

W2ASACT MEETING NOTES
Meeting on December 10, 2019, 9:30 am to 12 pm
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, 1539 11th Ave, 2nd floor CM Russell Room

Members and participants present:

Alex Huffield	KLJ Eng	Kari Smith	DEQ - Water Quality
Anna Miller	DNRC - CARDD	Kevin Smith	DEQ
Autumn Coleman	DNRC - CARDD	Krist Fortman	DEQ
David C Larson	DNRC - RDB	Lindsay Volpe	DNRC - CARDD
Denise Cook	DNRC - CARDD	Maria Jackson	Great West Eng
Erin Zindt	MAP	Mark Smith	DEQ - ENG - DW
John Camden	MRWS	Mike Abrahamson	DEQ - ENG - WW
John Dillard	DEQ	Sonja Hoeglund	DNRC - CARDD
Jorri Dyer	DNRC - CARDD		

Via Conf. Phone:

Karen Bucklin Sanchez, USDA-RD
Steve Troendle, USDA-RD

Call to Order, Sign-in Sheet, Agenda Changes

Anna Miller, Chair, called the scheduled meeting of the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W2ASACT) to order at 9:32am, on Tuesday, December 10, 2019. The sign-in sheet was routed and the meeting agenda and draft minutes from the September 10th meeting were distributed. Those present briefly introduced themselves. Anna asked if there were any revisions to the September 10th minutes. Mike Abrahamson made a motion to accept the minutes and Mark Smith a second and the minutes were approved and adopted.

Guest Speaker: None

Kristy Fortman – DEQ Watershed Management Section Supervisor

Kristy said she is tasked with showing the Legislators what we at DEQ are up to. She began by pointing out on the screen, DEQ's website landing page at <http://deq.mt.gov/>. Then she clicked on Water where you can see the Water Quality Division Dashboard, which is broken down into more categories. If you want to expand, click on the  in the upper right of the page. Kristy showed how to glance at the latest assessments. They also have volunteer monitoring showing pollutant levels on the Clark Fork River, coming into and leaving Missoula in 2003 vs. 2016.

Kristy pointed out Water Quality Restoration Projects. For more details, you can click on the “dots” (●) on the left of the screen. Under Status of Watershed Approach is Water Quality Planning (TMDL). For 319 funding, you must have a TMDL. After the TMDL, we look back to see if a stream, etc. needs to be re-assessed. This system allows inserting links to videos, which are time-lapsed.

On the 3rd dot (●) from the top is Permits and Compliance. Compliance included inspected sites – areas for DEQ to work on. For instance, pollutant discharges in Montana.

Clicking on the 4th dot (●) you can see Subdivision files that are waiting for review. Kristy also showed where to see approved plans and Montana continues to build a strong infrastructure. Anna asked what that shows and Mark replied our NIMS data which stems from SRF funding data and is updated on a yearly basis for the EPA.

The 5th dot (●) gets you to Public Drinking Water. DEQ is at 90% compliance so we need to work on the 10% or so that are non-compliant. Some challenges include keeping up to date and finding meaningful data and displaying it effectively. Kristy asked that we get the word out to get folks to come back to the site.

Kristy also mentioned “Story Maps” which is via ARC GIS. Lindsay suggested we follow up at our next meeting. Karen suggested using story maps to highlight certain projects. Lindsay suggested having a map to highlight things like workshops. Erin added that information is great, but people need to know how to find it.

Karen said she likes the look of the DEQ site, but how do I get my coworkers to take a look? We will follow up at our next meeting. In the meantime, call Kristy at 444-7425 or email her at kristy.fortman@mt.gov.

Program Updates

Anna Miller with DNRC handed out the Local Government Delivery List from Department of Commerce. She said that communities often count on receiving the total amount of funding that they applied for. Steve added the phrase “conscience of impact”. He said if there are changes to funding, you need to let RD know.

Anna handed out a spreadsheet with a list of schools. Steve said he was inclined to wait for projects to get funded. He is busy with many tasks taking up his time. He said we do not know when we will have definite information on DLA grants. Anna added a note of caution. If the award for the request is not made, that can change funding. Erin commented that the list has over \$42 million in project requests. Only \$20 million is available.

John Camden with MWRS said the theme for next year's MRW conference is "20/20 Vision". The 2020 conference will be March 25, 26 and 27 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. He added that Wednesday, March 25th WASACT has the Canadian Room for the workshop, which is scheduled from 8:30 to 2. A Rural Water Infrastructure Funding Workshop sheet was handed out by Autumn Coleman. John reported that the Sleepy Inn has some construction issues and will not have rooms for the conference. John handed out vendor registration forms. He said that registration for Government agencies is \$125, but that is not on the form.

John then handed out some MATC Training Calendars. Anna mentioned that Rory Schmidt replaces Barb Kaufman. John added that Rory may not continue in the position. Anna added that there was AWWA money for training. Barb, who did the training Spring 2019, wanted another training for the Montana League of Cities and Towns and that did not happen. John said it is still on and hopes to have it at the March 2020 MRW conference.

John handed out a new MRW guide book. He reported that MRW is now fully staffed. He said they received a 10-month extension on the circuit rider program. Other than that, they are preparing for the March conference. Steve asked about the info and John said he would send out an email. John added that they eliminated the free "spouse/other" and the cost will be \$50. Also, the 15 minute breaks will change to half-hour breaks.

Break 10:25 to 10:40

Program Updates Continued

John Dillard with DEQ reported that DEQ is working in conjunction with Helena High School to sample for lead in schools. Drinking Water rules, once effective, we will begin testing. Then we can implement a "flushing" program. It will be necessary on the state level, to be compliant. John added that schools are responsible for the cost of sampling. We don't know how many drinking water fixtures are in schools. He mentioned the Uniform Plumbing Code. Anna asked if every sink needs to be checked and John replied only those used for human consumption. John said all fixtures used for drinking water should be checked. They could sample one out of five fixtures if they are similar, to help with cost. The larger cost will be if lead is found in samples.

In the case of lead in water, we would first implement a flushing program. Fixtures would need to be replaced. Leaded service lines may have to be replaced and schools would incur the remediation costs. John said DEQ will assist where we can. John asked what can be offered elsewhere for funding. Anna asked if the current grant can be used for testing? The EPA grant is only to be used for testing. The EPA will manage the EPA grant.

John Camden asked if OPI has stepped up and John Dillard said OPI has a meeting set up to discuss it. He said we could have Legislative appropriated money for schools. Could we use that money for repairs? Kevin added that there was a kick-off meeting with OPI. He said that part of watershed management (EPA) funds can be used for testing and those grants are managed by Region 8 HQ. John Dillard added that three watershed management grants are for water infrastructure to help disadvantaged communities and issues with lead in schools. Steve said since he missed the meeting with OPI, that he would reach out to them and touch base.

Steve mentioned a community facilities program, which would provide grant money for various projects, including a new freezer at a nursing home. He added that he would like to locate some funding for schools that have lead issues and work with them to get funding even if RD cannot help them. John Dillard let Steve know that he would send Steve the OPI meeting information. The community facility program can also help schools with boilers, roofs, etc. John said we sent back \$13 million in funds. Maria Jackson said the CDBG – Coal Board can also help.

John Dillard said DEQ is gearing up to help schools with lead issues. They are doing video training to show how to do test sampling. He said is it not that difficult and that the school staff members can do the sampling themselves. They can do an inventory on fixtures and keep it simple. EPA is not leading on lead issues in schools. Schools and daycares have to sample once in every 5 years. With an internal plumbing issues, like lead in schools, Public Health and Human Services agrees that we need to take care of our schools due to the vulnerable population affected.

Steve added that currently communities under the 20,000 population limit can be helped. Over that amount, RD cannot help. He is waiting on a policy re-write. Then may be communities up to 50,000 may be helped. A high population means a community is not eligible for as much funding now. Kari Smith asked what are the MHI (Median Household Income) limits? Steve said you could look on the RD website. For under 50,000, the limit is 90%.

Mike Abrahamson with DEQ Mike said DEQ has posted an ad for a FTE for a SRF position.

Kevin Smith with DEQ said his office is busy. They get commitment letters for TSEP out.

Steve Troendle with RD is operating under a continuing resolution. Projects are getting close. There is one vacancy in Missoula. He hopes to get this year's appropriation of funds.

Alex Huffield with KLJ Engineering said it is business as usual in his office with the added end of the year business.

Maria Jackson with Great West Engineering noted that her office is also busy, and they are working on applications for clients. Erin added that the TSEP start-up race will be on the next agenda and commerce will present.

Jorri Dyer with DNRC reported that there is an open Watershed Management Grant cycle coming January or February 2020.

Sonja Hoeglund with DNRC said the private grant program has \$45,000 left for septic replacement projects. Sonja is also doing planning grants and project grants.

Autumn Coleman with DNRC reminded all that she needs changes to the funding table by January 31. Denise will send out the current table in advance of the next meeting. Anna added that on our HB 652 grants, we have 40 projects and we have contracted 30. Autumn said the RDG program is funding two projects, which are wastewater systems affected by past mining operations. She said there was a crucial state need demonstrated.

Committee Updates

Workshop Updates

Erin Zindt is working on the funding workshop and asked if anyone has ideas for a case study at the workshop. Autumn said she would confirm with InterCap and Erin said she will confirm with the Department of Commerce. Lindsay added that the video is old. Anna said we have another video on CD that shows beakers like a chemist uses to show funding. Erin asked how long that video is? Anna replied that it is 10 minutes long. Erin mentioned a place to show where to find resources. Erin reported that MAP has one more operator, bringing their total up to four. They received the DEQ contract. She said they can visit projects. Her office is working with RW and RD.

Discussion started on the funding spreadsheet. A suggestion was made to change the name to "WASACT Resources". Karen added that planning will be this fall so maybe for next year, "Consultations" could be available, and also have meetings with community leaders. Anna said we may have to meet upstairs. Erin suggested we encourage people to meet with agencies now. Steve said we could have "Structured Consultations". He suggested adding a "Resource Team" and having a brief description of the community's needs.

Discussion continued with Steve suggesting a 15-20 minute "huddle". Anna said we could mention at the beginning of the workshop, getting a list of who might need help and want to meet with agencies after the workshop. Then we could set up a time and place at the end of the conference. John added that December 20, 2019 is the deadline for putting something on the agenda. Autumn noted that the workshop sheet will go out in mass numbers. John said that an agenda is needed at the conference. John reminded all of Montana Rural Water's new address: 525 Central Ave, M6, Great Falls, MT 59401. Erin asked about a survey at the end of the conference and Anna replied that we could hand it out at noon. Erin added that the survey will provide some insight into communities' needs.

Uniform Application and Standard Documents

David Larson said the Uniform Application is finished and online. The links work and the budget will get totaled. We no longer require a Fax number. You can download the application, fill it out and then save it.

David gave an update on Emergency Grants. Greenfields ID has been helped and this project was by Willow Creek. Delfia Milstone has water going under vs. over the diversion. Some project requests are pending, not yet committed projects include Bridger Pines, which as a block in a wastewater line; and Clyde Park, which has a water leak in their well house.

Erin noted that there is often high turnover of system operators. Lindsay asked if TSEP has emergency funds? Maria said TSEP can help fund up to \$15,000 or more. She added that they have \$100,000 for the biennium with \$83,000 left.

Website

Lindsay Volpe noted that items on the website have been updated. The Uniform Application is posted and there are no big changes. The planning grant cycle is open until the end of January. She handed out a spreadsheet with Renewable Resource Grant Applications through Fall of 2019. Anna asked Jorri if a school could come in for a planning grant? Lindsay said Jorri will be managing some grants.

Congressional Update – None

Anna said regarding the Continuing Resolution, the federal government passed a one-month resolution until December 20, 2019.

End of Updates

Next meeting will be in February at DNRC, hopefully in the bigger first floor conference room. Details will be out in advance.

Meeting adjourned at 11:34.

Minutes taken by Denise Cook. Presentation section reviewed by Kristi Fortman. Entire content edited by Anna Miller.