

**Northeastern Wyoming Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
CAM-PLEX – Gillette
October 12, 2000**

Welcome

The facilitators opened the meeting at approximately 6:06 pm. The facilitators sent a sign-in sheet around the room and reviewed the agenda to set the expectations for the meeting. Participants introduced themselves by stating their name, affiliation, and place of residence.

Planning Team Issues

Barry Lawrence provided an update of the efforts to add members to the Basin Advisory Group (BAG). Roger Croell of Sundance has agreed to join the BAG to represent industry. He will be assisted by his daughter Kim Vanderheiden. Major Miller, an outfitter from Aladdin, and Denny Tebow, the marina manager for Keyhole Reservoir, will represent recreation. An environmental representative is still needed and BAG members were requested to provide names of individuals who might be interested in serving on the BAG. In addition, the WWDC is still trying to get county commissioners to serve as alternate members, as requested by Donna Ruffing.

Jon Wade gave a status report of the basin plans underway for the Bear and Green River Basins. Both basins are nearing completion. At the September and October BAG meetings, the consultants have been presenting results. BAG members are reviewing draft products. The Bear and Green River BAG will continue meeting after the active planning process has been completed. These meetings will be held every four months. The Powder/Tongue BAG is proceeding on the same schedule as the Northeast BAG.

Jon Wade reported that, as a result of the discussion at the last BAG meeting on stock water, the consultant's scope of work has been changed to include the compilation and mapping of stock well and stock reservoir locations. This data will be used to quantify stock water use. Since there are a significant number of stock wells and stock reservoirs in the basin that are not permitted, the assistance of BAG members, NRCS, conservation districts, irrigation districts, and others, is requested to estimate the ratio of permitted wells and reservoirs to those that are not permitted.

Jon Wade explained the anticipated schedule for future meetings of all BAGs, and the relationship of the meeting schedule. He indicated WWDC will ask the legislature to fund two more basin studies beginning in 2001.

The facilitators stated the next two BAG meetings, as selected by the BAG members, will be held December 14 in Newcastle, and February 8, 2001, in Moorcroft. The BAG then scheduled the next meeting for April 12 in Sundance.

Consultant Update – HKM Engineering

Joe Lord of Lord Consulting distributed and explained a graphic project schedule that the consulting team is following. He then presented a status report by explaining the consulting team is working on data collection to define the basin water use profile. Primary activities include mapping irrigated lands, compiling ditch diversion records, and preparing ditch operating memoranda.

Question: When will methane water impacts be addressed? Response: Impacts of CBM development will be addressed in Task 3 by compiling analyses from CBM EIS work completed by the BLM.

Question: Is the aerial photo mapping based on new photography? Response: No new aerial photography will be generated for the plan. Irrigated lands mapping will be based on existing photography taken in the 1994-1996 timeframe, along with other aerial photography that is available. Field proofing the mapping is included as part of the aerial photo mapping task.

USGS Data in the Powder and Tongue River Basins

Myron Brooks of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) gave a presentation on the activities, projects, and programs of the USGS specifically related to the Northeast Wyoming river basins. The presentation addressed four basic questions: 1) why does the USGS do this work; 2) how is the data collected; 3) where is the data being collected; and, 4) what uses exist for the data.

The presentation addressed: 1) streamflow measurement and gaging procedures; 2) water quality sampling methods; 3) quality assurance and credible data; 4) locations of historic and current stations and length of record; and, 5) uses of data collected by USGS. Sample streamflow and water quality data were presented and described.

Myron indicated data is available on the USGS website: <http://wy.water.usgs.gov>

Question: Does the Wyoming DEQ use the USGS credible data to set their parameters to identify which streams are contaminated? Response: DEQ uses USGS data and compares it to standards they get from EPA in the listing process. In addition, DEQ uses data from other sources.

Question: Where are the USGS offices? Response: The main district office is in Cheyenne. USGS has field offices in Casper and Riverton.

Question: Do you have projects of your own or do you just provide data to others? Response: USGS also completes projects of their own. Any data developed by a USGS project goes into the USGS database for others to interpret and use.

Question: Explain Sodium Adsorption Ratio (SAR) and how it is measured. Response: SAR is the ratio of the sodium, calcium, and magnesium ions based on a formula. SAR becomes a problem when the water has a high TDS concentration in conjunction with a high SAR value.

Question: How does USGS decide where to place streamgaging stations? Response: Most of the funding for the stations is provided by others, the location is selected by the funding agency. The USGS works with the funding agency to locate a gage to meet the objectives of the USGS. Furthermore the USGS likes to have gages that are not impacted by regulations or diversions.

Question: Why are established stations discontinued? Response: Lack of funding. A cooperator may decide they are no longer interested or no longer have the funds to support the station.

Question: What is the relationship between the USGS and the SEO hydrograper-commissioners? Response: The SEO operates certain gages in cooperation with the USGS. SEO hydrograper-commissioners use USGS techniques. USGS reviews the data from these cooperative stations and includes the record in the USGS long-term database. In addition to these gages, the SEO independently operates many more stations, likely twice the number of cooperative stations.

Issues Identification Process

The facilitators explained the process followed by the BAG to prioritize the subissues. Subissue prioritization for the Niobrara River basin was tabled because there were no members present from that drainage. Subissues for this drainage will be addressed at the next meeting.

The facilitators led the BAG members through the subissue prioritization process. BAG members grouped subissues prior to prioritizing them. The subissues under **Underground Water, Conservation, Water Rights, and Quantity** were prioritized. The results follow.

Question: What is the purpose of the subissue prioritization process, what is it leading the BAG and the consultants to, and how will the information be used? Response: The identification of future water use opportunities in Task 5 will use the results of the subissue prioritization process to make sure the right issues are addressed in the right priority, in the right basin. Also, the consulting team needs to collect the data in Task 2 that will address the priority issues. The process is also important to identify what issues the BAG members feel are important.

A BAG member asked for the meaning of conservation. The BAG discussed the meaning and adopted the following definition: “Using water in the best way that we can and still conserve it for future generations”.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:05 pm.

Northeast Wyoming River Basins
Prioritization of Subissues by River Basin
 Basin Advisory Group Meeting: August 17, 2000

Issue: Related Lands Subissues:	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Belle Fourche
Private Land Rights	1	1	1	1
Noxious Weeds	2	2	1	2
Streambank Erosion	X	X	2	3

Issue: Funding Subissues:	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Belle Fourche
Funding for implementation	All basins: 1 - Federal, 2 - State, 3 - Private			

Issue: Surface Water Development Subissues:	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Belle Fourche
Agricultural	1	1	1	1
Recreation	3	X	2	3
Municipal	2	X	X	2

Issue: Economic Development Subissues:	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Upper Belle Fourche	Lower Belle Fourche
New and existing roads	3	1	3	3	1
Subdivisions	1	2	2	2	2
Industrial	2	3	1	1	3

Northeast Wyoming River Basins
Prioritization of Subissues by River Basin (continued)
 Basin Advisory Group Meeting: October 12, 2000

Issue: Underground Water	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Upper Belle Fourche	Lower Belle Fourche
<u>Subissues:</u>					
Industrial		2	1	1	1
Urban		X	1	1	1
Agricultural		1	1	1	1

Issue: Conservation	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Upper Belle Fourche	Lower Belle Fourche
<u>Subissues:</u>					
Surface Water		1	1	2	1
Ground Water		1	1	1	2
Recycling		3	3	3	4
Research		2	2	3	3

Issue: Water Rights	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Belle Fourche
<u>Subissues:</u>				
Water Quantity: adjudicated rights vs. normal streamflow		2	3	1
Current use, adjudicated & historical - private property, State law, protecting existing water rights		1	1	1
Compact issues: Belle Fourche		X	X	1
Keep "Wyoming" water in Wyoming		3	2	1

Issue: Quantity	Niobrara River	Little Missouri	Cheyenne River	Upper Belle Fourche	Lower Belle Fourche
<u>Subissues:</u>					
Wasting water – discharge without beneficial uses		1	4	2	1
Adjudicated rights vs. normal streamflow		2	1	4	4
Instream flow		X	4	5	4
Draft on aquifers, all uses/underground irrigation wells		1	2	1	3
Timber, mining, oil & gas		3	3	3	3
Flood control		X	X	5	2