



Let's Keep Talking About Our River

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"In the nine great trout states of the western United States, it would be difficult to find a single stream that exceeds the overall quality of the Big Hole River. It ... rises at high altitude and flows clear and cold through wide valleys and narrow canyons, seldom presenting similar water or scenery throughout its entire 150 fascinating miles." George F. Grant

In a few simple words, George Grant captures the essence of the Big Hole River that has, in turn, captured the hearts and dedication of so many who visit to fish its clear, cold waters or who have stayed to settle along its banks.

Many have explored in depth each of those 150 fascinating miles, while others breeze by as they go about their daily lives, pausing for a moment to refresh themselves with the sights and sounds that 'our' river offers.

The overall quality of the Big Hole River is not a condition that we can take for granted. There are many local, state, and national organizations that are working together to ensure that quality does not degrade as have so many other rivers in our region and throughout the country.

Each of these organizations – whether private, non-profit, academic, or governmental – contribute their specialized understanding and knowledge of the river as well as the voices of the community they represent.

And, it is the community that will, in the end, determine the fate of this beautiful river.

The more voices that are added to the community discussion and the more who show their points of view, the more clearly we will see the river in all its aspects. The questions that are being asked right now are: What is valuable to us about the Big Hole River? Can we take the long-term view? How do we want it to look in 10 ... 50 ... 100 years? What tools are available to our community to reach our goals? What are the risks we face? How do we manage the river and surrounding watershed?

Recently, Karin Boyd of Applied Geomorphology, Inc. spoke to citizen groups gathered in Wise River, Jackson, and Twin Bridges. The discussions centered around floodplains, avulsions, and channel migrations as well as the use of mapping for managing the river as a dynamic system.

At the end of the month, a second set of community discussions will cover the layers of legal standards from the point of view of FEMA, flood insurance requirements, and governing agencies. All these influence how the communities choose to develop (or not develop) within the watershed. Also influencing development is the issue of groundwater demands such as wells and septic systems.



The Big Hole Watershed Committee invites you to participate in the next set of educational and discussion forums. It is our mission to seek understanding and agreement among the individuals and groups with diverse viewpoints on water use and management in the Big Hole watershed. The group is committed to fostering the ability of the local community to create effective solutions and to seek long-term solutions based on sound information.

The meetings will be held 6:30 pm on Monday, June 29 at the Wisdom Community Center ; Tuesday, June 30 at 11:30 am at the Wise River Community Center ;and 6:30 pm at the Twin Bridges School.

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