

Powder/Tongue River Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Sheridan, WY
November 20, 2002

Welcome

Facilitator Sherri Gregory-Schreiner welcomed the group and the meeting was called to order at 6:02 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 April 2 in Buffalo.

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 December 17 in Powell and December 18 in Jackson whereas the BAG for the Northeast Wyoming Basin will be meeting November 21 in Moorcroft. The Bear and Green River BAGs met November 18 in Kemmerer and November 19 in Green River. Barry discussed the status of all basin studies, including the Platte River Basin, and schedule for future meetings.

Sheridan Research and Extension Center Activities

Roger Hybner, Director of the UW Sheridan Research and Extension Center, indicated the research performed at the center focuses on dryland and irrigated forage production as well as weed science, plant pathology and horticulture. Additional information about the Sheridan Research Center may be found at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/agexpstn/exphome.htm>

Aquaculture in Wyoming

Jim Bennage, Sheridan College, discussed the economic potential of fish production in Wyoming. He pointed out that the prime factors needed for successful fish production is water and temperature. The successful catfish industry in Mississippi and trout industry in Idaho were highlighted. Potential sources of water, including coalbed methane and saline/brackish water, as well as marketing opportunities from Wyoming, such as live haul, were discussed.

Belle Fourche and Powder River Drainages Water Quality Assessment Project

Michelle Cook, Campbell County Conservation District, indicated the assessment project was funded on April 10, 2002 by way of a DEQ 319 grant. Project goals include:

- Comprehensive watershed assessment to identify impaired segments of Little Powder River, Stonepile and Donkey Creeks and to assess baseline information for Dead Horse, Wild Horse, Spotted Horse, LX Bar, SA, Bitter Creeks, and Powder River.

- Provide information/education to the affected interests and general public to encourage public involvement in future planning.

Land ownership is a mix of federal, private and state acreage.

Project benefits include:

- An evaluation of impaired waterbodies to scope the sources of concern,
- an identification of human health concerns,
- an assessment of baseline monitoring of waterbody health, classification status, stream bank stability, and vegetation for future determinations and uses, and
- local commitment from landowners and local entities.

Cooperating team members include the NRCS, city of Gillette, Campbell County Commissioners, Crook County Natural Resource District, and Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service. The project timeline and current status was discussed. Coordinating projects include the Belle Fourche River Watershed Assessment, Planning and Implementation 319 Grant and the Donkey Creek and Gillette Fishing Lake I&E 319 Grant.

Assessment and Planning on Goose Creek and Upper Tongue River Watersheds

Carrie Rogaczewski, Sheridan County Conservation District (SCCD), discussed the assessment, planning and implementation plans for the Upper Tongue River Watershed. The partners involved in the effort include the TRWP Steering Committee, NRCS, DEQ, Game and Fish, town of Ranchester and landowners. Carrie indicated the assessment included physical, chemical, biological, and habitat parameters along with a historical data review. 12 sample sites, including 5 tributaries, were sampled April-October for the years 1996 –1999. The 2002 impairment listings were based on fecal coliform and temperature.

The Upper Tongue River Watershed Plan was developed by local residents in 2000 and identifies, categorizes and prioritizes concerns. The plan also outlines objectives and action items. The various concerns and resultant implementations were outlined. Four demonstration projects, including a septic system replacement, streambank protection, stream channel restoration and an animal feeding operations improvements were discussed.

The Goose Creek Watershed Assessment is funded by the EPA through section 319 of the Clean Water Act and project sponsors. An advisory group is in place, and the members represent the SCCD, Sheridan County Commissioners, the city of Sheridan, and a technical advisory committee. Carrie indicated the assessment included physical, chemical, biological, and habitat parameters with a historical data review on 46 sample sites, which were sampled April-October for the years 2001 - 2002. The 1998 and 2000 impairment listings were based

on fecal coliform levels. The deadline for the local watershed plan development is 2004.

Carried concluded the presentation by stating that through the assessments on the Goose Creek and Upper Tongue River watersheds, the SCCD has defined watershed planning as a locally led, voluntary, and dynamic process driven by the expectations of the stakeholders and developed through active, public participation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.