

**Green River Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
White Mountain Library, Rock Springs, WY
January 9, 2001**

Welcome

Facilitator Joe Lord welcomed the group and the meeting was called to order at 1:05 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. Joe Lord reviewed the agenda.

Planning Team Issues

Jon Wade noted that this was the last regular monthly meeting of the Green River Basin Advisory Group. The group will continue to meet three times a year, with the next meeting scheduled for March. The final Green River report will be available in about a month. Only a limited number of these reports will be printed, with emphasis on distribution through the website and/or on CD.

Jon also gave an update of the planning efforts that are underway in the Powder/Tongue and Northeast Wyoming basins. Additionally, he stated that the WWDC is requesting \$1.55 million of this Legislature for planning efforts in the Wind/Bighorn and Snake/Salt River Basins. Open houses to introduce river basin planning in these areas have been set for January 29th and 30th in Thermopolis and Alpine respectively.

The following meetings of the Green River Basin Advisory Group are currently scheduled:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
March 20, 2001	Pinedale	10 a.m.	Sublette County Library
July 10, 2001	Baggs/Savery	10 a.m.	TBA*

*The July meeting of the Green River Basin Advisory Group is tentatively scheduled to include a tour of the High Savery Reservoir Project Site.

Consultant Update: Final Green River Basin Plan, Products and Process

Pat Tyrrell, States West Water Resources Corporation was introduced. Pat gave a presentation of the draft final report, which was submitted, to the WWDC on December 26th, 2000. Pat's presentation covered a considerable portion of the draft report (six chapters). Specifically covered were the introduction, basin water use and water quality profile, available surface water and groundwater determination, demand projections, future water use opportunities, and implementation processes. It is anticipated that the final report will be available in about a month. Highlights of the presentation follow:

Pat noted that the amount of irrigated acreage was found to be a few percent more than it was found to be during the 1970 Water Planning effort. Also, municipal use amounts to only about 6,540 of 401,034 AF/Yr.

This effort compared to the 1970 Water Plan found an increase in industrial water consumption from 16,000 AF to about 66,000 AF. Trona and power generation are the main cause of this increase.

Thirty-four applications for instream flow water rights have been made in the Green River Basin with two having been granted to permit status. Relative to the Wyoming Game & Fish recommended water levels, a BAG member questioned the methodology that was used to derive the figures. Tyrrell pointed out that the consultant was instructed to include this information in the report and he was unable to answer questions about the derivation. Ron Remmick of the Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Green River Office, provided the figures. The questioner pointed out that a great number of the reservoirs plotted have no variation in terms of maximizing fish production in the reservoirs.

Regarding future demands for water in the Green River Basin, Tyrrell emphasized that planning is necessary but seldom right, and many factors are outside of our control. Nonetheless, much effort went into coming up with the best projections of what future water demands are likely to be, with a planning horizon of 30 years.

Another BAG member pointed out that a permit condition insisted upon by the Environmental Protection Agency, of the Section 404 permit for High Savery Dam was that no additional irrigated lands be brought under production with water from the facility. The BAG member further stated that “what we have is that the federal government is willing to allow the State of Wyoming to develop additional water under federally-dictated conditions”.

Regarding future water use opportunities, a set of criteria were used to rank opportunities/alternatives that might meet anticipated needs. These criteria consider factors affecting the likelihood of getting a project in the works, such as institutional constraints, beneficiaries, water availability, feasibility, etc.

Discussion

An individual from Rock Springs inquired whether future energy demands were taken into account in the plan. Mr. Tyrrell affirmed that potential energy demands were addressed to the extent that future water development projects certainly have the potential to generate both energy and tremendous financial resources for the State.

Another person questioned if the State Department could overrule work in the plan in order to divert excess water to the Gulf of California. John Shields indicated that Mexico wanted the water for estuaries in the Gulf. Further, there is an apparent agreement, or conceptual framework

for the need of additional study to determine needs. As no state under the Compact is likely to relinquish rights to the water, approaches to resolving the issue may be market-based.

One BAG member suggested that water surpluses shouldn't be looked at by basin, but need to be collectively considered over the entire State of Wyoming.

Still another member pointed out that the estimates of Wyoming's allowable share of the Colorado River does not take into account the provisions of Article XI of the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact, hence the estimates are not technically correct. The individual continued on, stating that "What needs to be done is to take 14 percent of the amount once the Little Snake River annual flow has been subtracted from the total."

One BAG member wanted to remind the group that laws and compacts designed to conserve for future use are often misinterpreted and as a result are often eliminated by federal action. In this light, the individual stressed that the plan is more urgent than it has been treated. Shields disagreed about the "ability" of the federal government to set aside interstate river compacts in this manner.

One questioner asked for the derivation of the 7.5 million AF/Yr number and 833,000 AF as Wyoming's share of it. John Shields briefly described the fact that while paragraph III.A. of the Colorado River Compact apportioned 7.5 MAF/yr to the upper division states collectively, the provisions of paragraph III.D. essentially guaranteed the lower division states 75 MAF in each ten consecutive year period although the long-term dependable supply is less than the amount apportioned to the two divisions. This effectively means that the upper division states split the remainder after the lower division receives its 75 MAF in each ten years. The upper division states' supply has been estimated to be between 5.8 and 6.3 MAF. The 833,000 AF/year is an estimate of Wyoming's compact apportionment assuming the upper division supply is 6.1 MAF/year and that the upper division states will not be required to supply water to meet the delivery obligation to the Republic of Mexico (there is not a "deficiency" under the Mexican Water Treaty obligation as addressed in the Colorado River Compact).

Other questions, which came up during discussions, included inquiries on the availability of satellite imagery, that of rural population growth estimates which might be too low, and the importance of maintaining riparian zones and channel capacity.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m.