

**Wind/Bighorn River Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record Dubois, WY
February 12, 2002**

Welcome

The facilitators for the Wind/Bighorn River Basin Advisory Group, Sherri Gregory-Schreiner and Cathy Lujan, of Counterpoise Consulting, Inc. in Cheyenne, opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. They introduced themselves and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Then the participants introduced themselves by stating where they were located and their affiliation. The sign-in sheet was then passed around the room.

Planning Team Issues

The next three basin advisory group meetings were scheduled as follows:

April 9th - 3 p.m. - Cody, WY
June 11th - 3 p.m. - Lander, WY
August 13th - 3 p.m. - Worland, WY

Barry Lawrence, WWDC River Basin Planner, distributed copies of past presentations to be added to the basin advisory group reference notebook. Barry then updated the BAG on the status of the planning process for the Snake/Salt, Powder/Tongue, Northeast, Bear and Green River Basins. He detailed the current activities in each, as well as the invited BAG speakers, and consultant work in progress (if applicable). He then invited interested individuals to attend any or all of the BAG meetings in the other basins.

Water Resources Data System Update – Robin Gray, WRDS

Robin Gray with the Water Resources Data System gave an update on current activities of the unit and discussed the current drought status of the Wind/Bighorn basin. Robin displayed information on current snowpack levels and forecast trends. She stated that the Governor's Drought Task Force would be meeting in Cheyenne on March 19. Robin indicated that some of the topics for discussion at the meeting would include cloud seeding and long term drought patterns. Robin concluded her discussion by handing out a list of pertinent water resource website addresses for use by the group.

GIS Mapping Activities - Leanne Brehob, Tri Hydro Corporation

Doug Beahm introduced Leanne Brehob from Tri Hydro Corporation. Tri Hydro is the firm responsible for performing the GIS mapping of the basin. Leanne opened by defining that a Geographical Information System (GIS) is an organized collection of computer hardware, software and geographic data designed to efficiently capture, store, update, manipulate and analyze data. GIS breaks down maps into layers so that the user can perform spatial and aspatial operations, as well as manipulate and analyze the information.

Ms. Brehob then explained GIS' benefits to the project, including powerful analysis capabilities, consistency of data, data standardization, spatial and descriptive data that are explicitly linked, the ability for data users to view and manipulate data in the manner they choose, flexibility in data retrieval, analysis and reporting, and the ability to customize user applications in a short period of

time. Ms. Brehob demonstrated how the information that has already been entered into the GIS could show information about an irrigated area just by highlighting the desired area. The data that is being utilized for this project include irrigated lands information, points of diversion, and water rights. When completed, the information that has been collected will be available on CD and viewable in Arc View and Arc Explorer. It should ultimately be available for download from the water planning website.

Economic Development in the Basin – Roger Bower, Wyoming Business Council

Roger Bower, Regional Director of the Wyoming Business Council, began his remarks by defining the following economic development building blocks:

Leadership Development: process of encouraging our young people to aspire to leadership roles in their communities.

Work Force Development: process of providing training opportunities for individuals which would allow for potential.

Community Capacity Development: development of infrastructure for the community to accommodate new businesses.

Entrepreneur Development: providing the ability for the interested company to develop and grow in the community.

Existing Business Development: encouraging the growth of businesses already in the area.

Recruiting: going out and finding businesses to move into the area.

Mr. Bower stressed the importance of growing a community from within. He then discussed examples of businesses in Fremont County such as the Brunton Company which is expanding. Mr. Bower concluded by discussing the types of new businesses which might be attracted to the area.

Upper Wind River Compact Watershed Group – Mayor Bob Baker, Town of Dubois

Mayor Bob Baker started his presentation by giving the group some background on the Upper Wind River Compact Watershed Group which was formed late last summer. Mayor Baker indicated that the goal of the group was to become informed on the water resources, soil conservation, and environmental protection issues that affect the Town of Dubois. Attendance at the meetings has ranged from 20 to 50 individuals. Mayor Baker indicated that many of the members were in attendance at this meeting.

Town of Dubois Issues – Mayor Bob Baker, Town of Dubois

Mayor Bob Baker addressed the issues that the Town of Dubois was concerned with relative to the water resources of the area. He showed a map of the area, and discussed the importance of being on the headwaters of the river basin. He went on to say that in the past there were multiple uses for

public lands' such as water, grazing, recreation, timber, and wildlife. Mayor Baker stated that recent decisions have impacted logging and grazing. It was noted that recreation has also been limited because of access issues.

Mayor Baker continued by saying that Dubois has experienced a lot of pressure on their infrastructure due to the loss of timber and livestock as resources. In an effort to recover from their economic loss, the town's infrastructure was neglected. Mayor Baker said that one problem was that their wastewater system was out of date. He noted that they have an adequate water supply for now, however the town's water comes from a shallow aquifer. Ultimately, they are concerned about their water source. While their water is currently of decent quality and quantity, there is no guarantee of it remaining so. He stated that another concern was that of storm runoff, causing gravel and dirt from the streets to wash into the Wind River. Mayor Baker indicated that paved streets and storm drains would help limit the impact of such events.

TMDL's and Effects on Watershed Planning – Chuck Harnish, DEQ

Chuck Harnish with the Department of Environmental Quality opened by stating that the 2002 303(d) list of impaired streams would be available for review at the local conservation district until March 1st, and could also be obtained through DEQ's website. Mr. Harnish explained the report gives an assessment of water quality. The 303(d) list details the impaired streams, or stream reaches not meeting designated classification. Standards have been arrived at for each stream through numerical data (dissolved solids, PH, temperature, etc.) and narrative data (sediment, wildlife, aquatic life, anything that is unmeasurable). The credible data concept is implemented during this process, which means that when data is collected it has to follow collection protocols.

Mr. Harnish further explained that once a stream has been listed as impaired, then either a total maximum daily load (TMDL) will be written or a locally led watershed plan needs to be developed and implemented. He stated that funding was available through DEQ for addressing water quality concerns and assisting with the development of a watershed plan. The local group must then show progress in addressing the identified impairments of the stream or stream segment.

Public Comment Period – Reg Phillips, Dubois/Crowheart Conservation District

Mr. Phillips opened by defining the area that the Dubois/Crowheart Conservation District covers, including the upper portions of the Wind River basin. He then passed out the district's annual report and plan for the future, which described their programs and activities. A focus for the district is the water quality assessment, which is a three-year project that began in 2001.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.