

Northeast Wyoming Basin Advisory Group Meeting Record  
Lusk, WY  
July 18, 2002

**Welcome**

River Basin Planner Barry Lawrence welcomed the group and the meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. Facilitators Cathy Lujan and Sherri Gregory-Schreiner of Counterpoise were re-introduced to the group. All attendees introduced themselves, followed by a review of the overall meeting agenda. A sign-in sheet was passed around to record attendance. The next meeting is scheduled November 21 in Moorcroft.

**Water Development Commission Report**

Barry Lawrence updated the BAG on the status of the plans for the other basins. The BAGs for the Wind/Bighorn and the Snake/Salt Basins will be meeting August 13 in Worland and August 14 in Moran; whereas the Bear, Green, and Powder/Tongue BAGS met July 15 and July 16 in Kemmerer and July 17 in Dayton. Barry discussed the status of all basin studies, and schedule for future meetings.

**Water Resources Data System Report**

Robin Gray discussed the current drought situation. She indicated that weekly drought e-mail updates are available, and can be requested via [jcurtis@uwyo.edu](mailto:jcurtis@uwyo.edu). The Wyoming climate atlas is being updated and will be available spring 2004. The 2002 Municipal Water Supply Survey has recently been placed on-line. She indicated the Northeast Basin Final Report, Executive Summary, and most technical memorandums should be on-line in the near future. September 1, 2002 is the target date for the State Engineer's Office (SEO) groundwater rights database in queryable format to be online.

**Aquatic Wildlife Resources in Northeast Wyoming**

Bob McDowell, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, discussed the watershed management plans in the Little Missouri, Belle Fourche, Cheyenne, and Niobrara basins. Sport fishing contributes \$11.7 million annually to the area's economy.

Bob indicated that fish management concepts include basic yield, trophy, catchables, wild, and unique categories. 3,000 miles and 235 streams are managed in the Sheridan region, of which 737 stream miles are located in northeast Wyoming. He discussed the various non-game and game fish in the 4 basin drainages. The Yellowstone Cutthroat trout is the only species native to the region. He discussed problems associated with nuisance fish introductions. Other topics of discussion included habitat enhancement, access development, amphibians, and aquatic habitat challenges.

### **State Engineer's Office Report**

Pat Tyrrell, State Engineer, discussed the agency's change in public water right search policy and related training available during the summer and early fall. He discussed the June 2002 Yellowstone River Compact tour. Additional discussion topics included coal bed methane, drought issues, and instream flow.

### **Modeling CBM Surface Water Impacts Using the Erosion Potential Modeler**

Greg Wilkerson, University of Wyoming, described the research project. He stated the objectives were to establish an erosion index for drainages in Northeast Wyoming and produce an erosion index map compatible with ArcView GIS. An equation was developed to estimate the change in the channel due to the addition of coal bed methane discharge water. Study reaches included Deadhorse Creek and Burger Draw in the Powder River basin. Greg stepped through an EP Modeler demonstration. The results indicated the potential for accelerated erosion in the Powder River basin.

### **Oil and Gas Commission Report**

Don Likwartz, Director, indicated water production from coal bed methane wells has gone from 8 million barrels of water/year in 1993 to 516 million barrels of water/year in 2001. However, the total number of active drilling rigs has declined 30% in the last year. There are four agencies involved in CBM development: State Engineer's Office, Department of Environmental Quality, Oil and Gas Commission, and the Bureau of Land Management. He went on to indicate that types of discharge within the basin vary due to topography and water quality. Coordination and education issues were also discussed. To date, 14,700 CBM wells have been drilled. It is anticipated that the well development will be last 10-15 years, utilize 250-325 drilling employees, and create a total of 1000-1300 jobs.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.