

DRAFT W2ASACT MEETING NOTES

Meeting on April 9, 2024, 10 am to 12 pm

Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, 1539 11th Ave, Helena, Montana
First Floor CM Russell Conference Room and Zoom**Zoom Meeting participants:**

1	Anna Miller & Denise Cook, DNRC	11	Lindsay Siebrasse, Commerce, MT
2	Autumn Coleman, DNRC	12	Lindsay Volpe, DNRC
3	David Larson, DNRC	13	Lindsey Glastetter, DNRC
4	Erin McKeon, Commerce, MT	14	Matt Blank, Commerce, MT
5	Jessi Finstad, DNRC	15	Melissa Downing, DNRC
6	John Camden, MRWS	16	Michelle McNamee, DNRC
7	Katherine Certalic, DNRC	17	Rick Duncan, DNRC
8	Ki-Ai Pierson, Great West Eng	18	Scott Miller, DNRC
9	Kylee Hughes, DNRC	19	Seth Shteir, DNRC
10	Laura Gundlach, Morrison Maierle	20	Sonja Hoeglund, DNRC

At DNRC:

Anna Miller, DNRC

Denise Cook, DNRC

Nina Denny, DNRC

Jake Goettle, DEQ

Lexi Laird, DNRC

Sandie Koenig, DEQ

Rebecca Shaw-Quinones, Interstate Eng

Lindsay Volpe, DNRC

Shawna Swanz, 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 Plan

BOI – Montana Department of Commerce, Board of Investments

CARD – 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
MRWS – Montana Rural Water Systems
MCEP – See TSEP
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
TSEP – Treasure State Endowment Program, MT Department of Commerce – Now MSEP
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

Call to Order, Sign-in Sheet, Agenda Changes

Anna Miller called the scheduled meeting of the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W2ASACT) to order at 10:04 am, on Tuesday, April 9, 2024. Anna went over the agenda and asked those in attendance to introduce themselves. The draft minutes from the April 9, 2024, meeting, which were distributed to those present at DNRC and posted to the WASACT website, were approved and adopted by those attending with no revisions. There were no changes made to today's agenda. There were 9 attendees in the room. According to the Zoom report, there were a total of 20 participants on the meeting.

Renewable Resource Grants – Lindsay Volpe

Grant applications are due May 15. Those interested may apply in Submittables. The application fee is \$250. Applications must be in electronic copy and a hard copy. Lindsay has already received letters of support.

Lindsay added that Planning Grants are out now. Those are due April 30. They can be backdated to July 1. Anna added that this can include funding to update a PER, sample planning and to update inventories. Lindsay added surveys and studies are eligible for planning grant funds. There is \$40,000 maximum for PERs. Grant application are open to the end of April.

There is also a Technical Assistance program – you can get 20 hours at \$150/hour. Apply for this in Submittables. DNRC awards the funding and pays the engineer. Autumn noted that there are many communities that need help, including local governments, water & sewer districts and HOA's are eligible for this assistance.

RRGL Loan & List

Lindsay said that people are doing a great job getting contracts out. Projects from last biennium – they are working on close out old projects. We do see feedback on claim payment timing. We have money moving and do well to get it out to communities.

Montana Rural Water Conference - John Camden

John said the March 2024 conference was a success. He thanked all those who were speakers. The 2025 MRWS conference will be March 12, 13 & 14. MRWS is interviewing for the next Executive Director for MRWS. Some staff members are heading to Michigan in June for a conference. In September there is a national water conference in Georgia.

USDA Rural Development – No representatives present

SRF Program

Sandie Koenig said her office is in the process of putting together the FY 2025 IUP. You can submit surveys to list your project. The BIL supplement and Emerging Contaminants funding have separate surveys for projects. The Federal fiscal Year 2024 grants are being applied for. The Technical Assistance program for Lead Service lines helps communities who reach out, get connected to an engineer. It is free to communities for help with lead service line inventory. DEQ has received 125 applications – these inventories are required by the EPA. They are due in October 2024.

Anna added to contact Greg Montgomery at DEQ or Susan Brurud at Department of Commerce for help. Anna asked if you can get funding to plan for mitigation of lead service lines and Sandie said yes. Once inventory is done, money can be used for mitigation. Th EPA is looking at getting this done. Rebecca asked if there is a plan for uploading documents and Sandie said yes. You should be able to move to the next phase. Anna added that Mike Abrahamson is working on the wastewater program IUP – he needs to know your project.

ARPA Update

Auditors are looking at the program. Michelle welcomed Lexi Laird to the program. Ask any of the ARPA grant managers when you have questions. Awards are on our website. Rachel, a new compliance specialist was hired for the ARPA program.

Autumn noted the recent interview Anna did with KTVH at Montana Rural Water Conference. It was on the Water Tasting Contest.

Michelle said her bureau is fully staffed. They are working on Quarterly reports that are due. They are getting tons of reimbursement requests. Anna asked if there are trainings to help folks and Michelle said yes. In January and April, there were training courses on reimbursements and the project closeout process. Trainings are posted on the ARPA website. The next training may be this summer. If interested in the ARPA newsletter, see Katheine Certalic. The next one should be in May. Michelle and Shawna will be at the Municipal Institute meetings in May.

Autumn reminded all the by 12/31/2025 ARPA money must be spent out. Anna added to get your quarterly reports done and have your documents ready. We have Federal auditors looking at ARPA. And Legislative auditors are also looking at ARPA. Ther may be auditors looking at your books. There is still money being rolled out for EPA grants.

Regional Water Update – Rick Duncan

Fort Peck / Dry Prairie - The Fort Peck Tribes are working on branch mains and service connections in NW quarter of the reservation system. Phase 3 is scheduled to be complete by end of 2024; Phase 4 construction will start near the end of 2024. The water treatment plant operators are sampling for total dissolved solids from the Missouri and Milk River sources. They want to be able to store adequate quantities of treatment chemicals on site, so that they can anticipate the need to adjust chemical concentrations before an event occurs, rather than reacting to that event after it begins.

Dry Prairie is waiting to hear from Reclamation, to find out whether The Pines addition construction will be funded by USBR. Work is proceeding on northern tier Opheim main line in north Valley County through Dawson and NW Sheridan County. New reservoirs – getting ready for construction of above-ground water storage tanks.

Rocky Boys / North Central Montana – Chippewa Cree Tribe working on recertified construction crew boss/operator to be second pipeline installation crew. Will be working on Core Pipeline Segment 4 and start on Segment 5 during the 2024

construction season. Plan to de-water in portions of the construction zone due to high groundwater may cost up to \$3 Million. Will update as info becomes available.

North Central is waiting on DNRC grant to pass through to City of Shelby for additional work on the Shelby wellfield. The regional water treatment plant near Tiber Dam has had a hold placed on construction of second phase to supply water to the non-Core system. Early summer 2024 there will be more info. There is work being done on Power-Teton County District water supply as to the preferred method on how to get them water – current plan is to do two horizontal wells. There is a contested case hearing to be scheduled regarding the water rights for this means of supply.

Central Montana RWA – Musselshell-Judith Regional Water System

Progress through the winter – crews on Phase 2A is different from other phases but the entire segment is expected to be online by the end of 2024. Phase 4 Roundup to Melstone – this will connect at least one Hutterite Colony. The next phase is the mainline to Broadview, through Lavina – 3A or 3B – plans are currently in preliminary stage, as the Authority works to put together funding. Anna asked about Ryegate as there are a number of communities with Emerging Contaminants. There is funding to rectify – working with both Department of Commerce and DEQ to get them help.

Rick said Wednesday morning there is a call on Phase 2 pipeline construction updates. For new Wells 4 and 5 in the Ubet wellfield west of Judith Gap, there are calls every Thursday morning. By the end of April work is scheduled be complete on Well 4. If you want to be on site, coordinate with Great West Engineering or Reclamation.

Dry Redwater – the contractor for the US Bureau of Reclamation is finishing work on the preliminary feasibility study to determine size of the regional system, cost and other details. For the Authority's next project, they plan to proceed to next construction phase HWY 2 project – water source from City of Sidney to rural subdivisions and other customers in Richland County.

MRWS Conf – Workshops

Autumn said she met with the League of Cities and Towns. She and Steve Troendle – talked about doing similar training at their conference. No time slots were left at West Yellowstone. Will do additional follow-up with public works directors. Want to do similar training to WASACT workshop. Anna said let us know of suggestions on the workshop. Jodi who was with the City of Choteau – now on staff at League of Cities and Towns. Clerk School May 6 – ARPA will talk. Anna will be there with Dorsey & Whitney.

Uniform App

David had no updates on the Uniform Application. There is \$100,000 per biennium for private grants and \$58,000 left. Much funding is going to a private septic project in Livingston. Emergency grants have \$300,000 of funding. Seven applications this biennium. \$182,000 left in Emergency grant program. Anna asked if he is working with Malta on wastewater mains. David replied yes as they collapsed. They caught it and got a bypass temporarily. We are going to help them with a permanent fix. David said they were able to find pipe, which helped. He also has a project in Shelby, old pipe failed and they are replacing distribution lines and mains.

Website

If you have additions or corrections ask Melissa or Denise.

Congressional Update

Congress passed budget for 2023/2024. September 30 is the end of Federal fiscal year.

End of updates

Lindsay introduced Nina Denny. She will work out of Belgrade. She will work with the RRGL program. Nina worked with RBNC and is excited to be involved with Resource management. Lexi Laird who came from DPHHS is looking forward to getting more involved in environmental management. She is an ARPA grant manager.

Anna reminded all of the Planning Grants – get them in by April 30.

Also the Legislature will be in session in January – 2025 is coming soon.

Anna thanked all those who attended. The next meeting is tentatively set for Tuesday, July 9, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 11:02.

Minutes taken by Denise Cook, reviewed by Anna Miller, to be approved/adopted at the WASACT meeting on July 9, 2024.