

# **W<sub>2</sub>ASACT Meeting Minutes**

**April 14, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**Department of Natural Resources and Conservation**

**11th Avenue, Bannack Room**

**Hosted by – Department of Natural Resources**

## **MEMBERS PRESENT INCLUDED**

Todd Teegarden	DEQ/SRF	Larry Gallagher	HUD-Helena Field Office
Nancy Geary	DEQ/SRF	Pam Higgins	MAP
Anna Miller	DNRC	Debra Demarais	MDOC/TSEP
Bob Fischer	DNRC	Richard Knatterud	MDOC/TSEP
Rick Duncan	DNRC	Kate Miller	MDOC/TSEP
Alicia Stickney	DNRC/RRGL	Jim Edgcomb	MDOC/TSEP
Jay Sinnott	EPA	Frank Kromkowski	MDOC/CDBG
Steve Guettermann	MT Water Center	Becky Beard	BETA
Louise Welsh	MT BOI	Steve Troendle	USDA/RD
Georgia Brensdal	MT DEQ EPP	Shelley Nolan	MT DEQ – PWS
		Nick V. Clos	MRWS

## **CALL TO ORDER, SIGN-IN SHEET, AGENDA CHANGES**

The scheduled meeting of the Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W<sub>2</sub>ASACT) was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on April 14, 2009, by Todd Teegarden, Chair. A sign-in sheet, agenda and minutes of the last meeting were made available to those in attendance. Anna Miller moved to approve the minutes; Jim Edgcomb seconded the motion; the minutes were approved and adopted. There were no changes made to the agenda. All those in attendance introduced themselves.

### **• Guest Speaker**

- 1. Steve Guettermann, Assistant Director for Outreach, Montana Water Center** – The Montana Water Center is working on a nationwide EPA funded training effort for small water systems. Steve would like to discuss and get feedback from the group regarding the four training modules they are working on; Water conservation, Energy conservation, Water audits and leak detection, and Alternative energy for small systems. Information is needed regarding what has been shown to work in these systems, as well as the funding of these projects. Case studies of the small systems that have made conservation changes would be valuable. If anyone has any ideas/information for these sessions, please submit in a form that would be usable in 45 minute PowerPoint sessions. These presentations can contain embedded audio. Todd Teegarden pointed out that the State of Montana has 2100 small public water supply systems, so these presentations could be very valuable.

Georgia Brensdal submitted information regarding motor efficiency as a possible subject. She also recommended presenting information regarding interfacing with Utility Companies while using wind and solar energy. The Dept. of Environmental Quality/ Energy and Pollution Prevention Bureau promotes energy and water conservation and can be a source of information and brochures for the presentations.

Steve asked the whole group to contribute, if possible, to provide an impetus to positive change. The research phase will be completed by the end of May. The final project will be complete by the end of the calendar year.

## **ITEMS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION**

## 1. Updates (if needed) from subcommittees

Workshops – Bob Fischer – The workshops held in March were all very well attended and successful. More workshops will be held this fall. The Planning Committee will begin preparing for these. Suggestions for improvements included: trying a webinar and making the general presentation shorter (more of a funding overview), then later presenting separate sessions with more specific details for those who wish to attend. The Committee will meet and set up the workshops, and ideas can be emailed to Bob. Any suggestions submitted will be discussed at that time.

Uniform Application – Jim Edgcomb – It is time to start revising the application. Any ideas for changes can be emailed to Jim.

Standard Documents – Bob Fischer – The department is working on uniform project signs to meet RD's requirements, plus everyone else's. The work will be done in Word format so everyone can use it. The Stimulus funding programs will have to have new signs. When new information is received, the specs supplement will be updated.

Internet Website – 'How to Hire an Engineer' is not accessible. Todd Teegarden will contact Pam Smith (DNRC) to have this fixed. A new fact sheet for plan review should also be linked and made available. A copy of this information will be distributed by Todd.

## 2. Updates on Ongoing Topics

Emergency Projects – Bob Fischer / Richard Knatterud – TSEP had inquiries from Fergus County, Melrose Water and Sewer District, the Town of Froid Water, and the Lincoln Sewer District. The available money is running low, but some funding will be provided by TSEP. There have been many requests for funding of projects that don't qualify as emergencies. Maintenance has been ignored until things don't operate as designed. Examples are the Centerville School water project, which is ongoing, and the Lincoln Sewer District, which was funded for new controls for their lift station. This type of funding is being questioned. Pam Higgins said MAP or RWS may be able to help in these circumstances. Steve Troendle mentioned RD has an emergency funding resource for water supplies called Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant, but only for an actual 'act of God'.

Tribal Issues – Larry Gallagher and others – Tribally designated housing authorities will receive significant supplemental funds under the Stimulus Act. A nationalized CDBG Indian Community Development Block Grant will be available on a competitive basis for tribes, with a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency in existing housing. Training programs will be implemented toward this goal. Please let Larry Gallagher know if a lack of water is an impediment to growth or expansion of any Indian business. The annual Montana Indian Business Enterprise (MIBE) conference will be held in Missoula next week. Larry would like to be able to refer these businesses to HUD for assistance. For those interested in seeing how the Stimulus funding is being distributed, go to HUD.gov.

The Crow Tribe recently met all startup conditions for their lagoon project, and an application has been received for funding the next phase to replace water and sewer lines.

Another preliminary engineering grant request was received from the Northern Cheyenne.

The Mayor of Browning requested, on behalf of the Blackfeet Tribe, to utilize the grant awarded in 2001 toward the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of their project. This request was denied due to the

lack of funding necessary for project completion. RD is entertaining applications from the Town of Browning to fill some of the shortfalls. They have acquired Indian Health Service (IHS) funds for Phase 3. It is possible that Phase 3 could be completely funded before Phase 2 is completed. Jay Sinnott (EPA) mentioned that the SRF portion of tribal funding is being passed through the (IHS). There are monies in HB645 to be distributed through the Tribal Commission, with a minimum amount for each tribe. The remainder will be distributed based on projects ready to go. Other projects are the Phase 2 Crow Tribe project and the Fort Belknap Water Treatment Plant – a preconstruction conference was just held and the project should be started within a month.

If anyone has any projects in the area of Poplar, please let Larry know.

#### Regional Water Projects – Rick Duncan -

##### **Rocky Boy's - North Central**

The Chippewa-Cree Tribe plans for bringing reverse osmosis (RO) plant water to existing water storage reservoirs in the Box Elder vicinity are currently under revision.

South Chester Water District is currently looking at the possibility of dividing the Tiber County Water District's water and piping a portion of the water to South Chester on an interim basis. The Authority's engineer's response to DEQ's review comments on plans and specifications for North Havre County Water District's interim supply were submitted to DEQ at the end of last week.

##### **The Musselshell-Judith Rural Water Supply**

The US Bureau of Reclamation has recently informed the Central Montana Regional Water Authority's engineering firm that it may proceed with plans for the next phase of the feasibility study for the project. Through this mechanism, the Authority will continue to comply with the provisions of the rules adopted by Reclamation, as per the requirements of the Rural Water Supply Act of 2006. Authority board members were scheduled to meet with landowners of potential test well sites in the Buffalo/Garneill/Judith Gap area last week. These areas have been identified as containing probable sites of interest for a future production well field. The next monthly authority board meeting is scheduled to be held May 13<sup>th</sup> in Broadview.

##### **Dry-Redwater**

The Authority's bill for Federal authorization of a regional water system was reintroduced in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress on March 18th, according to aides to Senator Baucus. There will most likely not be a Senate committee hearing on the bill until late in May or some time during the month of June. The Authority's annual meeting was held at the Lambert school on Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. Roger Meyer, a registered land surveyor and representative of Richland Conservation District on the Authority's Board, is the newly elected Chairperson.

Baan Wille, representative from the Town of Jordan, is the new Vice-Chair. Applications were received from several individuals interested in the position of Water Authority Coordinator. The applications have been screened by a sub-committee of Board members, and three finalists will be interviewed in the near future.

##### **Fort Peck - Dry Prairie**

The **Fort Peck Tribes'** work on the clear wells and washwater recovery basin for the Regional water treatment plant (WTP) is now scheduled for completion by June 23<sup>rd</sup>, nearly 8 months beyond the originally scheduled completion date. The Tribes currently have the next phase of the WTP project advertised for bids, with bid opening date scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The date was extended so that the "Buy American" conditions of the ARRA could be fully investigated. Engineers' estimated cost is ~\$27 million.

**Dry Prairie's** southern Valley County plans and specifications are under review by

Montana DEQ. The project will provide water to the Town of Nashua, and rural Valley County users between Nashua and Glasgow. Construction is anticipated to begin some time during the summer of 2009. Culbertson WTP upgrade by means of installation of a 3<sup>rd</sup> filter bay is moving along. The filter bay components arrived on April 6<sup>th</sup>, and the contractor is well under way with the work. Installation will be completed some time this spring.

Dry Prairie's other current projects include:

- Completion of service to Basin Electric electrical generating plant NE of Culbertson, via a project segment now referred to as the McCabe loop, which is 85% complete.
- Installation of a main from Culbertson west to Big Muddy Creek (Reservation boundary), from which point the Fort Peck Tribes will provide water to the community of Fort Kipp.
- Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Building plan review by both the Bureau of Reclamation and DEQ

WASACT Project Tracking Sheet – Jim Edgcomb – A new tracking sheet is due to be available at the next meeting. Please get your current information to Jim at least 2 weeks in advance so he has time to make the changes. A reminder will be sent out in early May so people have a chance to work on and submit their new information.

Army Corps of Engineers – Sect. 595 Program & Projects – Anna Miller passed out the latest reports of applications received. “2010 STAG/WRDA Requests”. Extra WRDA funds might be used to augment projects already in progress.

STAG projects – Todd Teegarden and Jay Sinnott – Jay said the three projects awarded this year are Hamilton WW, Crow WW and Helena Water. Because of the restrictive nature of requests, he has requested a language change from Hamilton and Crow Agency, to allow them to use the money for water or wastewater components. There will be another amendment for Helena. MSU Extension Service put a video on the web regarding water and septic tank training. (Handout)

## **PROGRAM / PROJECT UPDATES**

**Steve Troendle (RD)** – The RD program will be receiving approximately 20% less money each year, due to a re-indexing. This means this year there will be about \$9 million in loan and \$3 million in grant funding. After all the projects that have been funded this year, only \$1.5 million in loan funds and under \$5 million in grant funds remain. Next month there should be ARRA funds available for projects nationwide that are ready to proceed. It will be distributed on a first come, first serve basis. Every eligible project completed will be funded. On July 1<sup>st</sup> it will be determined what money is left. It will then be re-allocated for the next round of distributions. The funds must be expended within 15 months, by September 20, 2010.

Everyone is still waiting for clear explanation of the ‘Buy American’ provision. Todd Teegarden mentioned the Regional EPA is now allowed to approve and sign waivers submitted in writing to their office. This should help clarify the limitations of this law.

**Anna Miller (DNRC)** – It has been very busy the past nine months. The Revolving Funds have made 22 loans for about \$28.7 million. Another \$11 million for these projects came from TSEP, RRGL, WRDA and STAG. DNRC has been working with DEQ to determine the distribution of about \$38 million in ARRA money. The Legislature must pass HB 645 and HB 2, which will give authority to execute loans. Todd Teegarden inserted that the Wastewater SRF program started out with 12 eligible requests for ARRA funding, but the total has since expanded to 38. The Drinking Water SRF program started with 19 requests, and has ended up with 53 eligible projects. The available money will be spread as far as possible, without eliminating funding to big projects. The finalized list will be available the end of this week. Anna wants communities to be aware of the greatly increased amount of record keeping and reporting required in an ARRA funding package.

**Jim Edgcomb (TSEP)** - HB 11 and HB 645 are on the floor of the Senate. The appropriation of \$17.8 million in interest earnings and \$23 million in General Funds should be approved, as well as the authorization to borrow up to \$6.5 million from BOI. Stimulus money, along with any money not utilized by HB 512 TSEP projects that were approved by the 2007 Legislature, will also be available for use on the 66 new projects. There are \$900,000 for PER's and 44 applications have been received. \$100,000 will be available for emergency projects. Funds are available, subject to passage of the bill. One FTE has been approved to help with Stimulus administration for two years. Kate Miller's engineering position will become permanent. HB 645 also appropriates \$20 million for Cities and Counties. (handout)

**Becky Beard (BETA)** - 'Ready, waiting, and hurry up and wait'.

**Larry Gallagher (HUD)** – Notification of HUD funding availability should be out by next week. Everyone is struggling with the definitions of sustainability and energy conservation requirements. Energy performance contracting is very important, and HUD may include energy efficiency ranking criteria on their applications by next year. Applicants will have about 30-45 days to submit their applications. Larry called everyone's attention to the HUD Logic Model as an effective accountability and reporting tool. It will be a requirement for any HUD grant.

**Jay Sinnott (EPA)** - Michele Marsh has provided comments on the plans and specifications for Crow Agency.

**Pam Higgins (MAP)** – The article that Gus Byrom helped write has made it into national rural matters publication. MAP is still encouraging other states to adopt a W<sub>2</sub>ASACT method of coordination. The Eastern Montana staff are presenting at the Spring Water School this week. Staff is doing one-on-one operator technical assistance/training.

**Bob Fischer (RRGL)** –HB 6 has the potential of funding all projects. 92 applications have been received, with all but 3 recommended for funding. There will be \$100,000 for emergency grants. \$800,000 was requested for Planning Grants. Of this amount, \$400,000 has been set aside for sewer, water, and solid waste projects. \$200,000 of the remaining \$400,000 will be used for irrigation projects, and \$200,000 will be used for projects sponsored by conservation districts. Applications for planning grants will be accepted, beginning May 1<sup>st</sup>. See the DNRC website for specifics: [http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/ResDevBureau/renewable\\_grant\\_program.asp](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/ResDevBureau/renewable_grant_program.asp).

**Frank Kromkowski (CDBG)** – 8 out of 20 projects on last year's list were funded. More applications are expected this year. The deadline for new CDBG public facility applications is May 22, 2009. The Planning Grants deadline is April 17<sup>th</sup>. No PER planning grants will be funded this year. There was a February deadline for housing grants. \$936,000 could possibly fund 2 housing projects. Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) regulations came out in October, but were extremely complicated. As of March 19<sup>th</sup>, \$19.6 million are to be spent mostly

on foreclosed properties in 24 eligible counties. Rules on issuing these funds are expected today. Funds must be obligated within 18 months of March 19<sup>th</sup>. Jennifer Olson is the Manager of the NSP. More information is available on the website: <http://comdev.mt.gov/> Disaster recovery funds are available for eastern Montana communities.

**Louise Welsh (BOI)** – The stimulus funding is not having a significant effect on the day to day work loads. Due to an accident, Louise is presently working without an assistant.

**Nick Clos (MRWS)** – The February 2009 conference was a big success, with approximately 1,000 people in attendance.

#### **OTHER ISSUES AND LOGISTICS OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for June 9, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. hosted by the Board of Investments. Todd thanked DNRC for hosting this meeting

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.