

# Big Hole



Watershed Committee

## **Big Hole Watershed Committee**

Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2012 ~ 7:00 - 9:00pm

Divide Grange Hall

### **In Attendance**

Jen Titus, BHWC; Kevin Brown, BHWC; Jim Hagenbarth, Rancher/CoChair; Doug Finnicum, BSB County; Doug Clark, ADLC; Cindy Ashcraft, Rancher; Dave Ashcraft, Rancher; Steve Luebeck, Sportsman; Scott Reynolds, GGTU; Billie Reynolds; Robert Olsen, GGTU; Russ Riebe, USFS; Erik Kalsta, Rancher; Mike Bias, BHRF; Joe Willauer, Guide; Tanya Rosen, WCS; Kris Inman, WCS; Jennifer Boyer, FutureWest; Harold Peterson, Rancher; Ray Weaver, Rancher; Jim Magee, USFWS; Liz Jones, Rancher; Randy Smith, Rancher/Chair; Bill Cain, Secretary; Mike Roberts, DNRC; Russ, DNRC; Rick Hartz, BVD County; Garth Haugland, BVD County

### **Introduction**

Attendees introduced themselves. May meeting minutes approved.

### **Stream Flow Report and Drought - Mike Roberts, DNRC**

#### *PowerPoint Presentation*

Snowpack peak was 75% of average and similar to 2007. Big Hole and Jefferson watersheds were the worst in the state. Valley precipitation for the Dillon area is 64% of average, Wisdom is 97% of average. Water supply predictions from NRCS suggest the Big Hole River will reach low flows this year. Climate predictions for the summer are hot and dry conditions. The presentation also included information from Erin Towlers climate modeling for comparison. The hydrograph shows the river reaching peak flows in April, where normally peak flows occur late May or June. Tributaries continue to hold good flows.

The first CCAA landowner plan was signed in 2008. This year flow targets occurred at 60 cfs at the Miner Lakes road. A CCAA success - an e-mail sent to landowners shows an unsolicited spike in river flows as irrigators followed their landowner plans to maintain instream flows.

#### *Big Hole Watershed Committee Drought Management Plan (DMP)*

The DMP was reviewed for history, origination, and DMP reaches with each triggers and actions. The philosophy behind the plan is the BHWC advocating for voluntary and preemptive actions to avoid a state mandated river closure. It is important to recognize the BWHC DMP is voluntary and suggests actions prior to river closure. Montana FWP is the agency that determines and enforces river closures. It is important that the BHWC uses one person for contact with the media to maintain consistent messaging = Randy Smith.

The DMP is implemented through the following:

- BHWC Media contact: Randy Smith
- FWP Contact: Jim Olsen

- Data and actions stem from DNRC: Mike Roberts
- BHWC initiates phone tree, outreach: Jen Titus

The FWP river closure determination is decided by a commission. In the past, the commission has selected someone to be a decision maker if the commission is not able to meet. - Jen to determine if someone is selected for this year and who.

Water users are recommended to document water reductions for support of the DMP. If you need assistance in measuring your water pre & post water reduction, DNRC can help.

The DMP was reviewed in 2012. However, during this meeting and in preparation for this meeting, a number of editing and wording clarifications were identified. We will produce a 2012V2 soon.

## **Reports & New Business**

### *Directors Report:*

Outfitter Representative on the Board: Selected as Joe Willauer, Guide from Twin Bridges. Joe is the head guide at the Stone Fly Inn in Twin Bridges. He has a master's degree in Urban Planning. The Steering Committee recommends Joe for the position and was uncontested at the meeting.

BHWC Finance Report: Copies were available for attendees. Donations are higher this year than in previous years. In moving forward, Jen Titus will assume the Executive Director position with reduced hours (20 hours per week). If there is no change in funding, this will sustain the position until June 2014.

Doug Clark is the new ADLC Planning Director Interim - introduced at the meeting.

This will be Kevin's last meeting as Executive Director. The Steering Committee presented him with accolades and a plaque for this farewell.

### *Project Updates:*

*Wildlife Committee:* The range rider will begin in July and is funded by RAC funds and continue through October. He will patrol the Steele Creek Ranch, Huntley Ranch and Lapham Ranch.

Sage Grouse: Wyoming Governor Mead developed a program to protect core habitat and is leaning on Idaho to join as well. The BLM is attempting to redo their grazing plans to decrease sage grouse impact. Meads program will be part of the BLM package. The Sage Grouse decision for ESA listing is scheduled for 2015.

Dogs: Effort continues to add GPS collars to the dogs to monitor their range. Dogs killed one wolf. More interactions between dogs and wolves are expected later in the summer as pups grow and gopher numbers decrease.

*Weed Committee:* Ray Tillman has agreed to be the WWB Coordinator this year. WWB will be 9/8/12.

**Weed Inventory:** A float to inventory weeds in the Lower Big Hole River is scheduled for 6/26. Mike Bias and Joe Willauer will provide boats.

*Land Use Planning:* Phase II of the floodplain mapping contract will be fulfilled by ATKINS and they are currently doing cross sections for the modeling. A funders tour is scheduled for July 25 that will link with the CCAA tour that same day. July 10: Meeting in Dillon, 1-4pm to discuss the incentive program. A Brainerd Foundation grant is secured to assist with business plan development.

**New Business**

- None

**Future Agendas**

- July 18 - pending drought conditions

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm