

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

Appendix M:
Regional Meeting #4 (Billings) Agenda and Round Table
Notes



Regional Meeting #4 (Billings) 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
Water Management Bureau Chief




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Yellowstone Basin Advisory Council

Regional Meeting for Public Comment
May 7, 2013



Billings, Montana
112 N. Broadway
Room A





5:30-6:30

- 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

6:30-7:30

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



Scoping Wrap-Up Meeting

Wednesday, May 8, 2013
Billings: MSUB Downtown Campus



Table 1

- l) Issues
 - a. Jim- Laurel water intake
 - i. Laurel water needs
 - b. Bob- Diversion issues
 - i. Causing the river to change course
 - 1. Rights of individual land protection vs. community rights
 - ii. Change in land uses in valley
 - 1. Changes water use
 - 2. Irrigation canals (efficiency)
 - c. Jason- Regulation on water rights
 - i. Uses
 - ii. Who can purchase rights
 - d. Bob- Water rights effecting other industries
 - i. Water used by new subdivisions
 - 1. Urban sprawl
 - ii. Recreation → demands on water
 - 1. Relationship to other water needs
 - iii. Priority vs. First in Right
 - 1. How to determine priority
 - e. Cal- Recreation brings in money to economy → Prioritizes recreation
 - i. Population needs for water sewage plant vs. wetlands
 - f. John- Agriculture → is a business → feeds population
 - g. Cal- need for more and accurate information regarding water uses and rights
 - h. Bob- Lack of data involving water use, etc
 - i. Tom- Return flow and irrigation, water needs
 - i. Water quality of return flow
 - j. Jim- Water quality of river → refineries' discharge → point sources
 - k. Tom- Water sampling
 - 1. Extreme cost
 - ii. Storm water runoff
 - 1. Quality of water discharged
 - l. Jason- Water quality → consequences for recreation
 - m. Tom- Water quantity vs. water quality
 - i. Water management
 - 1. Conservation
 - n. Bob- Water storage
 - i. Cost and location
 - o. Cal- Evaporation issues
 - i. Loss
 - p. Bob- Recreation issues with storage
 - i. Docks and water levels
 - q. Jason- Regulation of ditch water

- i. Need for enforcement of
 - ii. Need education
 - iii. Regulation of use
 - 1. Flow control
 - 2. Measured
 - r. John- Others (out of state) need water...
 - s. Jim- Need more storage
 - t. Cal- Multiple Use issues
 - i. Recreation
 - u. John- Fracking
 - i. Need for more water
 - 1. Consumptive use
 - II) Success
 - a. Education
 - b. Public involvement
 - c. Public relations
 - i. Through-out and after process
 - III) Pitfalls
 - a. More in-put
 - b. Jason- University, advertising
 - c. Bob-
 - i. Knowing what the loss will be
 - ii. Varied interest groups involved in BAC
 - iii. Educating
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Table 2:

- I) Immediate Concerns
 - a. Water rights have not yet been adjudicated
 - b. Water Quality
 - c. Foresting
 - d. Fires → leads to excess silt deposits
 - i. Ash → affects irrigation
 - e. *EROSION*
 - i. Particularly downstream
 - f. 1974 concerns same as today, never resolved
 - g. Interdepartmental collaboration with regard to natural disaster response/preparations
 - i. FLOOD AND FIRE
 - h. Competing uses
 - i. Municipal & Agriculture
 - i. Bakken- Growth in Sidney
 - i. And municipal
 - j. Industrial use of water

- k. Water for fracking
 - l. Water quality = N2, P
 - m. Cities vs. agriculture = flood irrigation?
 - i. Nitrogen, anhydrous ammonia
 - n. Long term
 - i. Growth (towns/cities), industry in the state
 - ii. Off-stream storage? Should we capture it? Yes, but when we do, we store it?
 - 1. ??Public Grand??
 - 2. Groundwater recharge=recharge in one season so that it exits back into rivers at a convenient time of need
 - o. Sprinkler Systems:
 - i. Irrigations ditches in urban areas are becoming abandoned but we do use them for storm water
 - ii. The more water you use, the more you have to pay
 - 1. 1 penny = 10 gallons
 - iii. We are semi-arid desert → future water use
 - iv. Are we using water efficiently?
 - 1. Have we made a good enough investment in our irrigation to maintain us?
 - p. Time Horizon = incentives for people to save water (do NOT demand it of people
 - q. Grant programs
 - r. Water Conservation
 - i. ****AWARENESS****
 - ii. ****EDUCATION****
 - 1. 2 main short-term goals
 - s. Watering lawns is where most of our water use goes (summer)
 - i. Drip system is more efficient, tune in ag. to better water uses
 - t. Hay meadow off of ditches because its better financially, but using scheduling we can reduce this
- II) Pitfalls:
- a. Look at small pieces or goals individually, instead of an overwhelming project as a whole
 - b. Needs to be citizen-based ownership
 - c. Coal slurry= water to other states
 - d. CO examples
 - e. Separation of water rights and land, keep it in the state
 - i. Leases are the problem!!
 - f. Potential implications of continuing to separate land and water
 - g. Fisheries
 - h. Small hydro dams all over = wind and solar are not continuous
 - i. Coal out of business = natural gas is pushing coal out

- III) Suggestions?:
- a. Waste water treatment: new regulations are expensive
 - b. Using gray water = reuse needs to be incorporated
 - c. Why use water for our lawns that has been treated to drinking quality?
 - i. Why spend the money?
 - d. Water here is very cheap
 - e. Has to be readily available to the public
 - i. All of our info especially in 2015 in the final report
 - f. Interactive display of information = easy to maneuver
 - i. Have to sell the final idea to the public
 - g. Conservation groups = should they have some funding for education programs
 - h. Challenges = take such a large river and have everyone agree
 - i. BAC need to be the name on the final report to the legislature, not DNRC
 - j. BAC needs to be involved with presentation
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Table 3:

- I) Issues
- a. No Storage on Yellowstone
 - i. Long term issue: STORAGE NOW
 - ii. Any kind of storage
 - b. 2011, lost opportunity to harness water for storage
 - c. Use, beneficial use
 - i. Priorities of uses
 - d. How to generate water?
 - e. Personal off-stream storage
 - f. Water Rights vs. Beneficial Use
 - i. 1868 Treaty
 - ii. Compact
 - g. Federal vs. State policies?
 - h. Allocation
 - i. Better information
 - j. Invasive species
 - k. Water moving away
 - l. Water rights can no longer be serviced
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Table 4:

- I) Issues (#1)
- a. Lack of snow
 - i. Make storage west of Billings
 - b. Water rates raising
 - i. Avoid waste
- II) Question #2
- a. Consumption of well water
 - b. Combine water supplies

- c. Rights to drill wells
 - d. Bill for developers (subdivisions) over agriculture
 - e. Hydroelectric power (Rosebud) → Non-Consumptive
 - i. Developmental use
 - ii. Conservation
 - f. Efficient use
 - i. Enforcement of effective ditch use
 - ii. Enough water use with growing population
 - g. Use for gas production (fracking) requires water rights → need to be enforced
 - i. How much funding does state need to provide?
 - h. ****Find someplace to store water (big snow storms, rain, etc.)****
- III) Question #3
- a. "Sooner the better"
 - b. 5 year review
 - i. (citizen review commission?)
 - c. Climate change factors
 - d. Bigger scale of reusing water (floating islands)
 - e. Out of state claims on water
- IV) Question #4
- V) Question #5
- a. Keep citizens informed and involved
- VI) Question #6
- a. Hire good politicians!!
 - b. Its going to get tougher as populations expand (and tribal use)
 - i. ****How to divert****
 - ii. ****More efficient irrigation****
 - iii. ****Enforcement of wasteful uses****
 - c. Keep in mind appropriate/beneficial uses
 - i. Fish and people down stream
 - d. Ask the legislature to end frivolous laws--Get rid of old laws that don't work!
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Table 5:

Quotes:

"Do we really have the water we think we have?"-Bill

"Eventually, with all the water drained from the YR for cities, we will run out"

"We need to think long and hard before we just start building dams"-Bobbi

Issues

- Tribes have been promised a large amount of water and nothing good is being done with it
 - concerns about using water for non-productive or non-beneficial use or not using it at all
- Worry about Billings' water reserve for city use
 - approximately 10 hrs
- Address mix ups at meeting

-Water storage worries- off YR

-Bill's concern of snow melt being lost to downstream flow

-Worries about storage type or methods

-We need to think long and hard before we just start building dams

Long-term

-Think about how farmland changes to houses and concrete

-Where are the water uses going to change

-Changing water recharge method when switch from land to development

-wells having to be drilled deeper if water level changes

-Keep in mind a site specific condition and requirements with regards to wells

-Irrigation improvements

Time Horizons

-It's hard to forecast a 20 year horizon

-Will global warming be considered or how?

Pitfalls

-Politicizing

-Working from facts not emotions

Citizen Base

-Just what we're doing

-Education is important

Success

-Carry on meetings

-Adjust along the way

-Keep and increase public awareness

Table 6:

Issues

-Desertification happening

-Spring and seeps drying, flows in Butcher Creek, less grass, running cattle earlier in Riparian zones

-Concern over allocation

-Conversion of agriculture water to residential- near Huntley

-Concerns regarding Crow Tribe claims

-future claims- are they excessive?

Pitfalls

-Relying on a typical baseline

-Watch out for unexpected demands

-Devil is in the assumptions

-Judge Loblis' comment regarding mining

-Do we know how much water is being used?

-Need to educate public

Long-term

-Must manage water for the lowest years

-Ditch leakage

Success

-Consider land use

-land use and water use are linked

-How much less water is used by old agriculture rights?

-Consider geology when it comes to water management

-Energy/water connection

-people can't afford to pump to supply pivots

Table 7:

Issues

-Maintaining fisheries: is instream flow enough for fish?

-Concerns about science: global climate change, water availability throughout U.S.

-Municipal needs for water: how do we balance multiple uses especially in droughts?

-How do we inform citizens about water to have productive conversations?

Dissemination to public

-Protecting the YR

Long-Term

-Oversight: organizational structures multiple users

-A forum for these discussions

-Water quality

-Water conservation in agriculture

-leakage, seepage

-Impact on wells

-Sitting from the perspective of water quality and quantity (subdivisions, etc.)

-Monitoring for quality

-pharmaceutical drugs, other pollutants (chemicals)— as baseline

-Metering of water at all points

-Need good data for predicting:

-different climate change scenarios, population changes, industry

Pitfalls

-Lack of legislative support

-Lack of public support

Success

-Get info out there

-Open meetings after planning before going to 2015 legislature

-Get more money from government

