

**Powder/Tongue River Basin Advisory Group  
Meeting Record  
Ucross, WY  
April 20, 2005**

**Welcome**

The facilitator for the Powder/Tongue Basin Advisory Group opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. After a brief welcome by Mark Gordon with the Ucross Foundation, the agenda for the meeting was reviewed. Participants introduced themselves by stating their name, place of residence, and affiliation. The sign-in sheet was then passed around the room. The next basin advisory group meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> in Kaycee. Additionally, the basin advisory group asked that the next meeting include a tour of the proposed Middle Fork of the Powder River Reservoir site. To accommodate this request, the time for the tour was set at 1 p.m., with the meeting taking place immediately afterwards at 3 p.m.

**Planning Team Issues**

Barry Lawrence, WWDC River Basin Planner, distributed copies of past presentations to be added to the basin advisory group reference notebook. He then updated the group on the status of the planning processes for the Bear, Green, Snake/Salt, Wind/Bighorn, Northeast, and Platte River Basins. He detailed the activities in each, as well as the invited BAG speakers, and consultant work in progress (if applicable). He concluded his remarks by discussing the past legislative session and pending new projects in the basin, and the retirement of John Jackson, WWDC Deputy Director.

**Wyoming Research Potential – Sue Niezgoda, UW Department of Civil & Architectural Engineering**

Ms. Niezgoda began by introducing herself to the basin advisory group as a new assistant professor in the Department of Civil & Architectural Engineering at the University of Wyoming. She further detailed her background, research interests, and purpose for addressing the group. She discussed possible research projects and encouraged the attendees to contact her with other potential research topics that could be addressed. Ms. Niezgoda may be reached at 766-3120, or via email at: [niezgoda@uwyo.edu](mailto:niezgoda@uwyo.edu)

**Lake DeSmet Update – Bruce Yates, Sheridan County**

Mr. Yates discussed the facility and stated that as of the date of the meeting the reservoir was 87% full. He went on to explain the amount of water available to the shareholders, the two completed Level II WWDC feasibility studies, and the current composition of the joint powers board, comprising Johnson and Sheridan Counties. It

was noted that 2,500 acre-feet of storage water was available for each. A considerable amount of discussion followed Mr. Yates' presentation and centered on current state water law as relates to the facility.

### **Wyoming Drought Update – Jan Curtis, Water Resources Data System (WRDS) & State Climate Office**

Mr. Curtis went through the current drought conditions across the state while also focusing attention to the Powder/Tongue River Basin. He presented numerous viewgraphs depicting long-range forecasts from a variety of sources. He went on to assert that he believed that the drought was “ebbing” and weather patterns were changing. Considerable discussion followed this presentation; including questions regarding his production of forage biomass projections, the latest of which would be released later in the week. Mr. Curtis stated that he expected the new forecast for the area to be marginal, instead of well below normal.

### **Resource, Conservation & Development – Aaron Waller, Northeast WY RC&D**

Mr. Waller explained the role of the RC&D's across the country, and more specifically Wyoming. It was noted that the RC&D program was based on several concepts, including: the value of public/private partnerships in making the best use of limited resources; the value of grass-roots involvement in making decisions about local areas; bringing USDA agencies together to focus on the similar issues, concerns, and opportunities; leveraging limited federal dollars with private funds to accomplish goals; working toward the goal of community sustainability; and achieving a balance between rural economic development and natural resources conservation. Mr. Waller went on to state that there were over 100 projects that have been conducted in the area. Specific projects include the Vore Buffalo Jump interpretive center, the Sheridan civil war cemetery restoration project, numerous public facilities improvements, historical preservation work and emergency services activities. He concluded his remarks by talking about current additional efforts within the basin.

### **Coalbed Methane Coordination Coalition Activities – BJ Kristiansen, CBMCC**

Mr. Kristiansen discussed the activities of the coalition and the current status of coalbed methane development across the state and detailed production numbers. He noted that the biggest limiting factor to further development was that rigs couldn't be put into place due to a lack of personnel. He discussed the migration of CBM development to other areas of the state and how the Green River basin was the fastest growing area for such development. He went on to discuss declining water production, and concluded his remarks by discussing the group's current projects, including: drainage basin characterizations, GIS data reduction efforts, geologic and environmental studies, direct consultations with county government, public meetings and presentations, working groups, stakeholder investigations, and studies of road use and airshed issues.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.