

WASACT Meeting Minutes July 8, 2025

Quarterly meeting of the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team

Date: Meeting on July 8, 2025, 10 am to 12 pm

Location: Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, 1539 11th Ave, Helena, Montana
First Floor Montana Conference Room and Zoom

Call to Order: W2ASACT Chair Anna Miller called the meeting to order AT 10:03.

Roll Call: Anna asked those present to introduce themselves.

In the room:

Bryant Higgs, APA

Craig Erickson, GWE

Ki-Ai McBride, GWE

Julie Hofbauer, M-M

LaNette Diaz, Interstate Eng

Lindsay Volpe, USDA-RD

Tash Wisemiller, USDA

Steve Troendle, USDA

Michelle McNamee, DNRC

Via Zoom:

1	Abby Weimer, DNRC	21	Krista Lammers, DNRC
2	Amy Personette, DNRC	22	Kristen Jordan, DNRC
3	Anna Miller, DNRC	23	Kitty Schmid, GWE
4	Autumn Coleman, DNRC	24	Linda O'Donnel, MCEP
5	Bobbie DeBose, DNRC	25	Lindsey Glastetter, DNRC
6	Chelsea Dodd, MRWS	26	Lindsey Siebrasse, Commerce
7	Chrissy Thompson, DNRC	27	Melissa Downing, DNRC
8	Cody Marez, MRWS	28	Mia Belting, DNRC
9	Coleen O'Rourke, DNRC	29	Michelle McNamee, DNRC
10	Daniell Redden, DNRC	30	Nikki Rogers, MWRS
11	Denise Cook, DNRC	31	Nina Denny, DNRC
12	Devin Beal, MAP	32	Rachel Gemar, DNRC
13	Ella Lunny, DEQ	33	Rebecca Beam, DEQ
14	Erin McKeon, Commerce	34	Rick Duncan, DNRC
15	Galen Steffens, Commerce	35	Sandie Koenig, DEQ
16	Heather Reeves, DNRC	36	Sasha Marlatt, MAP
17	Heidi Fleury, DNRC	37	Shawna Swanz, DNRC
18	Janelle Painter, DNRC	38	Stephanie Crider-Pridemore, Commerce
19	Katherine Certalic, DNRC	39	Susan Brurud, WET
20	Kayla Mehrens, AE2S	40	Tucker Colvin, SWEFC

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from April 8, 2025, meeting, which were previously posted on the website and distributed to those in the room, were adopted with no revisions.

Open Issues: Anna mentioned the passing of John Camden's wife, Sandi. The service is this Saturday at 1 in Helena. John retired from MT Rural Water Systems in 2024.

Anna reported that the Big Beautiful Bill passed. She added that there may be amendments in the appropriations bills.

New Business: Craig Erickson with Great West Engineering began the discussion on how the MHI (Median Household Income) has changed drastically, which has led to many Great West clients no longer qualifying for loan forgiveness. Craig handed out a sheet showing statistics and table showing Economic Development Administration – Measuring Distress. Towns like Circle had a major impact as in 2019 their MHI was \$43,527 and now it is \$81,250. Discussion continued with ideas of income surveys to gather data. The problem is surveys not being returned. Also noted was the issue with residences that are seasonal and/or rented through Air BNB or Vacation RB. We will continue to look at this issue and come up with ideas to gather data on distressed communities.

Program Updates:

RRGL Program

Michelle McNamee reported that since we are in a new biennium, we have new pots of funds. New grant cycles will be opening. Autumn Coleman showed the RRGL webpage and Katherine Certalic pointed out where to find grantee info on the page and she put links to the info sessions in the chat. Reach out with questions.

Montana Rural Water Systems

Cody Marez reminded all that the next Montana Rural Water conference will be March 23 through 25, 2026 at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. We have outgrown the Heritage Inn. Nikki Rogers reported that Chelsea Dodd is new to MRW and formerly ran the water department for Glasgow. Chelsea will help communities with funding applications, support water and wastewater systems, sampling, help clerks, and help with budgeting and billings as well as meter reading. Chelsea's contact info was added to the meeting chat.

USDA – Rural Development

Steve Troendle reported the interest rate is up as of July 1 is 3 1/8% for poverty level, 4 1/4% for intermediate and 5 1/4% for market rate. He said RD's allocation grant was spent by the time it was announced. There was \$33.5 million funded in water and wastewater projects. \$8 million funded cost overruns. Montana funded \$325,000 more than the state of New York. Steve said Ryan Urbanic is filling in to cover Wyoming and Colorado engineering reviews. Steve's office is down to four specialists in Montana. He announced \$18 million in unfunded applications. Pooling is August 8. Unspent funds will be taken away. Steve requested hard copies of fiscal balance sheets with applications coming into his office.

ARPA

Autumn Coleman announced the W2ASACT web page has been updated and has a cleaner look. She mentioned the funding booklet, formerly the funding table, is viewable on the site. Let Shawna Swanz know if you have updates on the funding booklet. Autumn gave us an overview of the W2ASACT website by sharing her screen. She suggested trying the external links. Anna Miller reminded all of the December 2025 deadline to spend out ARPA funds.

Shawna Swanz announced that over 100 claim payments were processed in June. December 31, 2025, is the deadline to get reimbursement for project invoices. We have 90 days afterward to clean up the projects. Reach out to your ARPA grant manager with questions.

Drinking Water Program

Sandie Koenig with DEQ reported that her bureau closed Fiscal Year End with \$50 million in loans to 24 communities. Sandie said the IUP was updated, and it will be published on the DEQ website this week. Her bureau applied for federal grants – a base grant and two BIL grants. There is one more year available to the state for BIL funds. Sandie announced the hiring of Becca Beam and Marc Golz.

Regional Water Program, DNRC

Rick Duncan reported on work being done near Scobey, Havre, Shelby in the Fort Peck/Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority system. In the Central Montana system, Rick announced water is now in Roundup. There is work ongoing near Melstone, where Sage Grouse habitat is a concern. The Dry Redwater Regional Water Authority is working on funding and a feasibility study. If you have questions on the systems, contact Rick at DNRC.

WMCC

Krista Lammers spoke of a Resource Acceptance System being developed and Heidi Fleury shared a link in the chat. Krista also mentioned a stormwater advisory council, which would develop a roadmap. She thanked all for their hard work and offered to share the WMCC resources. Krista put her contact info in the chat.

Montana Department of Commerce

Erin McKeon will have Lindsey Siebrasse send out an email with some info and changes to their programs at Montana Coal Endowment Program.

W2ASACT Workshops

Autumn Coleman asked all to reach out to her with ideas for future workshops.

Standard Documents

Anna Miller said that Mike Abrahamson with DEQ will follow up at a later date.

Meeting link: https://mt-gov.zoom.us/rec/play/bYgVleM-9WnfvjJynllsZ_QKa3Edjb88kTLe27uSayPb9F05X4hSG0oK0G9pFAsyB_9RyeOHZakh9GZM.nbHJW9ldc3R1n9Dy

Passcode: 6U!m@5eq

Adjournment at 1135.

Next Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday October 14, 2025, in the first floor Montana Conference room at DNRC.

Acronyms:

AIS – American Iron & Steel
 APE – Advanced Pump & Equipment
 ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
 ARRA – American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009
 AWWA – American Water Works Association
 BABA – Build America, Buy American
 BIL – Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
 BOI – Montana Department of Commerce, Board of Investments
 CARDD – Conservation & Resource Development Division, DNRC
 CDBG – Community Development Block Grant Program, MT Department of Commerce
 CMRWA – Central Montana Regional Water Authority
 COVID-19 – Corona Virus 2019
 DEQ – Montana Department of Environmental Quality
 DNRC – Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
 GWE – Great West Engineering
 HDR – HDR Engineering
 HUD – Housing and Urban Development
 IAC – Infrastructure Advisory Commission (ARPA)
 IUP – Intended Use Plan
 KLJ – Kadmas Lee & Jackson Engineering
 LFD – Montana State Legislative Fiscal Division
 MAP – Midwest Assistance Program
 MEPA – Montana Environmental Policy Act
 MISC – Montana Invasive Species Council
 M-M – Morrison - Maierle
 MRWS – Montana Rural Water Systems
 MCEP – See TSEP Montana Coal Endowment Program (formerly Treasure State Endowment Pgm.)
 RATES – Rural & Tribal Environmental Solutions
 RDG – Reclamation Development Grant Program, DNRC
 RRGL – Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program, DNRC
 SRF (DNRC) – Wastewater State Revolving Fund Loan Program
 SWEFC – Southwest Environmental Finance Center at the University of New Mexico
 TSEP – Treasure State Endowment Program, MT Department of Commerce – Now MCEP
 USDA - RD – United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development
 WASACT – Water & Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team, Montana

WMCC – Western Montana Conservation Commission (from Flathead Basin Commission and Upper Columbia Conservation Commission)
WRF (DNRC) – Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program