the basin plans and a full-blown simulation model. However, he acknowledged that Riverware is primarily set up to model hydropower and river operations at a larger scale, with less emphasis on smaller users (i.e. irrigation diversions). It is more of a management model and less a physical model. The model also currently does not take into account water rights.

Much discussion ensued on the value of the spreadsheet model currently being constructed by the consultant. In particular, questions arose regarding the use of averages to determine whether shortages exist. Mr. Tyrrell offered that "average" conditions were only one case that would be modeled; wet and dry year scenarios are also planned. Additional questions arose regarding the detail of diversion modeling, and whether double rights were being considered for those diversions early enough in priority to divert them. Mr. Tyrrell indicated that if diversion records showed double rights being diverted, and the effect of such diversions were seen in the next downstream gage, then yes they

are. It was reiterated that the spreadsheet model does not simulate individual diversions, but follows water consumption “down the river” based on irrigated lands and gage data. Large diversions with good records are modeled individually while smaller diversions are “lumped” for ease in tracking. In essence, the model will identify reaches or segments of waterways where water supply is in excess of, or short of, demands.

### **Consultant Update**

Mr. Pat Tyrrell of States West gave a brief project update and stated that he would like to go over the entire basin plan at the September meeting in Kemmerer, utilizing the full three hours. BAG members were asked to be thinking about future water use opportunities for discussion at that meeting.

The consultant topic for the evening, Little Snake River Depletions for the Yampa PBO, was introduced by John Shields. Essentially, the Yampa River Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) is intended to provide some regulatory certainty for water users in the Yampa River Basin (of which the Little Snake River is a part). It would eliminate the need for project-by-project Endangered Species Act compliance. To do this, the PBO authors need estimates of Wyoming’s current and projected depletions to the Wyoming part of the basin. A “block” of future depletions is to be estimated, which is not intended to serve as a “cap” on future use. Rather, the block provides an increment of depletion to allow time to measure the response of threatened and endangered fishes to Recovery Program activities.

Pat Tyrrell then provided the Consultant’s current estimates of existing and projected future depletions in draft form for review and comment. Using numbers generated from plan estimates, in addition to review of USBR Consumptive Uses and Losses Reports, the High Savery Environmental Impact Statement document, and ongoing basin projects, current depletions are estimated to be:

<b>Current Use</b>	<b>Depletion, AF</b>
Municipal (In-Basin)	76
City of Cheyenne	14,400
Agricultural	18,893
High Savery Reservoir	7,724
Diked Wetlands	284
Small Reservoirs	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,426</b>

Future estimates of depletions are as follows:

<b>Future Use</b>	<b>Depletion, AF</b>
Municipal (In-Basin)	88
City of Cheyenne	22,656
Agricultural	18,893
High Savery Reservoir	7,724
Diked Wetlands	284
Small Reservoirs	663
Dolan Mesa Canal	2,656
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,964</b>

Little discussion was held on the estimate of current depletions. However, comments were heard that future depletions need to consider all possible projects. In particular, the Little Snake Conservation District has hopes of constructing numerous stock and wildlife reservoirs within the basin, and doesn't want to be "capped" if the future block of uses turns out to be a firm limit. Further meetings will be held with representatives of the Little Snake Conservation District prior to finalizing the depletion estimates for submittal for inclusion in the PBO.

### **Additional Presentations**

#### Inland West Watershed Reconnaissance Project—Randy Davis, USFS

Mr. Randy Davis of the Bridger-Teton National Forest gave a presentation on the "Inland West Watershed Reconnaissance" project being undertaken by the Regional Foresters of the four Inland West regions of the USFS. Mr. Davis indicated this work was still in the data gathering stage. He also indicated that at this point, except for two watersheds that provide municipal water to Pinedale and Afton, all watersheds on the Forest have fisheries as their designated uses.

This work, described as a "resource evaluation" rather than a "management program" by Mr. Davis, was displayed on three maps with watersheds delineated to the 6<sup>th</sup> level hydrologic unit code (HUC). The maps showed Watershed Vulnerability (natural vulnerability to such features as landslides), Geomorphic Integrity (erosional/aggradational imbalance) and Water Quality (possible impairment, similar to TMDL determination).

Color-coded areas, by HUC, indicated whether a watershed was of concern, not of concern, or of uncertain or inconclusive status primarily due to a lack of data. Many watersheds fell into the third category as Mr. Davis stated existing data were thin and much work remained to be done.

A questioner asked if private inholdings were shown on the maps. Mr. Davis said no.

Another questioner asked about the two watersheds that were indicated of concern related to water quality, and asked how that determination was made. Mr. Davis indicated determination was based on experience of the observer. The questioner responded that the State of Wyoming required “credible data” before impairment could be concluded. To this, Mr. Davis replied that the intent was not to establish TMDLs based on the existing information; rather their work was intended to identify areas for further study, and to prioritize their work.

Wyoming’s Conservation Program—Ron Vore & Sue Lowry, SEO

A planned presentation on the State Engineer’s Office Water Conservation Program, and proposed changes to State Water Law, was postponed until the August BAG meeting in Lyman.

**Closing**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.