



Big Hole Watershed Committee
Monthly Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2009 – 6:30 pm
Divide Grange Hall

In Attendance Steve Parker, BHRF; Mike Bias, BHRF; Garth Haugland, Bvhd Co; Art Christensen, Bvhd CD; Andrew Hanson, Outfitters/Guides; John Reinhardt, Rancher; George Trischman, Rancher; Dave Amman, DNRC; Steve Armingier, BLM; Harold Peterson, Rancher; Noorjahan Parwana, BHWC; Russ Riebe, USFS; Lim Hagenbarth, Rancher; Jean Caddy, BHWWC; Jami Murdoch, BHWC/TMDL; Bill Cain, BHWC; Marty Hovan, BSB Water; John Dolling, Rancher; Jim Olsen, MFWP; Darren Olsen, USFS; John Childs, Childs Geoscience; Chad Walbe, Childs Geoscience; John Peck, EPESP; Randy Smith, Rancher; Brad Borst, MWA; John Trudnowski, Skyline Sportsmen; Bill Anderson, Anderson Engineering; Mark Kambich, Rancher

Review of November Minutes No changes – Note- The December meeting of the BHWC was cancelled so that participants could attend the Annual meeting of the Missouri Headwaters Partnership (including Big Hole, Beaverhead, Ruby Jefferson, Lower Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, Blue Water Task Force).

Big Hole Basin Snowpack Update (presented by Dave Amman)
Snowpack conditions in the Big Hole look good with all SNOTEL sites showing above normal snow water despite recent warmer and dry weather. Overall basin snow water looks great at this time. Peak snow water conditions typically occur in mid to late April in the Big Hole Basin and we are about half way through the typical accumulation period.

The CPC forecast (Jan 15) predicts near normal air temperatures and precipitation through next fall, except for warmer temperatures and below normal precipitation in June and July.

Big Hole Basin Approximate Snow Water Equivalent (Percent of normal):
Calvert Creek and Saddle Mountain have the lowest percentage of normal in the basin at 104%.
Mule Creek has the highest percentage of normal at 129%
Basin-wide percent of Normal is 114%

Big Hole Drought Management Plan

There was brief discussion about last year's experience with the Drought Management Plan. Because of good snowpack and adequate flows last summer, there was little controversy and few recommendations for change to the DMP are anticipated. The DMP Committee will meet in early February and make recommendations to the BHWC about any changes, if any. Parwana will organize the meeting. If anyone is interested in

participating on the DMP Committee, call Parwana at 782-3682 or email nparwana@bhwc.org.

BHWC Committee Reports

Weed Committee – Jeanne Caddy – The Weed Committee signed their contract agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation so they can begin their work on the Divide Creek Weed Management Area. They have been waiting for this grant to come through for a couple years now.

Jeanne applied for a DEQ minigrant to help implement a fishermen's weed education program. She will know if the funding comes through by the end of February.

The Weed Committee is working with Beaverhead County on a Five Star grant. Their proposal will address an oxeye daisy infestation up the Wise River Road.

Wildlife Committee – Jim Hagenbarth and Mark Kambich – The Wildlife Committee met for the second time on January 13. Purpose of the meeting was to hear from similar groups regarding community based wildlife management efforts, discuss the nuts and bolts of their programs, analyze this model for the BHWC Wildlife Group consideration and learn more about elk and wolf interactions in the Madison/Yellowstone Area. The BHWC Wildlife Committee will focus primarily on elk management and habitat.

John Scully and Jeff Klein shared the process the Madison Valley Elk Management Group went through to create a community organization. A great deal of time was spent gathering accurate information on elk numbers and developing plans that dealt with agency cooperation, access to private land, herd movement and management and predator impact on herd movement. They developed a plan for hunter access and herd management. Brucellosis infection of the elk herd is an upcoming management issue.

Kurt Alt, Regional Wildlife Manager with FWP, presented the Madison Valley Elk Dispersion Study.

The Wildlife Committee is seeking interested, active hunters and sportsman organizations to participate on the committee.

TMDL Report (Jami Murdoch, BHWC TMDL Coordinator)

The lower and middle TMDL is coming up for public review process. This area includes the Big Hole River from Pintlar Creek to the mouth. A Technical Review of TMDL will occur on January 29, 2009, from 1:30 pm-3:30 pm at the Forest Service Conference Room, 1820 Meadow Lark Lane, Butte, MT.

On February 4, 2009, there will be a Stakeholder Review meeting at Reichle School near Glen from 6:30 pm-8:30 pm.

Finally, a Public Comment meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 18, 2009 from 3:30 to 5:30

The draft TMDL document is available on the BHWC website – www.bhwc.org –

Public comment may be submitted to DEQ from February 16 through March 20, 2009. Comments can be sent to Darrin Kron at DEQ, 1520 East Sixth Ave, P.O. Box 200901m Helena MT 59620.

New Business

Several grants are currently under review for funding. DNRC Renewable Resource Grant place high and is anticipated to be supported. This grant is for the Kalsta Spring Creek Project. Parwana and BH Coperative Ditch members testified in favor of the DNRC Resource Development Grant at the legislature today. Parwana made a presentation this morning on the 319 grant proposal for upper Big Hole activities including monitoring and Governor Creek project. On Friday, Parwana and Olsen will make presentations for the MFWP Future Fisheries Grant proposals submitted for Kalsta Spring Creek and Big Hole Cooperative Ditch Projects. Olsen is working with MFWP to try to dedicate State Wildlife Grant funding toward the Pendergast-Spiers-McCullough Ditch project. That funding must be used by June. We are waiting to hear for the program administrator on that funding.

February Agenda

The February meeting is the BHWC annual meeting. Work plans, budgets, and policies will be discussed. In addition the Drought Management Plan Committee will make recommendations for the DMP.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm