

**BHWC Wildlife Working Group Minutes**  
**Kick-off Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 12, 2008**  
**Search and Rescue Building**  
**1116 Highway 41, Dillon, MT**  
**6:00 – 8:30**

Co-Chairs – Jim Hagenbarth and Mark Kambich

**Introductory Statements:**

The BHWC is a collaborative community group established in 1995. The purpose of the BHWC is to seek understanding of the river and agreement among individuals and groups with diverse viewpoints on water use and management in the Big Hole watershed. There are 22 governing members representing all interests. This is a solutions based group that comes to decision by consensus. Consensus is vital because it engenders unity and in unity there is power. This group would be dealing with property rights from Jackson to Twin Bridges. There must be landowner support for any initiative to be successful.

**Purpose of Wildlife Working Group:**

The general public has expressed an interest in dealing with wildlife issues in the Big Hole Watershed. It is important to keep in mind that the Big Hole is the focus of this group which would be a stand-alone committee.

Some of the questions this group might wrestle with are:

- Are we looking at big game or at all wildlife?
- Are we looking at broad management (for example corridors affecting land use) or specific management (for example hunting regulations)?
- What is our scope?

Participants were each asked to describe their interests or concerns related to wildlife in the Big Hole Watershed.

**INTERESTS OR CONCERNS**

MISTI 500kV Power line corridor proposal	Oil and gas leasing and development
Cooperative problem solving	Wolf Management Plan
Elk Management – e.g. population management; behavior; distribution	Other species including big horn sheep, deer, grizzly, antelope
Fractured Habitat	Impacts of other species on grayling
Hunter/Landowner relationships	Economic costs of wildlife on ranching
“Sanctuary” properties – How to encourage absentee landowners to recognize their management impacts on neighbors	More landowner (local stakeholder?) involvement in developing hunting regulations
Liberalize hunting season	Hunting management
Incorporate science in management decisions taking larger landscape into consideration	Management across property boundaries
Grazing allotments	Encourage more ecological understanding
Disease – especially Brucellosis and inter-species transmission	Wildlife habitat on public lands
Building bridges among interests	How to manage wildlife populations to benefit all (including wildlife)
Wildlife damage hunts	

It might be useful to investigate scenarios that are already working. Devil’s Kitchen, north of Helena, was held up as an example of a wildlife working group that has been successful.

Wildlife management decisions are being made in the Madison Valley that may affect what happens in the Big Hole.

**What interests or participants should be involved?**

Ranchers; Agencies (FWP, BLM); *US Forest Service; US Fish and Wildlife Service;*  
 Absentee landowners; *Montana Wildlife Federation;*  
 BOA; *Sportsmen’s groups;*  
*Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation;* *Montana Wilderness Association (and other environmental interests?);*  
 Big Hole groups including BHWC and BHRF;  
 Guides and outfitters: *County Commissioners should be informed of our activities.*

*(italics indicates interests that have not yet been invited or were not able to be present for the kick-off meeting).*

**Interest-level Gauged:**

Participants indicated a desire to move forward. There must be accomplishment to maintain interest. Group agreed to meet once a month for a few months to begin with.

**Next meeting will be 6:00; Tuesday, January 13, 2009 in Dillon.**

Potential meeting locations in Dillon:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Contact Name</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>	<b>Note</b>
Search and Rescue	Patti Odazc (Bvhd Co)	406.683.3750	No charge- Get combination from Patti
4-H Building	Shannon	406.683.3785	Cost \$25 for non-profit – Must arrange for key – They would be willing to cut a key for us if we met there regularly
YMCA		406.683.9622	Meeting room free to non-profits – max 25 people – close at 8:00 pm – Must fill out paper work prior to each meeting ahead of time.

**Tasks and Responsibilities:**

1. Invite Beaverhead watershed group to participate but clarify that our mission is related to the Big Hole – Parwana –
2. Prepare Minutes – Parwana –
3. Prepare agenda for next meeting – Hagenbarth –
4. Distribute minutes and agenda to Wildlife Working Group and arrange for meeting space for next meeting – Parwana –

**Announcements:**

Southwest Montana watershed groups including Big Hole, Beaverhead, Ruby, Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin, will have a common meeting on Tuesday, December 4 at Twin Bridges School Pot luck begins at 6:00 pm. Meeting begins at 7:00 pm. Mary Sexton, Director of Montana Department of Natural “Resources Conservation (DNRC) will be the keynote speaker. She will focus her discussion on oil and gas leasing I southwest Montana. All are encouraged to attend.

Beaverhead Outdoors Association is having their annual fundraiser on January 17 at Dillon Elks Lodge, beginning at 5:30. Cost is \$15 which includes annual membership and prime rib dinner. Funds raised support many resource improvement activities including fencing projects and development and improvement of the Kid’s Fish Pond.