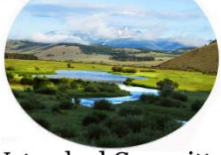


Big Hole



Watershed Committee

Big Hole Watershed Committee

Monthly Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2014 – 7:00 pm
Wise River Community Building

In Attendance

Holly Asmuth, Resident; Jen Downing BHWC; Emily Sorenson, speaker from Grizzly, Wolf and Raptor Discovery Center - West Yellowstone; Mike Wilkinson, Resident; Kris Inman, Wildlife Conservation Society; Mark Wilcox, Butte-Silver Bow/Weed Committee; Dick Osier, Resident; Jim Carpita, Beaverhead County; Liz Jones, Rancher; Erik & Lars Kalsta, Rancher; Greg Smith, Rancher; Roy Morris; George Grant Trout Unlimited; Jim Hagenbarth, Vice Chairman/Rancher; Garth Haugland, Beaverhead County; Kim Snodgrass, Water & Environmental Technologies.

Introductions *Attendees introduced themselves.*

Reports

Streamflow Report - Sent via Mike Roberts, DNRC (see attached)

- All stations are above normal due to precipitation, cooler weather
- Very dry July with the above average snowpack and runoff, streamflows dropped precipitously, especially in the upper basin.

Drought Management Plan Status Report - Jen Downing

- CCAA and DMP flow targets were hit at the Wisdom gage for Five days in early August. Thanks to landowners implementing CCAA plan and precipitation flows rebounded to above target levels.
- Other than a couple occasions in Section I/Wisdom, no DMP conservation targets were hit, therefore no river closures of fish restrictions in entire river all season for either flow or temperature!

Directors Report - Jen Downing

- News Release this week 8/19: USFWS announces Arctic Grayling does not warrant protection Under Endangered Species Act due to conservation partnerships including Big Hole Watershed Committee. Big Hole Watershed received Award for efforts in protecting the grayling. USFWS will present at the October BHWC meeting to talk about what happens next.
- In June, Eric Kalsta- was added to the BHWC Governing Board
- Tip the Big Hole in June went well, many guides donated.
- California Creek Project on Mount Haggin underway. There is already success with sediment reduction due to gully check dams. Riparian work expected Fall 2014/Spring 2015.
- French Creek project in process. BHWC submitted request \$295,000 for restoration under the DEQ 319 program. Answer expected November 2014.
- In July, Governor Bullock applauded the BHWC for their work on drought resilience wants others to follow BHWC example in working together during a press conference announcing a new agency Drought Resiliency Partnership. The partnership will highlight Upper Missouri work.
- Technical improvements continue - new online donations and contact management software in place.
- BHWC hiring new coordinator, past coordinator no longer with us.
- BHWC was awarded a Big Sky Corps position beginning January 2015. This member will work full time for 10.5 months and review and assess past & future water quality projects.

Steering Committee - Jim Hagenbarth

- NA

Wildlife Committee – Jim Hagenbarth & Jen Downing

- Ranger Rider program (7 allotments) in place through September 30. Rider documented and notified producer of wolves in cattle. No livestock loss occurred.
- Looking at composting program and/or carcass removal in Jackson.

Land Use Planning Committee - Jen Downing

- DNRC grant for incentive program startup denied.
- Big Hole River Floodplain Maps are now approved and considered final by state. Next step is state adoption to occur this fall.

Weed Committee – Mark Wilcox

- Weed Whackers Ball , September, 13th at Wise River Community Building. Ticket sales look good, donations are coming in.
- Weed growth has banner year for noxious weeds due to great weather conditions.
- In Butte-Silver Bow, non-compliance letters out to city residents again and many residents are reporting non-compliance issues or asking questions. Good news is the community is recognizing that there is a problem. When a non compliance /letter is issued/then certified letter/10 day period to contact weed control/ then if no compliance weed control will spray at their cost o \$200.00 an hour that they will be charged on their tax bill. Important to Big Hole because of high volume of recreationists that come from Butte = Seed source.

Presentation: Montana Pelicans (Part of Wildlife Speaker Series, sponsored by WCS)

Presenter: Emily Sorenson, Grizzly, Wolf, and Raptor Discovery Center, West Yellowstone, an educational non-profit organization.

Montana Pelicans are American White Pelicans. Some say they were not in the Big Hole Valley 30 years ago. Full grown, can be 10 -30 pounds in weight with 8 1/2 ft - 9 ft wing span. They eat 2 to 5 pounds of fish a day. During the breeding season (mid April thru September) may produce 1-2 eggs. Usually one egg survives. At 10 week old fledglings can fly and will stay in breeding colonies on the ground for about 3 1/2 months. Colonies are large. One of their breeding grounds are at Canyon Ferry. They will hunt in groups and often forage at night. They may fly 100 miles for food. Life span is 20 years. Pelicans will often hunt schools of fish and work together as a team. Pelicans winter in Florida & Mexico.

New Business – none

Upcoming Meetings

- September 17, 7pm @ Divide Grange: Topic: Big Hole River Fishery Report, Presented by Jim Olsen, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
- October 15, 7pm @ Divide Grange. Topic: 2014 USFWS Arctic Grayling Decision - Why, How and What Happens Next? Presented by Jim Boyd, USFWS.
- November 19, 2014, 6pm @ Divide Grange. Topic: MSU State of the College Report - Programs and Projects of Interest to BHWC. Presented by MSU.

Adjourn

Streamflow Report - August 2014

Mike Roberts, Hydrologist, DNRC

At this time of the year we are typically experiencing the lowest river flows of the irrigation season. All stations at this time are above DMP and CCAA flow targets. As we move into September, shorter days, cooler nights, irrigation diversion reduction, reduced basin evapotranspiration, and the potential for "equinox" storms contributing moisture to the system all potentially play a role in recovery of streamflows.

After a very dry July following an above average snowpack and runoff, streamflows dropped precipitously, especially in the upper basin. CCAA and DMP flow targets were hit at the Wisdom gage for five days in early August. Thanks to landowners implementing CCAA site plans and recent valley precipitation, flows rebounded to above target levels.

		<u>Median</u>	<u>Flow (cfs)</u>			
06023500	Big Hole River near Jackson MT	23.0	28	1.19	--	08/19 07:15 MDT
06023800	Big Hole River ab Spring Creek nr Jackson MT	27.0	23	2.30	--	08/19 08:00 MDT
06024020	Big Hole River at Miner Creek nr Jackson MT	73.0	74	1.14	--	08/19 07:15 MDT
06024450	Big Hole River bl Big Lake Cr at Wisdom MT	27.0	64	2.40	14.1	08/19 07:45 MDT
06024540	Big Hole River bl Mudd Cr nr Wisdom MT	104	123	3.02	--	08/19 07:30 MDT
06024580	Big Hole River near Wise River MT	244	361	2.91	14.5	08/19 07:30 MDT
06025250	Big Hole River at Maiden Rock nr Divide MT	329	495	3.22	15.2	08/19 07:45 MDT
06025500	Big Hole River near Melrose MT	345	502	1.85	15.6	08/19 07:15 MDT
06026210	Big Hole River near Glen MT	230	624	2.69	16.8	08/19 07:30 MDT
06026420	Big Hole R bl Hamilton Ditch nr Twin Bridges, MT	140	375	1.59	17.4	08/19 07:30 MDT

Forecast: The short-term forecast is for unsettled conditions bringing cooler and wetter than average conditions for the next week to 10 days.