

Powder/Tongue Basin Advisory Group
Meeting Record
September 29, 2004
Kaycee, WY

Welcome

Facilitator Sherri Gregory welcomed the group and the meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. All attendees introduced themselves, followed by a review of the overall meeting agenda. A sign-in sheet was passed around to record attendance. The next meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2005 in Ucross.

Water Development Commission Report

Barry Lawrence introduced Justin Mulbay, the new river basin project coordinator for the Water Resources Data System at the University of Wyoming. Barry updated the BAG on the status of the plans for the other basins. The BAG for the Northeast Wyoming Basin will be meeting September 30 in Newcastle. The BAGs for the Bear, Green and Snake-Salt Basins will be meeting October 11 in Cokeville, October 12 in Lyman and October 13 in Jackson. Barry discussed the status of all basin studies, and agendas for future meetings. Handouts from the prior meeting were distributed.

Powder River Conservation District (PRCD) Activities Update

Wendy Wagoner discussed the August 27, 2002 flood in Kaycee and related damage. Within 24 hours of the flood, the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) was authorized to assist with the elimination of threat to life and property through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. The total estimated benefit to the community was \$10M. Planning assistance was requested from NRCS and Army Corps of Engineers in the fall of 2002, with a preliminary investigation report completed in August 2004.

An ecology camp sponsored by the PRCD for local sixth graders was also highlighted. Discussion followed.

Salt Creek 319 Grant Watershed Assessment

Bruce Nelson, Environmental Design Engineering, indicated that the Salt Creek and South Fork watersheds on the Powder River were listed as impaired for chloride and selenium in 1996-2000 by WYDEQ. The project purposes and objectives are to assess the Salt Creek watershed quality and conditions using historic data and data collected during the watershed investigation, particularly for chloride; gather data to assess the Powder River status as impaired for chloride near Salt Creek; monitor and examine elevated selenium concentrations on the South Fork of the Powder River; and establish a sampling and analysis plan, as approved by the WYDEQ. He went on to describe the sampling regime, and explained the results. It was indicated that elimination of discharges to Salt Creek would potentially harm existing beneficial uses, i.e. loss of fish and wildlife habitat and loss of stock water, in both Salt Creek and Powder River as Salt Creek would be dry during significant portions of the year. Future plans for the project were discussed. Discussion followed.

USDA Secretarial Drought Designation

Lois Van Mark, Farm Service Agency, discussed the Governor's Drought Task Force and its accomplishments, particularly with the producers on public lands. She indicated that there are two types of federal drought assistance programs available, federal ad-hoc and on-going programs. Ad-Hoc programs include the Livestock Assistance Program, Crop Disaster Program, and American Indian Livestock Assistance. On-going programs include Emergency Conservation Program, Secretarial Declaration of Disaster, Conservation Reserve Acres, and 2004 Nonfat Dry Milk Livestock Feed Assistance Initiative.

Lois went on to discuss the USDA secretarial drought declarations and counties involved. Benefits were explained relative to affected and contiguous areas. Lois concluded her remarks by discussing the Community Collaborative Rain and Hail Study (CoCoRaHS) and its implementation in Wyoming. Further information on this program can be found at <http://www.cocorahs.com/> Discussion followed.

WY05 Hydrologic Highlights/Winter Season Outlook

Joe Sullivan, National Weather Service (NWS), discussed the past season with regard to precipitation comparisons between 2001-2004, temperatures, and streamflow trends. A season drought outlook, climate outlook thru June 2005, and El Nino trends were also discussed. Joe then presented an overview of the National Weather Service. The NWS, which is affiliated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has 123 offices nationwide with 13 river basin centers. The Riverton office serves this basin. NWS information can be accessed through the NOAA weather radio, the national website <http://www.nws.noaa.gov> or <http://weather.gov>, the local website <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/riw>, or by telephone (800)211-1448 or locally (307)857-3898. Of particular interest on the national website are the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (AHPS), current conditions and climatological data. Discussion followed

Current Status of CBM in WY

Mickey Steward, Coalbed Methane Coordination Coalition (CBMCC), discussed the accomplishments of the CBMCC during the past year. Principal projects have included a road and bridge study investigating speed and weight, studies of subsurface aquifers affected by depletion, county resource definitions, Dead Horse and Prairie Dog Creek studies, data monitoring, website development, stakeholder contacts, and tours. A lengthy discussion followed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.