



**Big Hole Watershed Committee**  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
*Wednesday, September 16, 2009 – 7:00 p.m.*  
Divide Grange Hall

**In Attendance:**

Andrew Hanson, outfitter; Ann Schwend, DNRC; Art Christenson, BCD; Billie Reynolds; Clyde Erickson; Craig Fellin, outfitter; Dave Amman, DNRC; Don Jones, rancher; Doris Fischer; Emma MacKenzie, BHWC; Erik Kalsta, rancher; Garth Haugland, Beaverhead Country Commissioner; Hans Humbert, rancher; Jeanne Caddy, BHWWC; Jeff Everett, USFWS; Jim Hagenbarth, rancher; John Peck; John Ray; Kevin Brown, BHWC; Kevin McNellis; Kristin Manas; Laurie Hagenbarth; Liz Jones, rancher; Mark Kelley, DEQ; Marty Hovan, BSB Water; Mike Roberts, DNRC; Noorjahan Parwana, BHWC; Pat Bradley; Phil Eastly; Rebecca Ramsey, Ruby Valley Watershed Council; Robert Olson, GGTU; Roberta Ray; Roger Williams, Ruby Valley Watershed Council; Russ Riebe, USFS; Scott Reynolds, GGTU; Shane Vatland, MSU-Bozeman; Steve Running; U of M.

**Introductions/Review of Minutes**

Introductions were made and the August 2009 minutes were reviewed and accepted. Kevin Brown, who was recently hired as the next Executive Director of BHWC was introduced to the group. Members of the Ruby Watershed Council were also welcomed to the meeting.

**Precipitation and Stream Flow Report**

Dave Amman handed out the most recent report (attached to minutes). He noted that in a comparison to stream flows from the last three years on September 15<sup>th</sup>, the flow was not as good this year due to the lack of precipitation over the summer. Mike Roberts discussed the upper basin and also noted the effects of the low precipitation on flow targets. He noted that all CCAA signed landowners have been in agreement and that there has also been some voluntary diversion shut-downs. All the new DNRC gages are on site – they are still working on adjusting two of them. The Saginaw Bridge gage has been moved due to beaver activity, and may need to be moved again. (Note: there is a link to the river flow information on the Resources page at [www.bhwc.org](http://www.bhwc.org)).

**PRESENTATION**

Dr. Steve Running, Professor/Director, Numerical Terradynamic Simulating Group (NTSG), College of Forestry & Conservation, University of Montana, Missoula, and co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, presented a PowerPoint about Climate Change – Water & Fire in Montana. The PowerPoint is available to anyone interested as a pdf file. Please contact Emma ([info@bhwc.org](mailto:info@bhwc.org)) to get a copy.

Dr. Running opened his presentation by noting that the Big Hole community is ahead of the curve compared to most of the region in terms of working together and is ready for the next step: strategic thinking and progressive management of the watershed.

The first part of the presentation was a general review of the science of climate change and the second part focused more particularly on the effects that can be expected in Montana which include:

- Rises in minimum and maximum mean temperatures
- Decreases in snowfall and earlier melting of winter snowpack
- Lower flow for all rivers and more water stress day
- Longer frost-free growing season
- Increases in forest fires

Questions included:

- Is there a difference between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from wood or oil/gas? Yes, we gain time by using above ground (wood) sources rather than below ground (oil) sources.
- What about ocean fertilization? The theory was considered very credible until the experimentation stage when the effects lasted less than two weeks.
- Isn't this a cycle that we're going through? Climate scientists have looked every which way, and we have passed – by a decade or more – the expectation of a downturn. Given current understanding, scientists cannot explain it any other way.
- The earth has gone through phases where there is no ice, won't the ice melt create equilibrium? Not for the survival of the current life on earth. Earth will survive – the question is, will we?
- What about risk from the methane from the permafrost melt? Yes, there is carbon frozen in the arctic and will be released as methane which will add to the problem.
- What about using nuclear energy rather than fossil fuel? There are designs that would solve the nuclear waste problem and use a greater percentage of energy available in the fuel rods. This is the reprocessing as is used for nuclear weapons and it is dangerous, politically.
- What about the Antarctic ice cap? That continent has a complicated topography ranging from sea level to mountains over 9,000 feet. There are areas that are warming and the glaciers are calving – in the center, the hyper-cold area are getting snow fall.

Dr. Running concluded by suggesting that we continue to keep informed, to ask questions, and begin to plan for the future.

### **Committee reports**

- Steering Committee

There was no report this month.

- Weed Working Group

Jeanne Caddy reported on the Weed Whacker Ball held on September 12<sup>th</sup>. She considered it a success. The money raised was approximately \$5,000 less than 2008,

but was still good given the current economy. Liz Jones, Ray Weaver, and their team fed 350 people who had a great time. Noorjahan presented Jeanne with flowers.

- Wildlife Working Group

Jim Hagenbarth reminded the group that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6pm, at the Jackson School. The topics will include elk, brucellosis, low calf recruitment in the Bitterroots, changes in hunting districts and rules for elk, moose, and antelope, and some discussion regarding the wolf hunt.

- Land Use Planning

Noorjahan reported that the Land Use Planning group is in a holding patterns and will resume meeting later in the autumn.

### **New Business**

Watershed Tour: Noorjahan noted that Friday, October 2 is the date set for the annual watershed tour. Jeanne will be organizing. The focus will be on the upper Big Hole.

### **Determine Future Agendas**

Noorjahan reported that Senator Tester's staff will not be available to present on the Forest Jobs Bill in October and may be available in January.

Marty Hovan offered to present in October, with engineers from DOWL HKM, on the diversion dam and water plant, talk about the new design and answer questions. The group approved this for the October agenda.

Shane Vatland will present in November on the PIT tag study. The group will decide on whether to hold a December meeting. Senator Tester's staff may present in January and February is the annual meeting.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.