



**Big Hole Watershed Committee**  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
*April 15, 2009 – 7:00 pm*  
Divide Grange Hall

**In Attendance**

Andrew Hanson, outfitter; Art Christenson, BCD; Bill Garrison, Garrison Ranches; Cindy McIlveen, BSB; Dan Battleson, MSE-TA; Doug Chandler, Allied Engineering; Emma MacKenzie, BHWC; Erik Kalsta, rancher; Floydena Garrison, Garrison Ranches; Garth Haugland, Bvhd Cnty; Harold Peterson, rancher; Jami Murdock, rancher; Jarod Brabec, Meriwether Ranch; Jeanne Caddy, BHWWC; Jerad Hutchen, Meriwether Ranch; Jim Hagenbarth, rancher; Jim Olsen, FWP; Josh Vincent, GGTU; Larry Hunter; MSE; Lauren Ellingson, Meriweather Ranch; Leslie M Burnett; landowner; Liz Jones, rancher; Marie Garrison, landowner; Marty Bennett; landowner; Marty Hovan, BSB Water; Mike Bias, BHRF; Nick Jaynes, MSE-TA; Noorjahan Parwana, BHWC; Ray Weaver; Steve Parker, BHRF.

**Introductions/Review of Minutes**

Introductions were made and the March minutes were reviewed. No changes were requested in the minutes.

**Precipitation and stream flow report**

Neither Dave Amman nor Mike Roberts of Department of Natural Resources Conservation were available. Noorjahan presented the past month's information noting that the snow pack continues to be good. It has been averaging over 100% throughout the basin. We are supposed to get more snow in the mountains over the next week or so, which bodes well for this summer's flows as long as the weather does not heat up too quickly. The full report is attached to the minutes.

**New Business**

Citizen's Group Presentation- MISTI Power Transmission Line

Marie Garrison and Marty Bennet, who presented at the October 2009 meeting, gave an update on the MISTI power transmission line. The PowerPoint presentation is available to anyone interested. Please contact Emma at [info@bhwc.org](mailto:info@bhwc.org) and she will send them right out.

Questions and comments from the Committee and community members:

- What type of towers will be used?

Of the three towers indicated in the PowerPoint presentation – the Guyed V-steel lattice structure towers are the ones that will be erected. Although underground cables would have less of an EMF impact, the construction and disturbance to the landscape would be greater and they would still need stations throughout the transmission line.

- What are other options available?

There has not been a final decision on the particular route. The route that is being protested in this presentation is one of three proposed routes. The EIS is being written by PBS&J. Concern was voiced that approval of this line would open the door to other similar projects in the future.

- What is the most useful response that we, as individuals, can give?

The recent meeting in Butte was packed – it was not just a few ranchers. The DEQ said they hadn't received any comments and it was pointed out that the community has not been informed. It is important for those who are opposed to this particular route, or to the transmission line being routed through Montana at all, should send their comments to the DEQ. Concerned citizens need to voice their thoughts and ask for other options. It was suggested that the citizen's group contact people in other states who are also being impacted by this transmission line.

- Will the BHWC take a stand on this issue?

Noorjahan will contact the Committee members asking for interest in creating a short-term working group to bring a suggestion to the full Committee at the next meeting.

It was pointed out that the Montana constitution requires a clean and healthy environment. It was also noted that this could have a direct economic impact to the projects that BHWC has been working on in the area.

The Montana DEQ is still taking public comments through their website at:

<http://www.deq.mt.gov/mfs/MSTI/MSTIindex.asp>.

#### Weed Committee Work Plan Update

Jeanne Caddy presented a PowerPoint update on the BHWC Weed Group work plan. The PowerPoint presentation is available to anyone interested. Please contact Emma at [info@bhwc.org](mailto:info@bhwc.org) and she will send them right out.

Questions concerning biological control were raised. Jeanne reported that a test site was developed last year on MCarty Mountain on the Garrison Ranch to test the effectiveness of flea beetles on leafy spurge. The results will be evident in the next few months. The Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee also sponsored a release of weevils on some knapweed at the Butte Montessori School. Erik Kalsta reported the bugs died off. Jeanne and the students from the Divide School will release bugs in September on knapweed located on the Fleecer Game Range as part of the Divide Creek Weed Management Area Project which is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

It was noted that effective results from biological efforts can take a long time and oftentimes are site specific. However, biological control plays a key role in the integrated weed management approach.

#### **Update on Big Hole River Water Transmission Line and Diversion Dam**

Presentation by Cindy McIlveen, BSB Planning Department

The original timeline for replacement of the water transmission line was 10 – 15 years. That has been adjusted to a 3-5 year replacement schedule. The initial plan was to replace sections that were leaking, but now there will be a steady push from south to north replacing each section. There is not was to track how many gallons are lost to leaks, but there is “a lot”.

There is an RFP out now for the diversion dam which will be closed at the end of April. The current dam was built with 100 year old technology and that kind of dam is no longer built right now. They are looking for proposals that are fish friendly and allow a free flowing passage for floating. They are also looking at different possible sites, and are not tied to the site where the dam is currently located. There will be an EIS/EA and the required public process. The goal is to “take water from the river without the river knowing”.

### **Update on Divide Pump Station**

Presentation by Marty Hovan, Butte Silver Bow County Municipal Water Plant Manager.

Marty presented a PowerPoint slide show with images of the current pump station and discussed some of the issues they’ve been dealing with as the dam has been aging and disintegrating. The replacement of the pump station brought up the following issues:

- Ice build up: they have asked the engineers to come up with solutions to this problem since there is no longer anyone at the station 24 hours/day during ice season to break it up.
- Sediment in the settling basin: there is no problem with sediments in the pumps, even in the spring.
- Is that portion of the creek navigable: there was discussion regarding whether or not the river in that area is considered navigable and so, owned by the State of Montana. According to: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/trust/mmb/NAVWATERSLIST2CONNIE.pdf> , the Big Hole River is considered commercially navigable from Steel Creek to Divide and so that portion of the river IS? IS NOT? under the jurisdiction of the state.
- Tours of the old pump house will be given.

### **Old Business**

#### Committee Reports

No Committee Reports were given

#### Community Education Initiative:

Noorjahan reminded the group of the Land Use Planning Forums to be held next week on April 20, 22, and 24.

**Determine May Agenda**

The group requested that Jim McGee and Jim Olsen be invited to present at the May meeting. It is possible that Steve Running will be available to present at the August meeting. Noorjahan asked if anyone in the group would be willing to offer a day of floating to Steve.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.



# BIG HOLE BASIN SNOWPACK UPDATE

April 15, 2009

This morning, snow pack conditions in the Big Hole Basin look great. The major storm today and tonight could contribute up to 2 feet of snow at higher elevations. These late season storms are extremely important to the summer supply outlook. All SNOTEL stations in the Big Hole Basin are at or above normal snow water, and we are within a few weeks of typical peak snow water conditions. The NRCS flow volume forecast will be updated again in a few days. The Climate Prediction Center forecast as of March 19 predicts below-normal precipitation through the fall.

## Percent of Normal Snow Water Equivalent (SWE)

	6- Jan	12- Jan	21- Jan	4- Feb	18- Feb	3-Mar	18- Mar	23- Mar	15-Apr
Barker Lakes	139	136	124	116	108	110	117	119	128
Basin Creek	118	112	107	98	89	87	85	94	102
Bloody Dick	107	124	111	102	93	91	103	108	117
Calvert Creek	105	119	104	102	89	88	98	101	141
Darkhorse Lake	119	133	120	111	100	95	100	101	108
Moose Creek	104	127	110	103	95	91	93	91	99
Mule Creek	127	143	129	120	107	102	106	109	114
Saddle Mtn.	103	117	104	99	89	87	91	91	103
<b>BASIN AVERAGE</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>114</b>

Graphs of Snow Water Equivalent: dark blue line is 2009; green line is 2008; light blue line is 1971-2000 normal accumulation.

