



The purpose of the Big Hole Watershed Committee 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.

Newsletter of the Big Hole Watershed Committee August, 2008

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Letter from the Chairman – Randy Smith



Wow, what a year this has turned out to be! There seems to be enough water to please everyone this year. As I go along the river I see a lot of activity on the water as well as fairly good hay crops. Most importantly, people seem to be happy. It is always nice to have a year when almost everything seems

to go right. With the advent of hotter and drier weather we must all keep in mind the health of the river and its inhabitants.

The Watershed Committee has been busy with the usual activities. That job is easier when there is water. Habitat improvement projects along the river continue to be done. We are learning what works and what doesn't. That is part of life and fitting in with the natural occurrence. We are not in control here so we need to work with nature and use her force whenever we can. I am always mindful of the privilege of living and working in such a beautiful place and leaving it better than I found it.

There has been some irrigation structure work done this year also. Those projects help with water management and will be ongoing over the next few years. If you know of a project that needs to be done, the Committee will try to help. There are numerous granting opportunities as well as cost share if the

projects qualify. If we can lessen the impact on the river by doing these projects then it makes a safer place to live and work.

With a good year come mosquitoes and, of course, weeds! The weed committee has been busy with their projects. I know there have been a lot of Spray Days around the area. Thanks to everyone who has helped and I would encourage everyone to volunteer in the upcoming weed days. Even if you think you won't be any help there is always something for everyone to do. I think we are making a difference and we need to keep after the problem.

We are all facing the pressures of the economy with the high fuel prices being on the mind of everyone. Of course it affects everyone from ranchers to tourists. It also affects the Watershed Committee. We are always trying to secure funding to continue our quest. If you feel like donating we will accept that donation at any time.

As we head into the normally drier part of the year, please remember we have to keep in mind the health of the river as we do what we do in life. Water is so important to everything and we want to use it wisely! Thanks to everyone who works to keep this the last best place.

Randy Smith, Chairman

Project Focus

In 2006, the Big Hole Watershed Committee facilitated a series of community meetings with the goal of identifying concerns and priorities for lower Big Hole River stakeholders. In this issue, we will focus on some of our work on the lower Big Hole. We identified 18 priorities at these meetings but are focusing on the top 3 for now. Goals 2 and 3 are closely related. Therefore, these last two goals are addressed in tandem. Described below are projects we have accomplished this year to address these goals.

Gaining a better understanding of the relationship between river flows and how river water is being used

▪ **Real-Time USGS Stream Gauge at Maiden Rock**

As part of the Big Hole Drought Management Plan, a technical advisory committee convenes each year to evaluate data and experiences of the previous year and recommend improvements to the Drought Plan for the upcoming year. The addition of a real-time USGS streamflow gauge at Maiden Rock Canyon was identified as a need by the Drought Plan Technical Advisory Committee at its 2007 meeting.

The Maiden Rock site is of particular importance because it is located at a “control point”. There is little irrigation for some miles above this location since it flows through Maiden Rock Canyon and this reach of river appears to be a gaining reach. The addition of the automated flow monitoring station will vastly improve the ability of the BHWC to implement the provisions of our Drought Plan. It will provide a better understanding of how water moves through the river system, allow more refined flow forecasting, and raise awareness among water users. Under a five-year contract with US

Geological Survey, gauging station will provide internet accessible real-time flow and water temperature information to anyone interested. All USGS real-time flow data is accessible through a link on our website at www.bhwc.org.

The BHWC secured funding for the gauge through the Bureau of Reclamation and five-year match agreements with USGS and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

We would like to recognize Montana Trout Unlimited for their success in getting a streamflow gauge in place last year at the High Road Bridge; and the BLM through the efforts of Tim Bozorth, Regional Manager, Dillon, for finding gap-funding to keep the Melrose gauge up and running a couple years ago. Finally, we recognize the DNRC for their important contributions, including highly qualified (not to mention personable) hydrologists and field staff.

Providing for long-term improvement of the fishery and providing opportunities for improved water management and irrigation efficiency

▪ **Lower Big Hole Irrigation Infrastructure Survey and Prioritization Study**

Last fall, we received support through a DNRC grant program that permitted us to undertake a physical survey of irrigation infrastructure, streambank integrity, and barriers to natural flow along the mainstem of the Big Hole River below Maiden Rock Canyon. Landowners throughout the reach were personally interviewed on site when possible. The study resulted in a list of 36 potential projects identified as “very high, high, moderate, and low” priority. With this prioritized list, we will be ready to take advantage of

funding opportunities as they arise. We see this effort as a chance for us to help improve aging irrigation infrastructure for the benefit of water users and fishery. Currently funding is being sought to rectify the highest priority project identified, the Big Hole Cooperative Ditch. We are also moving forward on a Spring Creek restoration project that is a very high priority project from the standpoint of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) fisheries biologists. A link to the study is available on our website: www.bhwc.org.

▪ **Irrigation Infrastructure Improvement near Melrose**

In 2006, cumulative drought conditions and an unseasonably hot, dry summer reduced late summer flows to near record lows. Under In response, an irrigator near Melrose took steps to maintain ditch flows, including placement of a cottonwood across the river channel. That action resulted in a hazardous barrier in the river and consternation in the community. The Mile High Conservation District sought help from the BHWC to rectify the problem. NRCS Engineer, Vic Hager, determined the main problem was improper headgate elevation. He prepared a design to rectify all the problems associated with this infrastructure.

The BHWC secured funding from two DNRC funding programs with the irrigator kicking in a chunk to fill in the considerable remaining funding gap. The project was recently completed and resulted in a more efficient irrigation system. “This project has been a good learning experience for the irrigator. He will benefit by having better control and management over his water. Anglers and floaters will no longer face hazardous barriers because of this diversion. Best of all, it’s good for the river,” says Jack Kambich, Mile High Conservation District Chairman.

▪ **Water Management Project near Glen**

With high flows in the Big Hole that we haven't seen in a decade, this project was finished just in time. The Big Hole Ditch near Glen was built in 1918. Since that time the irrigators have been diligent in maintenance but the wooden infrastructure was over 50-years old and deteriorating, thus reducing the irrigators ability to manage irrigation water. Adding to the difficulty, when Interstate 15 was built, the ditch was run



In 2008, water management improvements on a large ditch near Glen replaced aging infrastructure. This work improves irrigation efficiency, prevents catastrophic ditch collapse and provides for fish passage.

through a concrete culvert under the interstate. This culvert was undersized, backing flow up the ditch which is elevated precariously over the river. The embankment was susceptible to breaching and threatened water

quality. The landowner documented 12 ditch failures between 1980 and 2004. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks was interested in this project because a substantial number of brown trout utilize the ditch and they suspect this ditch is important for spawning.

Foundation Support Grows

Since the Big Hole Watershed Committee secured 501(c) (3) status two years ago, we have worked diligently to expand our base of support to include Foundations. We are grateful to the following foundations for their confidence in us.

The Cinnabar Foundation

The Cinnabar Foundation was created to foster a sound conservation philosophy and to support the search for diverse and sustainable lifestyles throughout Montana. Among the Cinnabar Foundation's goals are the promotion of environmental protection and wildlife conservation and the promotion of ecologically balanced management of land and water in Montana. We are proud that the Cinnabar Foundation recognizes our successes in achieving those goals. Last year the Cinnabar Foundation funded the BHWC for the first time. This year the

Foundation will not only continue their support of our work – but will more than double their previous contribution. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, we must demonstrate to them community support for our efforts by meeting a \$5,000 challenge. Cinnabar Foundation funding will support our efforts toward recovery of imperiled fluvial Arctic grayling, drought mitigation, and land use planning. If you will consider helping us meet the Cinnabar Foundation Matching Grant Challenge, please call or email.

The Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation

The LCAO Foundation (www.lcaof.org) is devoted to the conservation of nature and the amelioration of human distress. The Foundation seeks to redress the breakdown in the processes linking nature and humanity. It concerns itself particularly with matters of species extinction, habitat destruction and fragmentation, resource depletion and

resource waste. It favors solutions that directly benefit local communities and serve as exemplars for saving species and wildlands. It recognizes the imperative to reconcile nature preservation with human needs and aspirations. Sadly, Liz Claiborne succumbed to cancer last year but the Foundation continues its vital work.

Patagonia

The Patagonia Outlet in Dillon Montana recently awarded the BHWC a \$5,000 environmental grant to help with the collaborative efforts to restore streamside habitat. With the help of volunteers and Patagonia interns, up to 21,000 containerized willow plugs were planted on several restoration projects in the upper Big Hole. Jeff Everett,

USFWS Wildlife Biologist, organized these work days which “neither sleet nor snow, nor ice, nor gloom, nor mud” suppressed! For those not in the know – we had a “good” spring this year with lots of rain. And as Jeff points out “Willows like the rain.” Thanks Patagonia, and thanks volunteers!

The Intermountain West Joint Venture

(<http://www.iwjv.org>) is a public/private partnership dedicated to the conservation of bird habitat in selected portions of the 11 western states stretching from Canada to Mexico. The Joint Venture achieves their mission

by developing partnerships with private and public landowners who support habitat conservation. The Joint Venture promotes the restoration and maintenance of all bird populations; fosters the protection, restoration,

and enhancement of wetlands, riparian habitats, and the widely diverse uplands characteristic. In 2008, the Joint Venture became a supporter of the BHWC and our many partners involved in habitat restoration in the upper Big Hole. The Big Hole project was described in their Winter 2007/2008 newsletter, "This project will complete a 486-acre restoration on the McDowell Reach by purchasing and planting willows and



Willow Flycatcher, R. Hutto photo

restoring the natural functions of the Big Hole River stream channel. Phase I, also funded by the IWJV, provided fencing of 6 miles installed along both sides of the Big Hole River. This restoration effort will benefit many bird species, including the Willow Flycatcher, Northern Water Thrush, Veery, White-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, American Widgeon, Mallard, and Sandhill Crane".

The Orvis Company

in 2007, recognizing the success of the Big Hole Watershed Committee and responding to the urgency of the imperiled grayling's situation announced a \$30,000 Challenge Grant in support of the Big Hole Grayling Recovery Project. The Orvis challenge was then met by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Donations from Orvis customers across the nation and in Montana flooded in allowing for the full \$30,000 commitment to be received. This also set the ground work for the additional \$22,000

donated by the Orvis Company to the Big Hole Watershed Committee. The Orvis Company, based in Manchester Vermont, is the oldest mail-order catalogue company in the United States. James Hathaway, Conservation Manager for the Orvis Company says, "The work of the Big Hole Watershed Committee is impressive and we are proud to support this project." (<http://orvis.com/intro.asp?subject=2433>)

Land Use Planning Conference Receives Accolades

Nancy Brady cried as she loaded mattresses and other bedroom furniture out of her Springhill Park home and into trucks. "I've been here 12 years and I've never seen anything like it," Brady said. "All I could do was cry and keep throwing stuff in the trucks and hope I could get it out." The East Gallatin event is reported to have flooded approximately 140 homes. Brady was one of at least two dozen homes north of Bozeman that were turned into islands over the Memorial Day weekend, surrounded by flooding from the nearby East Gallatin River.

"It's not the first time these areas have flooded, but it's the worst that it's been in years. And many of the areas are where developers had fought county officials in order to build" stated Scott Gillilan, a hydrologist and consultant to Gallatin County on floodplain issues. "This flood just proved where these (flood) areas are," Gillilan said. "That was not a big flood. That was not a 100-year-flood. I don't think it was a 20-year-flood. If they thought that was a big flood, they haven't seen anything yet." (from the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Amanda Ricker, reporter, May 27, 2008).

In fact, the flow at the East Gallatin gauging site was a 4 to 8 year event, highlighting the dangers of building in or near floodplains and the complacency that has followed a decade of drought.

Those involved with making planning decisions on the Big Hole are well aware of the dangers posed by ill-conceived development. "We've struggled with these questions for a long time" says Garth Haugland, BHWC Governing

Board Member and Beaverhead County Commissioner. "Developers and individuals come to us wanting to build in places we know are going to be a problem down the road. If we say "no" to them, then we may be threatened with a lawsuit. Our county just can't afford that. "

Harold Peterson agrees. A longtime Wisdom-area rancher and Beaverhead County Planning board member, Harold observed "People coming new into the valley just don't know what this river can do. We old-timers have seen water and ice jams cover ground where someone wants to build their nice new home.

Wise River rancher Liz Jones, also on the planning board, concurs. "We need to protect those people and we need to protect ourselves. How are we going to get an ambulance or fire equipment down to someone who needs it if their house is on the other side of moving water? What we need is more information about what our rights and obligations are when it comes to making decisions on new developments".

These concerns and others were the genesis of a recent conference organized by the BHWC. "Preserving Our Watersheds - Protecting Our Property Rights" was the theme of this world class conference on "No Adverse Impact" held last February at Fairmont Hot Springs. The featured speaker was Mr. Ed Thomas, a respected national authority on NAI. No Adverse Impact is defined as "...an approach that ensures the action of any property owner, public or private, does not adversely impact the

property and rights of others.” The objective of NAI is the safe and proper development of land subject to a hazard.

The conference was preceded with a field tour for local landowners, agency folks, and Ed Thomas to set the stage. The tour called attention to the fact that the Big Hole still has something worth saving but also drew attention to the types of development we do not wish to see. Compare the Big Hole to neighboring river basins such as the Gallatin and the Bitterroot. You be the judge.

One stop on the tour was at the riverfront property of part-time Big Hole residents Elizabeth and William Childrey. When the Childreys’ moved to Montana a few years ago, they believed they had bought a piece of paradise and planned to build a house smack dab on the river. Conversations with thoughtful neighbors, guidance from an informed realtor, and willingness to sit back and pay attention before making an irrevocable decision guided them in a new direction. They decided to build their house out of the floodplain on the hill which overlooks the river. Today, they could not be happier with that decision. “In fact,” Mr. Childrey stated “I believe this property is more valuable now than it would have been if we built on the river bank. We love our daily walk down to the river. Everyday there is something new to see. We will never regret our decision.”



Does agriculture have a place in our floodplains? Do homes? These questions were explored at the NAI conference.

Another highlight of the tour was a stop along a beautiful cottonwood bottom on the Hagenbarth Livestock Ranch, a multi-generational family ranch. As Jim Hagenbarth pointed out “This valley is still beautiful because of the ranchers who have kept it whole. We’re not only protecting our natural resources, we’re enhancing them. The way the economy is now, we ranchers are not in the business of livestock. We are in the realty business. We need to figure out a way to make sure development occurs where it should and not where it shouldn’t. But it is important these decisions respect private property rights. I can’t be asked to make decisions that devalue this land for my heirs”.

Over 100 people attended the two-day conference following the tour. Part of the impetus for organizing this conference was frustration on the part of land use planners, planning board members, emergency responders, and county commissioners about lawsuits filed against them when they decline issuing permits to an ill-conceived developments. As guardians of county coffers, local governments fear these lawsuits. Ultimately, NAI offers a tool for avoiding or prevailing in lawsuits. NAI

forces developers to take responsibility by proving their development activities will not harm future landowners or neighbors. Under the NAI concept, it is incumbent on local citizens, their planners, and their government representatives to define the values they wish to defend. That is where their power lies.

Mr. Thomas offered the following observation after the conference: “The NAI session [organized by] the Big Hole Watershed Committee in Montana went unbelievably well. Their NAI Workshop was the best yet developed in the Nation. Their approach to developing the workshop was clearly tremendously influenced by the non-confrontational approach they have developed for dealing with watershed issues. Their approach and the results that they are achieving are, in my opinion a National NAI “Best Management Practice” for how to begin

to change attitudes, and change behavior too.” The BHWC takes pride in this endorsement, given that Mr. Thomas presents as many as 100 of these conferences a year!

The Big Hole Watershed Committee would like to thank the following for supporting this conference:

- **Sky Sponsors**
\$1,000 and up: Liz Claiborne/ Art Ortenberg Foundation (www.lcaof.org), Montana

Department of Environmental Quality (www.deq.state.mt.us), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (www.dnrc.mt.gov), Montana Smart Growth Coalition (www.mtsmartgrowth.org), Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (www.fwp.mt.gov), and Bureau of Land Management (www.blm.gov/mt/st/en.html).

- **Water Sponsors**
\$500 - \$999: PBS&J (www.pbsj.com), Montana Association of Planners (<http://www.montanaplanners.org>), Association of Montana Floodplain Managers (<http://mtfloods.org>); Beaverhead County (<http://www.beaverheadcounty.org>), Butte Silver Bow County (<http://co.silverbow.mt.us/>), Madison County (www.madison.mt.gov), and Montana Water Trust (www.montanawatertrust.org).

- **Earth Sponsors**
\$300-\$499: Watershed Consulting, Whitefish, Montana (www.watershedconsulting.com), University of Montana – Watershed Health Clinic (www.umt.edu/watershedclinic) and the Sonoran Institute (www.sonoran.org).

Links to information about NAI are available on our website (www.bhwc.org).

Thanks to Karl Christians, past Montana Floodplain Administrator, for help writing this article.

Weed Committee Briefs

Weeds, weeds everywhere! The Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee has had a busy summer filled with everything from spray days and community weed information meetings to bug distribution and the Weed Whackers Ball.

The Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee tries to help out at, and provide donuts for, as many county and agency spray days in the area as possible. This isn't always easy given the fact Beaverhead County Weed Coordinator Jack Eddie has a spray day list as long as his tattooed arm. The committee also participates in spray days back from the Big Hole watershed such as on Fleecer Mountain, and the Dewey Cemetery just to name a few. Spray days usually involve employees from Beaverhead, Madison, or Silver Bow Counties, Bureau of Land Management, Fish Wildlife and Parks, the Forest Service, and of course area landowners. Together, they spray and pull weeds in 'borderless' areas all along (and beyond) the watershed. Their efforts are to be admired and applauded.

For the last nine years, the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund (MNWTF) has financially backed the Big Hole Watershed Weed Project. The 85-mile project runs from the Mudd Creek bridge to the confluence with the Beaverhead River in Twin Bridges. The MNWTF gets hit harder every year with more and more funding requests which means they can't send as much money our way as they once did. That said, we do get some financial help from the Bureau of Land Management (Butte office) to help us keep the project going. So, thank you to both grantors. This project is one of the longest running river projects in the history of the MNWTF.

We have had the good fortune to share weed information with folks in both Divide and Melrose this year through community meetings. We are also fortunate to be in a

position this year to help folks pay for their herbicide. Rather than just stand up in front of them and encourage them to manage their weeds, we are now able to provide them with some tools in the form of 50% cost share (for watershed residents in Deer Lodge and Silver Bow Counties where cost share programs do not exist.)

We've also been fortunate to find some private land on McCarty Mountain near Glen to establish a test site for the effectiveness of flea beetles on leafy spurge. We're hoping to see positive results in the spring.

The Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee (BHWWC) received the coveted 2007 Weed Fighters United Award at the Montana Weed Control Association's Annual Conference in January. The BHWWC was one of



several weed groups nominated from across the state. The award gives recognition to a non-professional group of people who work cooperatively with other departments, agencies and people; has instituted an aggressive attack on weeds; and uses unique and innovative approaches to weed control.

We have spent a large amount of money renting tables over the years for the Weed Whackers Ball. In an effort to eliminate that expense, we are asking for donations so we can purchase tables. By making a one time \$80 donation to the Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee, you can become a Weed Whackers Ball Table Sponsor. Your name will be displayed atop the table on permanent signage showing your support in the effort to manage weeds in your beautiful Big Hole Watershed.

Need help identifying noxious weeds on your property? You can refer to one of the following web sites for information on Montana's list of noxious weeds: www.agr.state.mt.us, www.mtweed.org, or www.weedawareness.org

Meet Our Administrator ~ Michelle Cavanaugh



Last May I started as the Big Hole Watershed Committee's Administrator.

I am a Butte native who grew up hearing stories about her great-grandfather homesteading in the Big Hole and taking trips with her grandfather to visit the site.

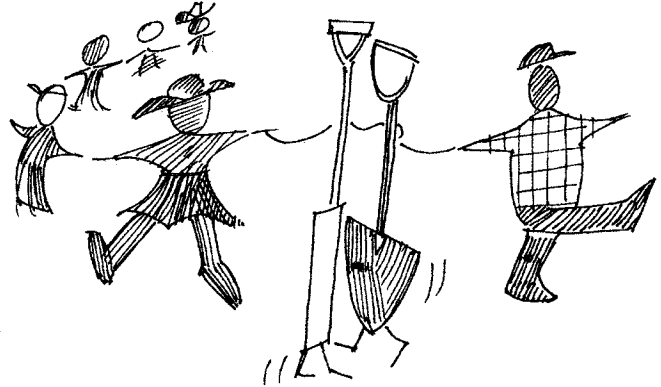
Over the years I have obtained degrees in Accounting, Computer Science, and Technical Communication. I now hope to apply this background for the benefit of the Big Hole Watershed.

I currently live in Butte with my poodle, Nutmeg. I look forward to meeting you all.

Weed Whackers Ball!

The Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee would like to invite you to the biggest and best party in the watershed, the Weed Whackers Ball on September 13th in Wise River. This is our annual fundraiser, which just keeps getting bigger and better every year! Our raffle items include roundtrip airfare and a week's stay for two in West Palm Beach, Florida; a \$350 gift certificate to Bugs N Bullets sporting goods store in Butte; and a \$100 gift certificate to Three Bears Alaska! Ray Weaver will be cooking up pigs stuffed with chicken and Liz Jones will be cooking up some tasty and tender beef. Alongside will be salads, rolls and desserts galore. We'll have our usual cash bar and live music. Mark Anderson has agreed to once again serve as our auctioneer for the live auction and of course we'll also have the silent auction. If you would like to donate

Weed Whackers Ball
auction
BBQ,
MUSIC



Food line at last year's Weed Whackers Ball.

any new items for the auctions, make a financial donation, or just need some information about the Weed Whackers Ball, call Jeanne Caddy at (406)267-3354 or (406)491-1929 or e-mail bhwwc@smtel.com

For more information about the Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee, or to learn more about noxious weeds in the watershed, call Jeanne Caddy at (406)267-3354 or e-mail her at bhwwc@smtel.com. To make a donation for the Weed Whackers Ball table sponsor project, please make your check payable to the BHWWC and mail it to PO Box 121, Divide, MT 59727.

Give a weed an inch and it will take a yard!

Big Hole Watershed Committee Recipient of Patagonia's "Voice Your Choice" Award

The Patagonia store in Dillon asked area residents to select a local environmental organization to receive a "Voice Your Choice" Award. The Big Hole Watershed Committee is the recipient of this year's award. We are particularly honored knowing the excellent work of the other organizations that were in the running with us, including AERO (Alternative Energy Resource Organization), American Wildlands, Buffalo Field Campaign, and Montana Wildlife Federation. This \$4,000 award will be put to good use in our efforts to address resource and community concerns.



Photograph courtesy Barbara Bauerle, Dillon Tribune

Noorjahan Parwana, BHWC Director, and Bill Cain, BHWC Board Secretary, accept Patagonia Voice Your Choice Award check from Patagonia Store Managers Beth Sullivan (left) and Ryan Applegate (right).

Big Hole Partnership Receives Watershed Restoration Award

The Big Hole Partnership recently received an award from the American Fisheries Society (AFS) Western Division for excellence in watershed restoration for Arctic grayling on private lands. The Riparian Challenge Award was presented at the AFS Western Division meeting in Portland, Oregon, on May 7. This award recognizes the efforts of the private landowners, non-governmental organizations, and state and federal agencies working cooperatively on the CCAA program.

The purpose of the AFS Western Division award is three-fold:

- Encourage agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private industry to strive for excellence in riparian and watershed habitat management;
- Encourage agencies to progress in on the ground accomplishments, which when added together throughout the West, will significantly improve riparian systems;



- Recognize managers and resource specialists for their efforts in maintaining, restoring, and improving riparian and watershed ecosystems.

Members of the Big Hole Partnership include dozens of private landowners, state and federal agencies (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana Department of Resources and Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service), and non-government conservation organizations (Arctic Grayling Recovery Program, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Big Hole Watershed Committee, Avian Science Center, and Big Hole River Foundation).

Committee Member Biographies



Steve Luebeck

Steve Luebeck has been a member of the BHWC since 1995. Although not one of the original members he joined shortly after inception.

He represents the interests of organized sportsmen in the Butte and Anaconda on the Big Hole Watershed

Steering Committee. One of the original members of the Steering Committee Steve serves as Treasurer. Steve is past President of the George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited in Butte, 1998-2000 and has served as Vice President and Treasurer. Steve serves on the Board of

Directors of Montana Trout Unlimited. Steve, a Certified Public Accountant, is employed as the General Manager of Fairmont Hot Springs Resort. He and his wife Jill (former Administrator for the Big Hole Watershed Committee) have a son Zachary and daughter Kerra.

Steve spends most of his spring, summer and fall recreating in the Big Hole Basin. His main interests are fly-fishing and elk hunting. His primary focus in the BHWC has been on recreation planning and drought planning for the Big Hole basin, though he has also been active in grayling recovery, stream-side development issues and organizational development.



Marty Hovan

Raised in Butte, Marty and his wife Meri have three children, Leah, Angela, and Jonathan, and four grand-daughters!

Marty started at Butte Water Company as a laborer in 1979. In 1993, he moved to the Big Hole Pump Station

as an Operator. In 1996 he made his final move to the Water Treatment Plant as an operator, taking over as the Treatment Plant Manager in 1998.

As manager of the Water Treatment plant, Marty also took over as Butte-Silver Bow's utility representative on the Big Hole Watershed Committee. At first he didn't know he had an option to be on the Committee. He thought it was

part of his job. But like so many others, the love of the Big Hole had taken over by the time he figured out it was an option. The result has been his continued dedication to the Committee for the past 10½ years.

At almost 58 years old, Marty has enjoyed seeing progress made on water issues over the course of his career. When asked why he has stayed on the Committee for so many years, he says he has enjoyed discussing water issues with so many different interests. This was certainly

a benefit to the watershed during the early years, when Committee meetings were sometimes heated, with each group involved, firmly standing in their own corner. Marty's sincerity and calm, low key presence helped move the Committee forward through interesting and sometimes controversial times under a consensus process.

Marty is currently finishing up the replacement of the old wooden water transmission lines throughout Butte and has construction of two water treatment plants on the horizon.

BHWC Governing Members

Bill Cain - Landowner/Guide, Glen
Art Christensen - Conservation Dist. Dillon
John Dooling, - Rancher, Jackson
Jim Hagenbarth - Rancher, Dillon
Andrew Hanson - Guide, Wise River
Garth Haugland - County Commissioner, Dillon
Marty Hovan - Municipal Water, Butte
Hans Humbert - Rancher, Wisdom
Liz Jones - Rancher, Wise River
Mark Kambich - Rancher, Divide
Nathan Korb - The Nature Conservancy, Helena

Steve Luebeck, - Sportsmen, Butte
Dick Marshall - Rancher, Twin Bridges
Steve Parker - Big Hole River Foundation, Butte
John Peck - EPEEP, Melrose
Harold Peterson - Rancher, Wisdom
Phil Ralston - Rancher, Wise River
John Reinhardt - Rancher, Wise River
Scott Reynolds - Trout Unlimited, Butte
Randy Smith - Chairman/Rancher, Glen
George Trischman - Rancher, Twin Bridges
Ray Weaver - Rancher, Wisdom



photo courtesy of glenn bodish

To learn more about the BHWC, or to make a donation, visit our website: www.bhwc.org or call 406-782-3682