Yellowstone Basin Advisory Council

Membership &

Report of 2013 Public Scoping Activities

Appendix D:

Design of Opportunities for Public Inputs

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Public Input—Roundtable Discussions. A round table discussion format was designed by the research team for use as a means of encouraging discussion of basin water issues. Members of the newly formed Yellowstone BAC participated in round table discussion at their kick-off meeting March 18.

Having seen how the round table discussions worked, the BAC members were then charged with facilitator roles at the regional scoping meetings. The intent was to provide the public participants the opportunity to speak directly with BAC members and to be afforded the time to explain their concerns and perspectives (see Table D-1).

Table D-1: Public Input Round Table Discussion Instructions
GOAL: 35-45 minutes of discussion Facilitator: Ask the questions below and ensure participation from each participant Research Assistant: Take notes on easel Audio Recorder: Record discussion
TO BEGIN: Ask participants to please introduce themselves: "Please, tell us who you are, where you are from, and why you are participating today."
1. What are some issues that the BAC will need to address as immediate or pressing concerns?
2. What are some issues that the BAC will need to address as long-term concerns? (perhaps as a 20-year window)
3. What sort of time horizon should the BAC establish as its focal horizon, immediate concerns, long-range concerns or some intermediate range?
4. Are there any obvious pit-falls that the BAC should avoid?
5. How can the BAC ensure a citizen-based beginning?
6. Are there any suggestions for how the BAC might ensure success?

At the regional meetings, public attendees were assigned a table number and, in general, each discussion table included 5-7 public attendees. One Yellowstone BAC member facilitated each discussion, but it was typical for more than one BAC member to sit-in. Ex-officio members were also asked to sit-in with the discussion groups.
The round table discussions occurred after the overviews were given by the DNRC team. Gilbertz and Hall were available to all tables during the discussion session to ensure that the designed questions were treated in a similar manner, and to assist if there were any technical difficulties with the recording devices.

Each discussion group was assigned a scribe who took notes on poster-sized tablets as people spoke. Participants were encouraged to provide editorial comments to ensure that

the notes taken accurately represented their thoughts. The discussions were also audio-recorded and later reviewed for specific details.

Public Input—Demographic Survey. At their initial meeting, the Yellowstone BAC and ex-officio members were asked to fill out a demographic survey (see Table D-2).

Table D-2: Demographic Survey

1) **Are you male or female?** CIRCLE ONE: (a) Male (b) Female

2) **Which age bracket best describes you?** CIRCLE ONE.

a. 18-25
b. 26-35
c. 36-45
d. 46-55
e. 56-65
f. 66-75
g. over 75

3) **What is your current occupation (If retired, what was your former occupation)?**

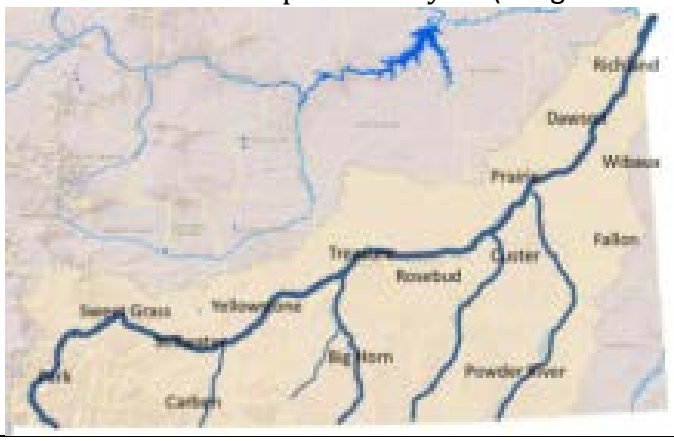
4) **Which of the following most accurately describes your role at this meeting?**

a. Member of the public at large
b. Member of the BAC
c. Technical Advisor

5) **Which of the following most accurately describes your water interests?** (RANK YOUR THREE MAIN INTERESTS: 1= Most Important; 2= Second Most Important, and 3 +Third Most Important)

_____Agricultural
_____Industrial
_____Commercial
_____Local business
_____Fish & Wildlife
_____Recreation
_____Ecosystem
_____Elected Official
_____Administrative (non-elected water administrator)

6) Please make an "X" on the map to indicate which section of the Yellowstone Basin is most important to you. (Image was larger)



At the regional meetings, once the round table discussions were completed, volunteers were asked to fill out the demographic survey and the Q Sort (described below). Not every person who participated in the round table discussions was expected to fill out the demographic survey or to complete the Q Sort.

Public Input—Q Sort. The Q Sort is a well-established social science research tool for identifying and quantifying participants' beliefs about specific subjects. Over the past few years Q Sort has been used to better understand how groups and individuals can approach issues concerning shared natural resources. Q Sort was engaged in the Yellowstone Basin as a means of helping prepare BAC members for planning discussions, and because it can help establish a focus for the planning process.
More specifically, Q Sort is useful for the following reasons:

- Because the statements are rooted in historically documented citizen-identified concerns about water resources, it helps prepare BAC members to consider a broad spectrum of Montanan's water concerns.
- Statistical analyses of how individuals rank and prioritize their beliefs help identify patterns of agreement and disagreement, and pathways towards consensus.
- Finding common ground in beliefs and management views identified using this method can be used to facilitate discussions and to help build trust.

The key to a successful Q Sort is to design a number of relevant statements that participants will respond to in terms of how much they agree or disagree with each.

For this study, 16 statements were created concerning water resources and water management. The statements were designed to meet three criteria. First, they reflected survey questions used in the 1976 planning process. Second, they reflected Q Sort items proven to be helpful in other settings where natural resources issues are under consideration. Finally, the 16 statements were deemed appropriate by DNRC agency representatives (see Table D-3).

The sixteen statements were reproduced for each participant as small paper tiles, each with one of the approved statements printed on it. Q Sort participants were first asked to organize the tiles into two groups: 'mostly agree' and 'mostly disagree.' Participants were then asked to place the statements onto a board that forced them to further organize their preferences into a ranked, normal distribution using a scale from -3 to +3 with the negative end of the scale representing "least like how I think" and the positive end representing "most like how I think" (see Image D-1).

Table D-3 : Yellowstone BAC Q Sort Statements
Quantity a Growing Concern & Supply and Demand
1. As we move into the next decades, water management will become more complex due to interstate demands, both upstream and downstream.
2. Consumptive (e.g., municipal water use, irrigation) and non-consumptive (e.g. ecological or recreational stream flows) uses are not in conflict at this time.
Identification of New Sources
3. The main stem of the Yellowstone River should not be protected from the construction of large dams.
4. The best way to deal with water scarcity should not involve the construction of new large reservoirs.
5. The best way to deal with water scarcity is to encourage irrigation system improvements.
6. The best way to deal with water scarcity is to encourage construction of small on-farm reservoirs.
7. Water markets are a viable way of reallocating water to other beneficial uses.
8. Water conservation and restrictions cannot substitute for new storage projects.
Non-consumptive use needs
9. Instream flows that maintain fish and wildlife habitat should not be maintained as priority over consumptive (other) uses.
10. Ecosystems and species should have water rights.
Climate Variability is a Major Concern
11. The number one issue for water planning is to prepare for future severe droughts and precipitation events.
Water Right Administration
12. More tax money should be spent to speed up the process of adjudicating water rights in the Yellowstone Basin.
13. Municipalities should be prohibited from selling water for industrial uses.
14. Energy companies should not be able to purchase water rights from farmers.
15. The lack of water information hinders water development.
16. Effective water rights administration does not include an effective enforcement component.

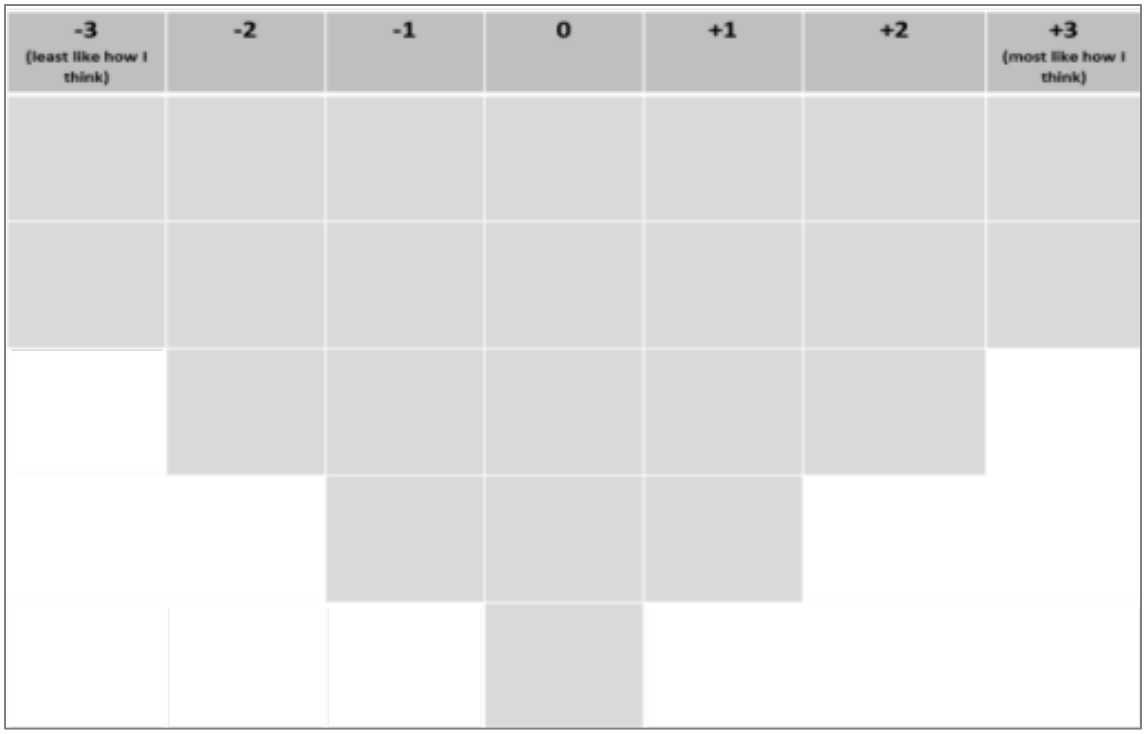


Image D-1: Q Sort Board

Positions of the cards were recorded and the results subjected to an analysis that revealed statistically significant patterns of agreement and disagreement among the participants.