

**Northeast Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
Newcastle, Wyoming
June 15, 2000**

Welcome

The facilitators selected for the Northeast Basin Advisory Group, Cathy Lujan and Sherri Gregory-Schreiner, of Counterpoise Consulting, Inc. of Cheyenne, opened the meeting at approximately 6:00 pm. They introduced themselves and welcomed participants to the meeting. The facilitators reviewed the agenda and explained the expectations for the meeting.

Participants introduced themselves by stating their name, affiliation, and place of residence. A sign-in sheet was passed around the room. The facilitators explained that the purpose of the sign-in sheet is to compile the name and address of all participants so they can be included on the list to receive mailings regarding the plan.

Consultant Introduction

Joe Lord introduced the Consulting Team, which is comprised of MSE-HKM as the prime consultant, and Lord Consulting, LLC, Watts and Associates, X10Systems, and Jere Folgert as subconsultants. He then described the role of each member of the Consulting Team. He explained that the role of the Consulting Team is to collect data, perform analyses, prepare reports, and generally to support the Planning Team and the BAG in the planning process. He stressed the importance of the BAG in the development of the river basin plan.

Planning Team Issues

Jon Wade described that the briefing book that will be distributed to BAG members as a reference document. He displayed the briefing book of the Green River BAG and passed the book around for inspection.

Jon Wade invited participants to contact the Planning Team with questions and comments. The primary means of distributing information and data will be on the Water Plan Website: <http://waterplan.state.wy.us/> The e-mail address is waterplan@state.wy.us

Participants suggested and adopted the following dates and towns for future meetings: August 17 in Lusk; October 12 in Gillette; and December 14 in Newcastle. The Planning Team will arrange for meeting sites in each of the towns.

Jon Wade explained that the purpose of the educational presentations is to inform BAG members on water planning topics. Educational presentations are also used to present and discuss issues of the specific area of the basin where the meeting is being held. Participants then brainstormed to generate the following list of potential educational topics:

1. Water law
2. Stream classification
3. Clean water Act
4. NRCS projects, priority areas, funding
5. Property rights – what is left of them?
6. Wetlands
7. Basic hydrology
8. Noxious weeds along river banks
9. Coal bed methane activity in general
10. Economic impact of this planning process
11. Corps of Engineers
12. Water compacts and water availability
13. TMDL'S / Impaired Streams

The Planning Team will arrange for speakers to make presentations on these topics.

Meeting Rules

The facilitators listed the meeting rules adopted by the Northeast BAG at the meeting on April 26, 2000:

1. Wait to be recognized
2. No finger pointing or attacks
3. No side conversations
4. All decisions will be by informed consent
5. Alternative opinions welcome
6. Stay on task
7. Members commit to the group
8. Accountability
9. Meetings are open to the public
10. Don't champion causes outside group

Participants discussed the timing of public comments during the meeting. They agreed that comments will be received as a topic is being discussed rather than restricting public input to a “public comment” period at the end of the meeting. However, new items should be brought up at this later time.

The facilitators asked if there were any additions or deletions to the meeting rules. There were no suggested changes to the rules.

The facilitators explained that name tents will be prepared for use at future BAG meetings. Meeting rules and the BAG mission statement will be printed on the back of the name tents as a constant reminder to BAG members.

Basin Advisory Group Membership

The facilitators distributed a list of BAG members and explained that the distributed list is an update of the list mailed previously. Members offered corrections that were incorporated into the list.

The following individuals were suggested to serve as BAG member alternates:

1. Ellie Priewe, Crook County Irrigation District (CCID)
2. Les Sherrard, CCID
3. All CCCD members as they would like to be involved
4. Garth Fisher, Weston County Natural Resources District (WCNRD)
5. Carol Nicholls, (WCNRD)

Donna Ruffing, Niobrara County Commissioner, would like to have other county commissioners serve as alternates.

A participant asked if votes would be taken. Jon Wade responded that the BAG operates by informed consent and no votes are taken.

The facilitators requested nominations for additional members for areas not currently represented. The following names were offered:

1. Industry (hard rock): Pete Lein (Rapid City), Fischer Sand & Gravel (Spearfish), and Roger Coell (Sundance) are companies that should be contacted for volunteers
2. Industry (oil & gas): no suggestions offered
3. Environmental: Connie Brown, Niobrara County, Lusk
4. Industry (timber): Mary Flanderka, Hulett
5. Recreation: Major Miller, Crook County

The planning team will follow up on these nominations. BAG Participants will contact additional people and ask them to consider membership. Responding to a question, Jon Wade indicated that BAG members serve three functions: 1) identify issues; 2) assist the Planning Team by reviewing planning products; and 3) inform others about the basin planning process.

Basin Advisory Group Mission Statement

The mission statements adopted by the Bear River and Powder/Tongue BAGs were read. Participants were requested to suggest ideas to be written into a mission statement for the Northeast BAG. After ideas were submitted and compiled, the BAG crafted and adopted the following mission statement:

Recognizing the diversity of the Northeast River Basin, identify existing and future water related issues in the Belle Fourche, Cheyenne, Little Missouri, and Niobrara River Basins, to assist in the planning process for the mutual benefit of all.

Issues Identification

There was a comment that four Conservation Districts have jointly identified concerns relative to coal bed methane development. The written list of concerns was given to the Planning Team.

Another comment stated that the BAG issue identification process needs to recognize the differences between the various river basins in northeast Wyoming. The various issues identified should further be noted as to which basins are affected.

Facilitators distributed small colored sheets of paper and asked participants to write issues on the sheets. Sheets were collected, posted, and read. Donna Ruffing, Niobrara County Commissioner, assisted the BAG members with grouping of the issues under topic headings. The group then asked to hear the issues identified by the Bear and Green River Basins. After hearing these lists the group adopted a few more issues to their own list. The completed list follows:

Related Lands

1. Noxious weeds
2. Streambank erosion
3. Private land rights

Funding

1. Funding for implementation
2. Private, state, federal – Who?

Water development

1. Agricultural
2. Recreation
3. Municipal

Water rights

1. Water quantity (adjudicated rights vs. normal streamflow)
2. Current use, adjudicated and historical
3. Private property water rights
4. State law water rights
5. Protecting existing water rights
6. Compact issues, Belle Fourche River
7. Keep “Wyoming” water in Wyoming

Underground Water

1. Industrial
2. Urban
3. Agricultural

Regulatory

1. Clean water act, quality, TMDLs
2. Wetlands
3. Endangered species
4. TMDLs
5. Groundwater permitting process
6. Forest management, or lack thereof, effecting water quality
7. Governmental taking of water and/or land
8. Corps of Engineers
9. EPA
10. BOR
11. BLM
12. Source point pollution problems
13. Wyo DEQ
14. Stream classification
15. Conflicting government goals with private owners caught in the middle

Quality

1. Sewer discharge
2. Non-Point Source
3. Streambank erosion
4. Underground irrigation wells
5. Maintaining water quality for present and future uses
6. Water quality of each stream/river should be determined by a statistically proven testing method
7. Coal bed methane water impact down river – quantity and quality
8. Timber, Mining, Oil and Gas

Uses

1. Develop for maximum recreational use
2. Boating and fishing
3. Water resources uses
4. Coal bed methane water impact down river – quantity and quality
5. Fisheries
6. Swimming
7. Wildlife
8. Timber, mining, oil & gas
9. Flood control

Quantity

1. Wasting water discharging without beneficial use
2. Water quantity (adjudicated rights vs. normal streamflow)
3. Instream flow
4. Underground irrigation wells
5. Draft on aquifers, all uses
6. Coal bed methane water impact down river – quantity and quality

7. Timber, mining, oil & gas
8. Flood control

Economic development

1. Roads, new and existing
2. Subdivisions
3. Industrial

Conservation

1. Surface water
2. Groundwater
3. Recycling
4. Research

The facilitators indicated that the identified issues would be discussed at the next BAG meeting. Additions and corrections to the list will be made and a determination will be made of which issues apply to each of the basins. The need to do a prioritization of the issues was also discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.