

**Northeast Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Sundance High School, Sundance WY
April 26, 2000**

Welcome

Facilitator Evan Green welcomed the group and the meeting was opened at 6 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was discussed and the agenda reviewed. The role of the facilitator was discussed as well. Introduction of all attendees followed. A sign in sheet was passed around to record attendance.

Presentations

Evan Green introduced John Jackson from the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC). Mr. Jackson proceeded to describe the history of the WWDC and river basin planning within the state. After a brief history of the Water Development Commission, Jon Wade and Barry Lawrence from the WWDC River Basin Planning Team were introduced to give a more detailed explanation of the water planning process. Before starting the presentation, Mr. Wade explained to the audience that coal bed methane was not the only reason for river basin planning. He further emphasized that river basin planning was initiated before coal bed methane became an issue, and that it will be addressed within the plan.

The Powerpoint presentation by Mr. Wade explained the water planning process including the feasibility study within the Bear River Basin and the selection and initiating of basin planning within the Bear and Green River Basins. Goals and objectives of the statewide planning process were explained as were the role of the basin advisory groups (BAG) to assist with the development of the plans. Planning Team members from the WWDC, State Engineer's Office (SEO) and Water Resources Data System (WRDS) were introduced. Mr. Lawrence demonstrated the water planning website (<http://waterplan.state.wy.us/>) and how river basin planning information may be obtained from the site.

Following the presentation, two questions were raised by the group. First, there was a question by an attendee as to dollars allocated for plan development and whether enough resources had been allocated given the fact that estimates for completing such a plan were generated prior to the expansion of Coal Bed Methane development. The answer was yes, that several firms had submitted proposals for completion of a Northeast River Basin Plan within the given budget constraints. Another questioner wanted to know if the firms that were proposing were located within the basin. The answer was that of the final three firms in contention, only one was located within the basin. The other two firms were located in Laramie and Sheridan.

Evan Green then discussed the importance of a Basin Advisory Group. He emphasized that the group is an advisory group not a policy setting group. He further stated that for this group to be successful information must flow in both directions. It will

be the Basin Planning Team's responsibility to educate the group on water issues through reference notebooks, technical presentations and handouts. It will be the BAG's job to identify important issues and relay information to the public. Mr. Green admitted that this will be a difficult process, there are many volatile issues that will need to be discussed. However, the BAG has to be a safe place to deal with dangerous issues and the role of the facilitator will be to create a safe atmosphere and to protect minority opinion.

Next Mr. Green brainstormed with the group on how to resolve conflicts. He noted that there are several ways to resolve conflicts: voting, going to court, autocratic decisions and informed consent. The last technique was decided to be the method used by the group. The goal of informed consent will be to agree on a process, not an outcome, and to protect minority opinion. Evan then went on to talk about what will be required to guarantee success. The following items were identified:

- Open public process
- Good information
- Committed participants – must be able to spend 2 or 3 nights a month
- Leave positions at the door and be prepared to talk about what you need
- Follow the rules (treat others as you would like to be treated), including:
 1. Wait to be recognized
 2. No finger pointing or attacks
 3. No side conversations
 4. All decisions will be consent
 5. Alternative opinions welcome
 6. Stay on task
 7. Members commit to the group
 8. Accountability
 9. Meetings open/public comment after
 10. Don't champion cause outside group

Mr. Green next covered the issue of who should be a member. Evan stated that the BAG needs 15-20 honest people who are committed to work and who will support the group. Several options in considering the makeup of the BAG is to limit members by sector, geographic location, or to include any honest person.

Break

After the Break was over, the facilitator announced that it was time to form the BAG. A question was asked as to the exact boundaries of the Northeast Basin, to which Mr. Lawrence replied that the Northeast Basin included the Little Missouri, Belle Fourche, Cheyenne, and Niobrara River Basins. The group then discussed the merits of the geographic model for a Basin Advisory Group as well as the importance of trying to involve the various sectors. It was decided that sector representation would be utilized with an intent to balance representation geographically (Little Missouri, Belle Fourche, Cheyenne, and Niobrara basins). There was a brief discussion as to the whether federal and state agency representatives should be BAG members. The answer from the facilitator was that this was their group, and that it was up to them to decide. One questioner asked what was to be gained by being a bag member? The reply was that

while anyone could attend and offer their input, BAG members will be directly engaged in a two-way stream of communication relative to the water issues affecting their basins and will be a voice, and have a say, in the planning tool that is being created for the Northeast Basin.

The group in attendance then began to list the sectors that they felt should be represented on the Northeast BAG, and the numbers of representatives for each:

- 1 Bear Lodge Multi-Use Group
- 5 Conservation Districts
- 5 Industry (coal, hard rock, CBM, timber, oil & gas)
- 1 Environmental
- 1 Recreation
- 1 Municipal (Mayor)
- 1 County Commissioner
- 9 Agriculture (1 each drainage – one on each of the headwaters and lower mainstem as well as representative from Sand Creek Tributary)

After discussing the proposed composition of the BAG, Evan asked the individuals in attendance to raise their hand if they were wishing to serve on the BAG. Names of interested individuals were recorded and then cross-referenced against the various sectors to see where further recruitment needed to be done. A few individuals volunteered to be alternates. Nominations were also accepted from the group for BAG membership, with the provision that state staff would contact those nominated to determine their willingness to serve. Representatives for vacant sectors would also be recruited by staff prior to the next Basin Advisory Group Meeting. The group confirmed that the membership list would be revisited at the next meeting with the intent to finalize the BAG.

Evan explained the last item on the agenda was the time and location for the next meeting. The facilitator asked the group if they would like to rotate meeting locations around the basin. The group agreed to this proposal, and decided the next meeting would be held in Newcastle on June 15 from 6-9 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.