

**Powder / Tongue Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Sheridan College Presentation Hall, Sheridan WY
April 27, 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. 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 and Mr. Lawrence 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 discussed where water planning information may be obtained while demonstrating the Wyoming State Water Plan Homepage. This information is available at the following web site:
<http://waterplan.state.wy.us/>

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
- leave positions at the door and be prepared to talk about what you need
- treat others as you would like to be treated and follow the following rules
 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. Maintain accountability
 9. Meetings open/public comment after
 10. Don't champion causes outside the group

Evan 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.

One questioner asked if BAG membership is only limited to the people present. Evan stated that this must be for the group to decide, in Northeast Wyoming the group nominated people not in attendance. Another questioner wanted clarification on the time commitment needed. Mr. Green answered that two nights a month would be about the average (which includes both meetings and reading assignments).

Break

After the Break was over, the facilitator announced that it was time to identify those wanting to join the BAG. Evan started the process with a raise of hands of who wanted to be on the BAG. 17 people raised their hands. Names of interested individuals and their representation were then written down.

Questions and Comments resulting from the list were as follows:

One person felt that Sheridan County was over represented and the Little Big Horn drainage was under represented. One person questioned whether this list can be revisited at the next meeting, commenting that this is a busy time for the agricultural sector. The answer was yes, the list will be finalized at the next meeting to be held in June.

Another questioner wanted to know how the meeting was advertised. Jodie Jackson from the WWDC stated that the meeting was announced in the local papers, in addition all people attending previous meeting received postcard notification.

One audience member asked if 25 people were too large of a group. Evan Green remarked that it was not too large, many people on the list were nominated and need to be contacted. Evan also announced that if your name was on the list or if you nominated someone to please get with the WWDC to get on the mailing list. Another person commented that the group was too large, but the representation was good. Following up on this remark, another person stated that anytime you have a first meeting you have a 10-15% decline in numbers. The facilitator then recommended that the membership list be the first item for next meeting's agenda.

Evan explained the next agenda item 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 Buffalo on June 14 from 6-9 p.m.

The group confirmed that the membership list would be revisited at the next meeting with the intent to finalize the BAG. One person from the audience wanted to know if the list would go on the internet on the Waterplan Homepage. Mr. Wade stated that these names would not be placed on the web, but will be handed out to all BAG members and placed in the reference notebooks. The facilitator asked for this list to be mailed to all on the list in advance of the next meeting.

One questioner asked what the agenda for the next meeting would be. Mr. Wade answered that issues identification will be started as well as how the BAG would like to conduct meetings and potential educational presentations would be addressed. Additional comments were made on the BAG membership. A consensus was reached that the list would be tentative and would not be sent out until all people on the list are contacted.

One audience member asked whether it was appropriate to have government agencies on the BAG. The facilitator stated that it was up to the group to decide. One person commented that it was imperative that the government agencies be on the group because of their technical knowledge. One person stated that the State Engineer's Office should be on the BAG. Mr. Green commented that they are part of the Water Planning Team and will be an integral part of the process. Mike Whitaker from the State Engineer's Office, Board of Control, announced that he would attend the meetings for technical support but not as a BAG member.

A few people commented on the procedure for announcing upcoming meetings. One person felt that meetings should be announced on the radio since newspaper ads may be missed. Another person suggested using the television community bulletin boards to announce meetings.

To end the meeting, Jon Wade reviewed the date and locations for the next meeting. The next meeting will be in Buffalo on June 14 from 6-9 p.m., location to be determined. Mr. Wade then stated that if the group was comfortable with meeting the second Wednesday of the Month, then future meeting locations could be discussed. One audience member liked the idea of locations rotating around the basin. Another person agreed and suggested that in August the group should meet in Sheridan or Ucross. It was further decided that in October the meeting location would be Gillette and in December, Kaycee.

A few more questions concerning BAG membership included whether the Forest Service or BLM should be on the BAG. Mr. Green stated that if you are going to have state employees, then you should consider federal employees as well. A few audience members had further nominations to include federal employees to the tentative BAG membership list.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.