

Yellowstone Basin Advisory Council  
Membership &  
Report of 2013 Public Scoping Activities

Appendix J:  
Regional Meeting #1 (Glendive) Agenda and Round Table  
Notes





## Regional Meeting #1 (Glendive) Agenda and Round Table Discussion Notes

### Welcome to the Yellowstone BAC

Prosperity in Montana depends on meeting water demands for population growth and economic development while satisfying existing beneficial uses. As directed by the Montana Legislature, DNRC-WRD is launching an initiative to update the State Water Plan (§85-1-203 MCA). The Montana Water Supply Initiative (MWSI) engages citizens in a planning process that identifies options to meet future needs, satisfy existing beneficial uses, and protect the state's water resources.

As the MWSI advisory board for the Yellowstone basin, the Yellowstone BAC is in a unique position to advise DNRC-WRD on the development of strategies and recommendations for meeting the water resource needs of the Yellowstone basin.

Thank you for your efforts.  
Sincerely,  
*Paul Azevedo*



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### Yellowstone Basin Advisory Council

Regional Meeting for Public Comment  
March 27, 2013



Glendive, Montana



### Lunch Break: 12:00-1:00

#### Session 1 10:00-12:00

- Welcome— Susan Gilbertz
- Purpose of Water Planning—Jim Robinson
- Purpose of Regional Meetings— Susan Gilbertz
  - BAC Membership-
- Yellowstone Water Budget— Jim Robinson and Chuck Dalby
- Water Rights—Kim Overcast

*Short Break*

- Facilitated Round Table Discussions— Collecting Insights from Public Attendees
- Data Exercise: BAC Q Sort
- Public Comment Cards
- Public Comment Statements
- Basin Identification Map

#### Other Regional Meetings

Friday, April 12, 2013  
Big Timber Regional Meeting  
Public Library

Wednesday, April 24, 2013  
Forsyth Regional Meeting  
Public Library



#### Wrap-Up Meeting

Wednesday, May 8, 2013  
Final Scoping Meeting  
Billings  
MSUB Downtown Campus



#### Session 2 1:00-3:00

- Welcome— Susan Gilbertz
- Purpose of Water Planning—Jim Robinson
- Purpose of Regional Meetings— Susan Gilbertz
  - BAC Membership-
- Yellowstone Water Budget— Jim Robinson and Chuck Dalby
- Water Rights—Kim Overcast

*Short Break*

- Facilitated Round Table Discussions— Collecting Insights from Public Attendees
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### Q1: Pressing & Immediate Concerns

- Is the current water rights inventoried and if all water rights were used; what would the impacts be?
- Has a minimum flow been established to sustain fisheries and related aquatic life?
- Is agriculture runoff being treated equivalent to other types of runoff ie. are all of the drainages back to the river in irrigated areas tested for fertilizer and pesticide related compounds. Long term plans should be developed to improve water quality for these drainages.
- We are fortunate to have low-cost Pick Sloan power for pumping water
- Water quantity- we would like to see more land developed and irrigated
- Quality: less from CBM and more from drought
- We are more dependent on what happens in the mountains (snowfall, snowpack)
- Do have an issue with moss(algae); clearer water allows light to get to bottom for moss to grow. Water seeps more when you have clear verse turbid water.
- Water conservation- we are working hard to conserve. Economically it is the right thing to do. Part of it if you lift your water via pump you want to use it all. Keep it in closed pipe. Power costs drop. With these saving, we want to irrigate more land.
- Use of the Conservation districts' water reservations to develop new lands
- Energy development is an uncertainty; problems with the Bakken the water use and fracking; the exchange of water rights
- Concerned about protecting the irrigation rights competing with the instream flow;
- Changes in the morphology of the river impact irrigation uses
- Irrigation development happens slowly over time; but new industrial water uses develop so quickly. How do you know farmers in good faith now selling water to industry are not exceeding their water rights?
- It is my belief water is more important than oil.
- Municipal water needs because selling water to the Bakken will eventually/likely affect junior water rights holders- especially municipalities
- There is not a marketplace for water; a market would help connect needs & supplies
- Water pressure is going down in wells because of the increased uses of water in this area- loss of artesian pressure
- Water quality: Well Water high in nitrates- harming our cattle
- In-stream flow
- Beneficial users should get more voice over river water uses as opposed to environmental groups or downstream users
- Seems like the Fish & Game have more power than anyone concerning the diversion to be put in at intake;
- Increasing population and industrial uses of water
- Pollution coming from upstream
- There is a tremendous demand on the river system for water for hydrologic fracking; what people don't realize that this water is lost forever; once it gets pumped down a

- mile underground it doesn't come back. Or they haul it to disposal wells. It is about 1M gallons per frack job.
- More efficient use of this water is a must! Money is the big problem for making this more efficient with equipment.
  - We need to line these canals as we are losing maybe a 1/3 or more from seepage. These are large expenses. Seepage and Evaporation
  - We need to look at what Wyoming is doing;
  - We need a record of how much water is used; our irrigation district has a record of what we are pumping; seepage; we can prove how much we are using;
  - Need storage taken from the June rise; "Use it or lose it"
  - How do you know where water depot trucks get their water?
  - How do you know you are exceeding your water right? If a landowner sells water to industry how do they know they are not exceeding their water right?

#### Q2: Long-term Concerns

- Municipal and industrial uses have inquired about irrigation water- which is an insufficient quality for most industrial uses
- Concerned about water used for energy; "Water rights are precious, let me tell you, more valuable than gold"
- Long-term industry uses and its impacts on water quality for drinking and irrigating water
- CBM decreasing quality of water
- In the future there will be a lot more Consideration about the value of water- rain water, the role of wetlands cleaning water
- In the Bakken there are 8000 wells; in the next 25 years they think that will increase to 40,000 wells, so that water used for fracking. Each well uses how much water?
- Does climate change have an impact on water availability?
- Cooleys and creek beds should be dammed as we are sending way too much water down the Yellowstone
- We need to protect our water users from lawsuits and environmental groups that will take that away; There are 100,000+ acres that could be irrigated, we need to learn how we can develop this land
- Concerned about upstream riverfront and residential development in floodplains; we need to halt subdivisions in the valleys and floodplains of the basin; 20 acre parcels developments do not belong on the Yellowstone River; The YR has extreme economic value as a recreational resource
- Make sure we have enough water for our state for the future
- I think recreation is a big opportunity that remains untapped
- Domestic uses from population increases;
- Upstream Billings and West Glendive: aquifers going down in areas of new subdivisions. Septic gray water is moving into wells because of increased people into the valley so people.

- So many new regulations are being put onto improving water quality and waste water quality; many people with well water will need to be put onto city water in order to have clean enough water. This increases the needs for municipal water systems to expand in size. Our testing expenses jumped from \$1000 per year to \$16000 a year just on sewer water; drinking water is about the same. Lab is in Billings.
- We discharge clean gray water into Glendive Creek; According to the DEQ water quality in Glendive creek is better than the water quality in the Yellowstone River. The reason there are fish in Glendive Creek is because we discharge into that creek.
- Water harvesting, conservation, shelterbelts, and storage ponds we are probably not doing enough in terms of managing or encouraging these techniques. Water conservation-focused interests are needed. But it takes some sort of plan to get there now. If we don't get on this now it will come on top of us. It is like the Bakken thing; nobody saw that coming but it is here.
- We need to do more about Exotic vegetation. Salt Cedar drinks up tons of water. A giant plant 15' to 30' feet tall can drink 300 gallons a day

Q3: What sort of Time Horizon should BAC

- Can you repeat the question? Can you rephrase the question?
- It is tough question.
- If you understand the question, you get an "A"
- Long-term; it is unproductive to get hung up on issues that we cannot predict—years ago we thought coal would be the major competitor for water use and now it is fracking—
- pressing concerns now will effect what will happen down the road
- Intermediate range should be the focus at least with technology changes
- Is the BAC done after 20 years?
- How do you prioritize the uses: I guess public health would be #1;

Q4: Obvious Pitfalls the BAC should avoid

- Avoid politics
- Ensure you do not exclude any water users; I like that there is an effort to have a wide range of interests on the council. This ensures that if there is a concern, someone with the expertise about the concern can address it appropriately.
- If you have a question make sure you invite the right people (experts) to speak to the group
- We don't want to avoid climate change discussions; we want to understand it
- Infighting: We in Montana fracture ourselves up into components; we divide by county lines, city, farmer/non farmer/ conservationists/ non-conservationist; it hurts small population states- like WY and MT because the large population states can take advantage of that by getting us to infight. They can stand back and reap the benefits of our infighting and say they cannot get together so we'll write the rule for them. If we are to have any power that we can exert we need to stick together as neighbors first. We need to be good neighbors. If we exhibit being good neighbors to each other then we can ask them to be good neighbors to us. Conservation and

- Recreation efforts is one of the most important things we can develop. We have misused the YR. We need to work with the Burlington Northern Railroad- the largest property owner on the YR- as a partner
- Avoid thinking that we have Congressional power. We're going to have to fight real hard against states that have larger populations and more representatives to keep our water.
  - Getting into a wizzing contest with big energy and railroads
  - Pitfall would be thinking big companies, industries, railroads, etc. have our best interest in mind; they have their own best interest in mind. It is their shareholders that tell them how to act.
  - I guess this question rules out conquering Wyoming
  - Probably stay out of water rights;

Q5: How can BAC ensure a citizen-based (bottom-up) beginning?

- You kind of do that already don't you?
- Get the information about these meetings out there sooner
- You always need that combination of the public notice and someone telling/contacting you
- There should be extra information for those vested interests to comment on any plans
- A: I am here because Bobbi Blakenship called me;  
B: (laughs) she called me too;  
A: Make sure you put in the extra effort to call people out to come to your events
- Prairie County Irrigation District and Conservation Districts would be a good conduit to reach almost every agricultural user in the County. A good way to get their feedback.
- You are doing it now: allowing people to comment online and in writing.
- Education- letting people know their inputs are needed
- Listen to the input; incorporate their thoughts into planning or you people will stop giving input
- What is going on right now; is a perfect start; as far the platform. I have not been involved in anything like this until now.
- Get the younger people on board: we need to listen to what the younger people have to say.
- I like what you are doing here; keep it up

Q6: Ways to ensure success of BAC.

- Have detailed information for the BAC members
- Find some money to keep this process going; otherwise it will fizzle; it is a long-term process it is going to need funding for 20 years.
- Build upon the communities- allow people to be open with you
- Frighten people to get them to pay attention; but don't act out of fear
- We need to be sure we work with other Basins
- Better education and incentives to landowners