

W2ASACT MEETING NOTES

Meeting on July 17, 2018, 9:30 am to 12 pm

Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, 1539 11th Ave, 2nd floor conf. room 225

Members and participants present:

Alice Stanley	DNRC - CARDD	John Camden	MRWS
Alicia Paz-Sous	MAP	Kevin Smith	DEQ - Water Quality
Anna Miller	DNRC - CARDD	Lindsay Volpe	DNRC - CARDD
Barbara Burkland	EPA	Mike Abrahamson	DEQ - Eng
Bryant Higgs	APE	Rick Duncan	DNRC - CARDD
Craig Erickson	Great West Eng	Sarah Robbin	RATES
Denise Cook	DNRC - CARDD	Sonja Hoeglund	DNRC - CARDD
Erinn Zindt	MAP	John Camden	MRWS

Via Conf. Phone: Steve Troendle, USDA-RD and John Camden, MRWS; Karen Buckin Sanchez, USDA – RD, Rika Lashley, Morison Maierle.

DEQ - DRF – Drinking Water State Revolving Loan program
 DEQ – Montana Department of Environmental Quality
 DEQ - WRF – Wastewater State Revolving Loan program
 DNRC - SRF - Wastewater State Revolving Loan program
 DNRC – WRF - Drinking Water State Revolving Loan program
 FDB – Financial Development Bureau
 MAP – Midwest Assistance Program
 MBOI – Montana Board of Investments
 MRWS – Montana Rural Water Systems
 RDB – Resource Development Bureau
 TSEP – Treasure State Endowment Program

Call to Order, Sign-in Sheet, Agenda Changes

Chair Anna Miller called the scheduled meeting of the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W2ASACT) to order at 9:38am, on Tuesday, July 17, 2018. The sign-in sheet was routed and the meeting agenda and draft minutes from the March 13 meeting were distributed. Those present and those via telephone briefly introduced themselves. There were no revisions to the March 13th minutes, which were approved and adopted.

Program Updates

John Camden with MRW – John began by reminding all of the Montana Rural Water Sustainability workshop July 24th, 2018 in Great Falls. Handouts with the workshop agenda and guest speakers were distributed. Anna Miller, Steve Troendle and Karen Bucklin Sanchez are among the guest speakers. John said this workshop is designed to help those smaller systems. National Rural Water has a contract to do the workshop. Rory Schmidt has a “Workshop in a Box” and Julie Allen will also be presenting. John said that MRW is providing lunch. Please pre-register with him.

Anna Miller explained that the EPA has 10 regions and not all states are as heavily involved with rural water. Montana is in EPA’s Region 8. To detect issues, systems need to be evaluated and engineers involved. MRW is required to facilitate workshops. Anna added that summer is busy and not all who want to, can attend workshops.

Erin Zindt added that many who work for the smaller systems work full-time jobs and it is difficult for those people to get to the trainings.

TSEP informed Anna that the grant list will be on their website.

John continued saying he started the program to help engineers. He added that the board may approve an apprenticeship program. John is working on how to get people to apply to be operators at small operations like Power Montana. He said oftentimes people hire on, get some experience and then move on. John will advertise for a Source Water Protection position. John added that an EPA Technical Assistant Grant was awarded.

John noted that the 40th Annual MRW conference will be February 20-2, 2019.

Lindsay Volpe, DNRC – Lindsay distributed the “Hope Table” spreadsheet that shows what applicants hope to receive to fund their projects. This only shows RRGL applicants. Lindsay also has an abstract report with the project detail and she can send that to those who request it. Anna asked what the breakdown was. Lindsay said half were irrigation and wastewater and half were infrastructure projects.

RRGL applications are still being reviewed. Those interested can attend the ranking meetings, which will be in August. There will be meetings with reviewers. Then a week off. And then the staff will meet to finalize. Erin asked if there were more applications and Lindsay replied that we had 76 applications this time and usually we received around 100. Alice added that less funding this cycle caused the number of applications to go down. Anna added that there was \$2 million from DNRC and \$2 million from TSEP taken out in the 2017 Special Legislative Session. Lindsay said she will have the final list at the next WASACT meeting.

Dept. of Commerce BOI – Julie Flynn has accepted another position, so there was no BOI update.

Steven Troendle – USDA – RD – They have two funding applications for water and wastewater. There is \$30 million in loan funds and no projects. RD has vacancies for 3 specialists. Lindsay added that the need for funding has not changed. Steve may still have funding for planning grants.

Lindsay said DNRC will have a planning grant cycle if there is money. Let us know if you have a planning need. Anna added that TSEP has no funding for planning grants. She said that we have to wait for revenue to come in. Revenues are coming in. We have other obligations.

Mark Smith, DEQ – Mark reported that the IUP for the coming year was completed. DEQ has not yet received their federal piece of funding. Erin asked there is a list on the website and Mark replied yes. Kevin Smith added that they are working with communities on funding.

Barbara Burkland, EPA – Barb noted that the EPA will forgo its funding. She added that it is difficult for small communities and school districts to get funding. Heart Butte School District's project is not moving forward. They have a new superintendent. Barb added that small communities have a hard time repaying loans. Barb stressed that RD prefers that applicants use "RD Apply" to seek funding. Keven added that the Uniform Application requires the use of RD Apply. Alice mentioned that CARDD has some planning grants that could help those small communities. Barb noted that Senator Testor secured \$300,000 in funds. Sarah asked if Heart Butte could merge the School District and the town system and the discussion continued.

Erin Zindt – MAP – Erin reported that MAP is planning their workshop in advance of knowing what applications will be received. Erin introduced Alicia, who is new with MAP. Alicia said that she is looking for ways to pay asset management grants. She wants to get tools to help communities. Alicia also mentioned CEC, Community Engineering Corps. She will send some info to Denise who can send to all via email. CEC's website is www.communityengineeringcorps.org.

Craig Erickson – Great West Engineering – Craig reported that communities are struggling with regional water supplies, but his firm is moving along with projects.

Rick Duncan, DNRC Regional Water:

North Central Montana Authority (NCMRWA) – Discussion started with a question from John Camden from Montana Rural Water about the City of Shelby's wellfield. Details were provided as to the status of the proposal by NCMRWA to expand the use of Shelby water to Shelby North, or Segment W5-A, which will provide water to Oilmont County Water District (CWD) and the new Ninemile CWD by autumn of 2020. Montana DEQ has reviewed the plans and specifications; it has given a conditional approval for the Shelby North project segment construction. NCMRWA will not be permitted to provide water to those systems until it has been clearly demonstrated that the Shelby wellfield, treatment and storage can provide the capacity to adequately serve them. Change in place of use for water rights will also need to be completed. DNRC is working with the Authority and the City on proposals for wellfield and treatment upgrades.

Rocky Boy's – The Chippewa-Cree Tribe has asked for \$50 Million in Federal appropriations to construct the first 11 MGD phase of the regional water treatment plant (WTP). It is not clear how much time will be required to receive that funding. The Bureau of Reclamation, NCMRWA and the Tribe are all working on strategies to reduce the remaining projections for pipeline supply capacities and construction costs, to reduce total costs below the Federally authorized ceiling for the regional project.

Fort Peck Tribes – The Tribes are in the process of transferring responsibilities for project oversight and system operation to a separate board or entity, with its own governing board. On-reservation construction is proceeding in many locations, including the R-Y Road project which will convey regional WTP water to the northern reservation boundary as a third point of interconnection with the Dry Prairie system. The mainline across the southern edge of the reservation is complete, and service lines are now being installed in eastern rural areas of the reservation

Dry Prairie – Dry Prairie's current construction projects include complete of a storage tank near Ste. Marie, booster pump stations at Ste. Marie and Nashua, the final mainline connection in the southwest service area between Nashua and the Glasgow area, and Valley County Area "F." The Authority is also in the planning stages of a project segment which will bring regional WTP water to Flaxville and Scobey, either in 2019 or 2020, depending upon levels of Federal project funding through Reclamation.

Central Montana – The Authority is in its 3rd of three monitoring seasons to determine groundwater capacities in the Judith Basin, to demonstrate that the Authority's planned withdrawal from the Madison Formation aquifer will not affect other area users, most notably Big Spring in Lewistown. Planning and design work on the first construction phase continues, in which water from the proposed wellfield at the Ubet location near Judith Gap will be piped to the City of Harlowton. The engineer's estimate for this first phase, which will include upgrades to the existing test well, installation of a second well, and construction of a pipeline to Harlowton, are in the range of \$10.5 Million. There is considerable work going on in Washington DC in attempts to pass legislation which will Federally authorize the Musselshell-Judith Regional Water System, with a proposed total price tag of \$92 Million.

Dry Redwater is beginning work on its 3rd construction project, to an area south and west of the City of Sidney known as Sidney Circle. Previous projects were: Sidney South, completed in 2014, which provided water from Sidney and limited sanitary sewer service to lots south of the city limits, down to the new Town Pump facility; and, East Yellowstone, which was begun in 2016 and completed in 2017. Sidney Circle will serve about 55 new customers for the Authority, and the project will be under construction through the 2019 construction season. As to this project's efforts towards receiving a Federal authorization, there are also several pieces of proposed legislation under consideration by Congress. Senators Daines and Tester are cosponsoring a bill.

Workshops – The group was reminded to have WASACT brochures at next week's MRW conference. Mike stated that AIS (American Iron and Steel) requirements with RD applications are the same as the EPA's. Kevin brought up combining certifications.

Congressional Update – No representatives in attendance. Anna suggested talking to your state and federal representatives to perhaps have someone join us at our quarterly meetings.

Website – Lindsay has put Sonja Nowakowski's Coal in Montana presentation back on the WASACT website as we had a request for it. Lindsay said the DNRC Rate Study is also on the website. Let her know if we need to post/link anything else.

End of Updates

Next meeting was set for Tuesday, October 9, from 9:30 to noon at DEQ and Mark Smith will host, providing a room at DEQ is available. The CM Russell room at DNRC will be booked at a backup.

Meeting adjourned at 11:39.

Minutes taken by Denise Cook