



Devils Tower

Water News

High Savery Dam and Reservoir Dedication

In 1980, the Wyoming legislature authorized a project to address the water needs in the Little Snake River Valley and to mitigate impacts to the valley from development of the Cheyenne Stage I and II water projects. Several dam and reservoir sites were evaluated to meet those water needs, with the Sandstone Dam and Reservoir being the favored site. However, that site was considered environmentally damaging and could not be permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Through continued study, the High Savery Dam and Reservoir site rose to the top as the project that would satisfy the water needs and project purpose in an environmentally sound manner.

After nearly 20 years of study and planning, a design contract was awarded to States West Water Resources Corporation of Cheyenne in August 1999. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit allowing project construction in December 2000. A construction contract was awarded to Ames Construction of Denver, Colorado in May 2001. Construction of the dam and facilities was completed in October 2003. The reservoir was filling during 2004 and 2005, and will be in full operation in 2006.

More than 125 people turned out to celebrate the August 30, 2005 dedication and ribbon cutting of Wyoming's newest water storage facility, High Savery Dam and Reservoir, located 35 miles south of Rawlins in Carbon County. The ceremony marked the culmination of many years of planning, study, design and construction. Governor Dave Freudenthal was the keynote speaker, with Senator Bill Vasey serving as Master of Ceremonies. Other speakers included: Floyd Field, Chairman of the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC); Jim Hicks, former WWDC member; Mike Besson, WWDC Director; Terry Cleveland, Wyoming Game & Fish Department Director; Pat Tyrrell, Wyoming State Engineer and Jim Chant, with the Savery-Little Snake Water Conservancy District. Also, members of the University of Wyoming Centennial singers sang the national anthem to open the ceremony, and "We are Wyoming", in closing. A ribbon cutting concluded the ceremony. Attendees were treated to an old-fashioned chuck wagon lunch. Tours of the dam site were also given by WWDC Project Engineer Michael Hand.



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Special points of interest:

- As always, look for activities in your area in the Calendar of Water Events
- March 1, 2006 - 5% Framework Progress Review Meeting - Riverton, WY. Call for details 777-7626



News from the WWDC

Framework Water Plan Update

The first round of river basin planning is drawing to a close with the Platte River Basin Plan nearing completion. River basin plans have been completed for the Bear, Green, Northeast, Powder/Tongue, Wind/Bighorn, and Snake/Salt. The river basin planning process began in the summer of 1999 with completion of the Bear River Basin and the Green River Basin plans. The Platte River Basin was the last plan to be completed and it is quite different from the others because of work

completed for the Nebraska v. Wyoming settlement. Now that the finishing touches are being placed on the Platte River Plan, it is time to start the Statewide Framework Water Plan.

The Framework Water Plan is a compilation of the seven individual plans. It will bring a statewide perspective to the work completed to date. The Framework Water Plan will also include a new presentation tool similar to the Water Atlas developed for the Platte River Basin.

The Water Atlas is an on-line presentation tool developed for the Platte

River Basin to provide summary information from the river basin plan report. This will allow readers to quickly print basin maps and tables without having to reference the report or technical memoranda. The Framework Water Plan will take this concept one step further by allowing the reader to dig as deeply into the data as he wishes, eventually enabling him to download the report and background data if desired.

The Basin Advisory Groups (BAGs) have also undergone changes recently. The BAGs appointed Framework Plan representa-

tives at their last meeting. These representatives will be responsible for relaying information from the BAGs to the Framework Progress Review meetings held at 5%, 50% and 90% plan completion. The meetings will be attended by the WWDC commissioners, staff, and consultants. The BAG representatives will also be asked to give updates to their BAG on the Framework Plan progress review meetings.

Platte River Recovery Implementation Program

On July 1, 1997, the Governors of Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado and the Secretary of the Interior signed the "Cooperative Agreement for Platte River Research and other Efforts Relating to Endangered Species Habitat along the Central Platte River, Nebraska." Since that time, a Governance Committee, with representatives from the three states, federal government, environmental organizations, and water users has been developing the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program). As proposed, the Program would be a basin-wide effort undertaken by the Department of the Interior and the states of Colorado, Ne-

braska and Wyoming to provide benefits for the endangered interior least tern, whooping crane, and pallid sturgeon and the threatened piping plover (target species). Through the Program, the states and the federal government would provide land, water, and scientific monitoring and research to evaluate Program benefits for the target species. While the Program is designed to provide Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance for existing and certain new water related activities throughout the Platte River Basin upstream of the Loup River confluence with the Platte River, the land acquisition and management for the target bird species will occur in the central Platte River region, Lexington to Chapman, Nebraska. Program water activities would be designed to provide benefits for the target bird species in the central Platte river region and for the pallid stur-

geon in the lower Platte river region below the confluence with the Elkhorn River.

The Program has three main elements: 1) increasing stream flows in the central Platte River during relevant time periods through retiming and water conservation/supply projects; 2) enhancing, restoring and protecting habitat lands for the target bird species; and 3) accommodating certain new water related activities. During the First Increment (13 years) the Program's objective is to retime and improve flows in the central Platte River to reduce shortages to target flows by an average of 130,000 to 150,000 acre-feet per year at Grand Island. Another objective during that timeframe is to protect, restore, and maintain 10,000

acres of habitat. The last element of the Program, to mitigate the adverse impacts of certain new water related activities, will be met through the implementation of state and federal depletions plans.

The monetary cost of the Program is estimated at \$187 million. In addition to monetary contributions, the three states plan to contribute water and land to the Program. The costs of the Program will be shared equally by the federal government (50%) and the three states (50%).





What's Up in the State Engineer's Office...

We thought we would give an update of activities that have been ongoing in some different basins around the state. In this newsletter, we will look at the Snake River Basin, the Bear River Basin and the Colorado River Basin.

Snake River: The Snake River Compact, which divides the Snake River and the Salt River between Idaho and Wyoming, was signed in 1949.

The fall agency meeting to discuss Snake River operations was held September 15, 2005 in Jackson. At this meeting, the Bureau of Reclamation discussed past spring and summer operations. Forecasts were made for winter inflows into Jackson Lake and to set the winter flows below the dam. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department, local

fishing guides and the fishing public are concerned with the winter releases as this is the time native cutthroat trout can be the most stressed. WY Game and Fish would like releases between 280 and 450 cubic feet per second (cfs). The past 4 years' releases have been about 280 cfs due to the extended drought. This year, the Bureau agreed to increase the releases to 320 cfs. The entire system recovered some storage in 2005. During 2004, all reservoir levels in the upper Snake River Basin were near record lows. Jackson Lake is about 200,000 acre feet higher this fall than in 2004.

Bear River: The amended Bear River Compact, signed in 1978, provides for administration of the Bear River among Idaho, Utah and

Wyoming. The Bear River Commission met October 31 and November 1 in Salt Lake City. The Water Quality Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed carryover amounts in the upper reservoirs. Similar to the Snake River, reservoir storage in the Bear River improved during 2005. When Bear Lake is below elevation 5911 ft. Wyoming and Utah are restricted in their storage amounts above Bear Lake. Mid-December Bear Lake elevation was 5908 ft. So it's not inconceivable for the elevation to rise above 5911 ft next spring.

Colorado River: A compact between the Upper Colorado River Basin States (Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah) and the Lower Colorado River Basin States (Arizona, Nevada and

California) was negotiated in 1922. In 1948, a compact between the Upper Basin States was negotiated. The Upper Colorado River Basin Compact apportions the water allocated to the Upper Basin by the 1922 Compact as follows: 50,000 acre-feet per annum to Arizona and of the remaining quantity, 51 ⅓% to Colorado, 11¼% to New Mexico; 23% to Utah and 14% to Wyoming.

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum and Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council met October 24-26. The Forum adopted the 2005 Review of the Water Quality Standards for Salinity in the Colorado River Basin (Triennial Review).

The Forum adopted an *in memoriam* resolution recognizing the contributions

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News from Water Resources Data System/State Climate Office

Perhaps the best news to report is that Wyoming's drought that began in 2000 is waning. While the North Platte River drainage is still near the lowest capacity in the past 30 years, the remainder of Wyoming's surface water supply is approaching normal. Soil moisture, stream flow, and the resulting native vegetation are at the best levels since 1999. Drought updates can be viewed at: <http://www.wrds.uwyo.edu/wrds/wsc/dtf/droughtupdate.pdf>

There is a new face here at WRDS, although for many it will be a familiar face. Tom Dietrich has returned to Wyoming and has been working part time since the

middle of September. Tom comes back to us after having spent several years at Weather Service Headquarters. Tom will be assisting with creating some new climatological and hydrological products which will begin showing up soon on the WRDS website <http://www.wrds.uwyo.edu>.

Another new face at WRDS is Jodi Preston who began working in mid-July and replaced Bev Sanchez who has taken a position elsewhere on campus. Jodi will be the first person people talk to when calling WRDS for information or to make a data request. Data requests may be made either by phone 307-766-6651 or via

email to wrds@uwyo.edu

The Water Resources Data System Library has a new web page <http://library.wrds.uwyo.edu/> In addition to the Wyoming Water Bibliography link, a link has been added to the WYLDICAT CATALOG, the state library's database. Several new items have been added to the general collection and the reference collection covering climate change, weather modification, groundwater, stream flow and Wyoming Water Development Commission project reports. WRDS is continuing to scan documents in its library and these will be made available through the library website.

All three 'seasons' of the *Water Talk* videos (a total of thirty-three titles) have also been converted to DVD format.

For those of you who have not signed up but are interested, WRDS is still looking for additional volunteers to take part in the Community Collaborative Rain and Hail Study (CoCoRaHS). Check it out at <http://www.cocorahs.org> and sign up.





**WYOMING WATER
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

6920 Yellowtail Road
Cheyenne, WY 82009

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of Gary Beach, deceased, former member of the Forum. In addition, the Forum and Advisory Council adopted a position urging that the U.S. Department of Agriculture retain the current federal cost sharing of 75% for producers participating in the Environmental Quality

Incentives Program (EQIP). The USDA was proposing a much-reduced cost-sharing rate.

The Upper Colorado River Commission held a work session in Salt Lake City on October 28. The Commission is focused on discussions to develop

shortage criteria to govern water use by Arizona, Nevada and California in the event reservoir storage becomes so low the Secretary of the Interior declares a "shortage" water supply. In those instances, the Lower Basin States would have less than the "normal" supply

of 7,500,000 acre feet per year of beneficial consumptive use.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Interstate Streams Division, State Engineer's Office at 777-7803.



Calendar of Water Events

March 1, 2006 - 5% Framework Progress Review Mtg - Riverton, WY, 1 pm

March 9-10, 2006 - WWDC Workshop and Mtg - Cheyenne, WY

March 27, 2006 - Bear

River Basin Advisory Group Mtg - Cokeville, WY, 6 pm

March 28, 2006 - Green River Basin Advisory Group Mtg - Green River, WY, 10 am

March 29, 2006 - Snake/Salt Basin Advisory Group Mtg - Afton, WY, 6 pm

April 11, 2006 - Wind/Big-horn Basin Advisory Group Mtg - Dubois, WY, 3 pm

April 11, 2006 - North Platte Decree Committee Mtg -

Scottsbluff, NE

April 12, 2006 - Powder/Tongue Basin Advisory Group Mtg - Buffalo, WY, 3 pm

April 12, 2006 - Yellowstone River Compact Technical Mtg - Thermopolis, WY, 1 pm

April 13, 2006 - Northeast WY Basin Advisory Group Mtg - Newcastle, WY, 1 pm

April 13, 2006 - Yellow-

stone River Compact Commission Mtg - Thermopolis, WY, 9 am

April 18, 2006 - Platte River Basin Advisory Group Mtg - Douglas, WY, 10 am

April 18-19, 2006 - Bear River Commission Mtg - Salt Lake City

June 5, 2006 - Upper Colorado River Commission Mtg - Jackson, WY