

**Snake/Salt Basin Advisory Group  
Meeting Record  
Jackson, Wyoming  
October 8, 2001**

**Welcome**

Facilitator Cathy Lujan opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Teton County Commissioners Chambers. Each person in attendance was given the chance to introduce himself or herself. Following the introductions, the agenda for the meeting was reviewed. There were approximately 30 people in attendance.

The following schedule was agreed on for the next three Snake/Salt BAG meetings:

Monday, December 10, 2001 – Alpine, 6 p.m.  
Wednesday, February 13, 2002 – Afton, 6 p.m.  
Wednesday, April 10, 2002 – Jackson, 6 p.m.

**BAG Membership**

Barry Lawrence handed out the current BAG membership list. It was pointed out that the National Park Service did not yet have a representative on the BAG. Representatives for Yellowstone National Park have declined an invitation to join the BAG. Grand Teton National Park has been contacted regarding membership in the group, but have not assigned a member at this point.

**Basin Planning Update**

Barry Lawrence then gave a report on the progress of other basin planning efforts in the State. Other BAG meetings that were to take place this week were discussed, along with some of the activities and topics to be covered at those meetings. It was indicated that such meetings were open to anyone having an interest in the respective basins.

**State Water Plan Website**

Robin Gray gave an update on the State's water plan website. The site contains information on each basin plan in the state depending upon what planning efforts have been completed for that basin. Information for each Basin Advisory Group is also included, such as agendas for future BAG meetings, records of past meetings, and, when possible, full presentations given at each BAG meeting. The homepage for the State's water planning effort is <http://waterplan.state.wy.us> The information on the website will not be mailed to individual members of the BAG, however they will receive email notification when new information is available.

## **Consultant Update - Sunrise Engineering**

Evan Simpson gave the consultant update. He presented an overview of the work being performed during the early stages of the basin plan and the various firms involved. Water Rights Services is working on collection of water rights data. Boyle Engineering will be working on modeling of the surface water in the basin. BBC Research & Consulting is reviewing the socioeconomic aspects that will help project future water demands. Sunrise Engineering is collecting data on various current water uses in the basin.

It was noted that during the BAG meetings, members would be learning about various aspects of water planning. As the plan proceeds and water use and projections are determined, the members of the BAG will use the information they have learned to give guidance regarding the future water use in the basin.

## **Socioeconomic Issues – Ed Harvey, BBC Research & Consulting**

Ed Harvey described his company and their roll in the basin plan. Input from the BAG members was requested to help understand the economics of the basin, and to put reasoning behind the data to get a true picture of what is happening. This will help with projections of future long term growth in the basin, which will in turn help with projections of future water demands.

Mr. Harvey presented data regarding the change in population in the basin. He also showed various aspects of the economies of Teton and Lincoln counties, and how these various economic situations can effect the future growth in the area. This included sources of income for residents, as well as the percentage of earnings in the counties divided by sector, such as agriculture, services, government, and so forth. Employment in the basin was discussed, and it was noted that the unemployment rate in Teton County appears to be low enough to cause problems with the labor supply.

Mr. Harvey reviewed historic data regarding various agricultural sectors in an effort to determine the future of these operations. It was also noted, that for the most part, agricultural activities are trending downward in the basin. Data related to tourism and recreation were also presented, indicating the significance of these activities to the local economy.

## **Snake River Operations – Mike Beus / Mark Croghan, US Bureau of Reclamation**

Mike Beus presented the history of reservoir development in the upper Snake River basin, such as the factors involved in the planning of the system, the time frame in which the dams were planned and constructed, and the priority dates of the water stored in the various reservoirs. The current level of each reservoir in the area was also shown.

Mr. Beus further reviewed the different permitted uses of the reservoirs of interest, such as flood control, irrigation storage, fish and wildlife uses, and recreation. It was noted that aspects of each of these uses can be affected by releases from a dam, and flows in the

rivers must be balanced between these interests. The capacities of the reservoirs relative to historic winter inflows were also presented, indicating the ability or lack thereof to refill the reservoirs over the winter.

Mark Croghan then discussed what data was used to forecast the spring runoff, which in turn helps determine the desired level of a reservoir at the end of winter. Releases at Jackson Lake were compared to flow rates at downstream locations, indicating the impact of inflows along the length of the Snake River. The water levels and discharges of various reservoirs for 2001 were compared to other recent drought years. It was also noted that the Endangered Species Act could impact the release from dams. Currently, impacts to salmon and steelhead, snails, and Ute Ladies'-Tresses are all of concern. Furthermore, the Snake River Basin Adjudication, currently underway in Idaho, can also impact released flows.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.