

Northeast Wyoming Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
September 30, 2004
Newcastle, Wyoming

Welcome

Facilitator Sherri Gregory welcomed the group and the meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. 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 for March 24, 2005 in Lusk.

Water Development Commission Report

Barry Lawrence introduced Justin Mulbay, the new river basin project coordinator for the Water Resources Data System at the University of Wyoming. Barry updated the BAG on the status of the plans for the other basins. The BAGs for the Bear, Green and Snake-Salt Basins will be meeting October 11 in Cokeville, October 12 in Lyman and October 13 in Jackson. Barry discussed the status of all basin studies, and agendas for future meetings. Handouts from the prior meeting were distributed

USDA Secretarial Drought Designation

Lois Van Mark, Farm Service Agency, discussed the Governor's Drought Task Force and its accomplishments, particularly with the producers on public lands. She indicated that there are two types of federal drought assistance programs available, federal ad-hoc and on-going programs. Ad-Hoc programs include the Livestock Assistance Program, Crop Disaster Program, and American Indian Livestock Assistance. On-going programs include Emergency Conservation Program, Secretarial Declaration of Disaster, Conservation Reserve Acres, and 2004 Nonfat Dry Milk Livestock Feed Assistance Initiative.

Lois went on to discuss the USDA secretarial drought declarations and counties involved. Benefits were explained relative to affected and contiguous areas. Lois concluded her remarks by discussing the Community Collaborative Rain and Hail Study (CoCoRaHS) and its implementation in Wyoming. Further information on this program can be found at <http://www.cocorahs.com/> Discussion followed.

National Weather Service Activities in Northeast WY

Teresa Murphy, National Weather Service (NWS) presented an overview of the agency. The NWS, which is affiliated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has 123 offices nationwide with 13 river basin centers. The Rapid City, SD office serves portions of this basin. NWS information, including weather and hydrologic forecasts, can be accessed through <http://weather.gov>, or by telephone (800)211-1448 or locally (605)341-9271. Teresa gave definitions of normals and the contrasts from 2001-2004. A temperature and precipitation outlook, and El Niño trends were also noted. Discussion followed

Belle Fourche Reservoir Environmental Assessment/Resource Management Plan
Faye Streier and Curt Anderson, Bureau of Reclamation, indicated that the Belle Fourche Dam and Reservoir, which is operated by the Belle Fourche Irrigation District, is located offstream on Owl Creek from Belle Fourche River northeast of Belle Fourche, SD. Originally authorized for irrigation under the 1902 Reclamation Act, construction on the earthfill facility was completed in 1912. The reservoir provides not only irrigation water but it also has diverse recreation uses, such as a warm water fishery, hunting and camping. A resource management plan is required to work with the irrigation district, SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks, and the SD National Guard to accommodate visitor use while protecting natural resources and public safety on Reclamation lands. Faye discussed the steps, which were taken to develop the plan and related environmental assessment, and the resulting land use categories developed in relationship to recreation and wildlife management. Various plan details were presented, as well as future plans for Rocky Point. Discussion followed.

Weston County Natural Resource District (WCNRD) Water Development Projects
Carol Nicholls, District Coordinator, discussed the operating criteria, public benefits, eligibility, and the application process for the WWDC's Small Water Project Program. Carol indicated that 13 projects sponsored by the WCNRD had been approved, which represented 47 miles of pipeline, 7 stock water wells, 72 stock tanks, 3 storage tanks, and 3 windmill towers. Discussion followed.

Current Status of CBM in WY

Mickey Steward, Coalbed Methane Coordination Coalition (CBMCC), discussed the accomplishments of the CBMCC during the past year. Principal projects have included a road and bridge study investigating speed and weight, studies of subsurface aquifers affected by depletion, county resource definitions, Dead Horse and Prairie Dog Creek studies, data monitoring, website development, stakeholder contacts, and tours. A lengthy discussion followed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.