



# Big Hole Watershed Committee

## Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2025 – 7:00 pm at the Divide Grange  
*Zoom option also provided*

### In Attendance

*In-person:* Tana Lynch, BHCW; John Reinhardt, Rancher/BHCW; Tom Bowler, Butte Resident; Betty Bowler, Butte Resident; Dean Peterson, Rancher/BHCW; Tim Fay, Wise River resident; Steve Luebeck, Sportsman/BHCW; Liz Jones, Rancher/BHCW; Jack Losensky, Author; Luke Lutz, DNRC; Jon Peterson, Rancher/BHCW Hydrology Technician; and Howard Varner, Rancher.

*Zoom:* Pedro Marques, BHCW and Jim Drummond, Jr.

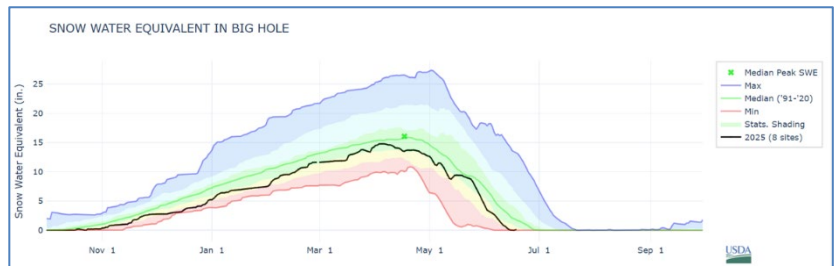
### Meeting Minutes

BHCW monthly meetings are held at the Divide Grange with a virtual (Zoom) option provided thanks to Southern Montana Telephone Company, who donated the internet service. Meeting minutes and recordings are available at <https://bhwc.org/monthly-meetings/> (scroll down for meeting minutes archive). Printed copies are available during in-person meetings. Contact Tana Lynch, BHCW Associate Director, at [tlynch@bhwc.org](mailto:tlynch@bhwc.org) or (406) 267-3421 to suggest additions or corrections.

### Reports

*Streamflow and Snowpack Report – Luke Lutz, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation*

- *Streamflows: (June 18th, 2025)*
  - Wisdom (06024450): 32 cfs
  - Big Hole River near Wise River (41D 08000): 761 cfs
  - Maiden Rock (06025250): 1,100 cfs
  - Melrose (06025500): 1,120 cfs
  - Glen (06026210): 1,160 cfs
  - Hamilton Ditch (06026420): 954
  - Stream And Gage Explorer (StAGE): <https://gis.dnrc.mt.gov/apps/stage/>
- *Snowpack:*
  - Snow Water Equivalent: 85% of average (1991-2020)
  - Peak ~2 weeks early; nearly melted out ~2 weeks early
- *Precipitation: 6% of average (1991-2020)*
  - *Standardized Precipitation Index:* See image, below right.
- *Climate Outlook (NOAA):*

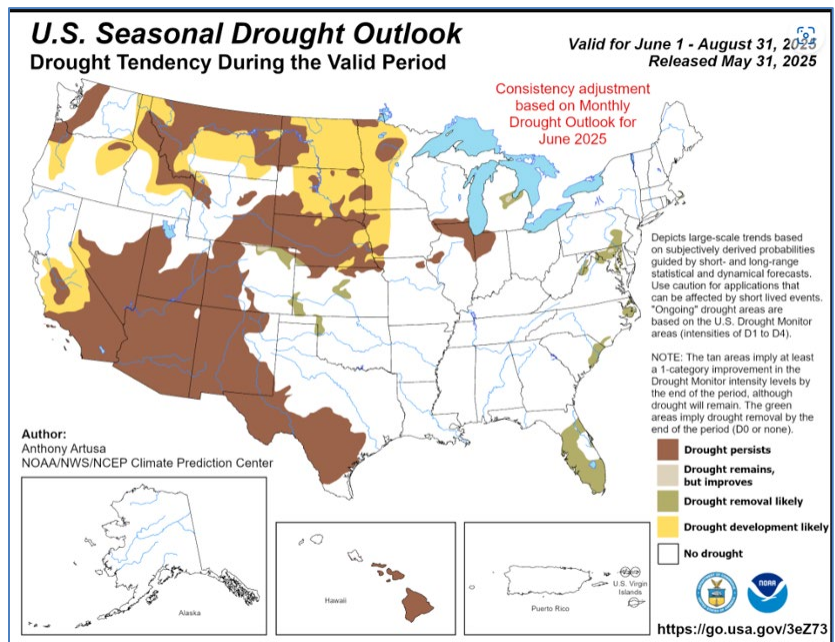
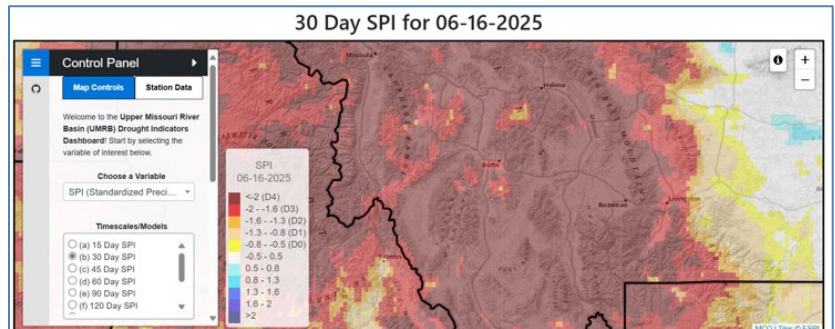
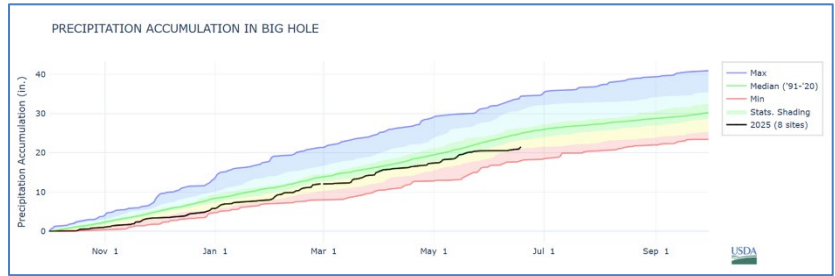


- **Outlook:** The 8-14 day outlook predicts near normal temperatures and slightly above normal precipitation.
- **Seasonal Outlook:** The seasonal outlooks above normal temperatures and below below normal precipitation.

- **U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook:** Drought persists in our area.

*Director's Report – Pedro Marques, Executive Director*

- Forest Service funding all clear! Our Elkhorn Partnership Agreement '24 is cleared for work.
  - Updated contract for Pioneer for:
    - Mill Building Survey
    - Test Pitting
    - Structural Analysis
    - Design
- Upcoming:
  - Irrigation project funding: NRCS water management entities grantw
    - Double diversion south of Melrose
    - Resources Legacy Fund to support
- Staying Solutions-Focused



- "In almost every case, it takes many people thinking together to devise a sound and sensible solution. But this is precisely the strength of democratic deliberation: it enables us to mobilize collective intelligence as no other form of decision-making can do." - Dan Kemmis, Montana Author
- BHCW key player in changes to Army Corps of Engineers permitting at national level:
  - Eliminates need for costly wetland delineations for low-tech restorative practices in streams and wetlands.
  - Eliminates double oversight by federal entities, expanding use of binding landowner agreements to BLM.
  - NWP proposed rules are published in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/06/18/2025-11190/proposal-to-reissue-and-modify-nationwide-permits>

○ Restoration Project Update:

▪ Contracts underway:

- High Meadow Storage Capacity (WGM Group)
- Smith Springs ditch siphon design (Confluence Consulting)
- Beaverhead CD- Elkhorn Mine
- Rock Creek Fish Barrier (RE Miller)
- MCC- Selway and Trail Cr. Meadow
- California Creek “demo area” design (WET)

▪ Upcoming projects:

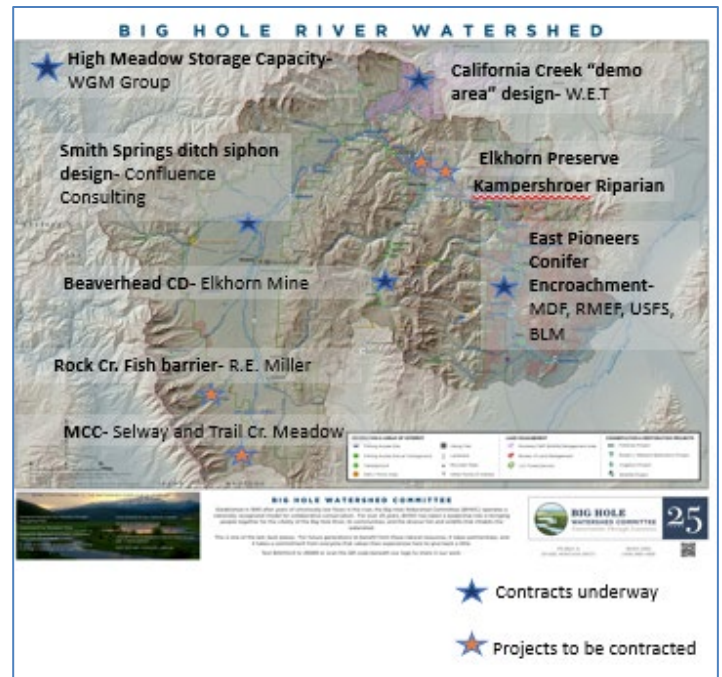
- Elkhorn Preserve
- Landowner Agreement in development
- Kamperschroer Riparian
- Re-bidding
- California Creek Designs
- Under Review by NRDP. FY ‘26 Contract Signed
- East Pioneers
- 5-Star Forestry starts July 1<sup>st</sup>
- Stock Tank Projects
- Support for FWP to fund 2 tanks

▪ Projects in design, scoping, funding:

- Wise River headgate
- Jerry creek headgate
- Merlose diversion
- Burma Road: sediment project
- Pennington Bridge: Madison County
- Moose Creek headwaters: TNC, USFS

▪ Mount Haggin Uplands Monitoring Plan:

- FWP wants to have a long-term guide on how to continue monitoring the sites that have been restored on Mount Haggin.
- BHWC has been working on drafting the plan and putting together before and after photos to show the work completed/progress made.



*Steering Committee Report – Jim Hagenbarth, Chairman; Dean Peterson, Vice-Chairman; Roy Morris, Secretary*

- Next steering committee meeting planned for July 14<sup>th</sup>.

*Communications and Wildlife Report – Tana Lynch,  
Associate Director*

- Communications:
  - Hired Karly Noetzel, Content Creator (contractor)
    - Recent MSU grad
      - Master of Fine Arts in Science and Natural History Filmmaking
    - Video content
    - Social media
    - [karlynoetzel.com](http://karlynoetzel.com)
  - Upcoming events:
    - Montana Folk Festival
      - July 11-13
      - Butte
    - 2025 Wildlife Speaker Series
      - July 16th
      - Trapper Creek Ranch, Melrose
  - Tim Montana Guitar Auction
    - Brazilian barnwood guitar donated to BHWC
      - Signed by Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top (Wise River Club co-owner with Tim Montana)
      - Auction open until July 11th!
        - Proceeds benefit BHWC!
        - Link: [facebook.com/reel/1660122568021586](https://facebook.com/reel/1660122568021586)
  - Publications:
    - [Emergency forest project aims to protect Butte's drinking water](#)
      - Montana Standard, June 12th
    - [Montana fisheries managers warn hoot-owl restrictions could be weeks away](#)
      - Montana Standard, June 11<sup>th</sup>
    - [Big Hole River low flows raise concerns for fishing and irrigation](#)
      - Montana Standard, June 10<sup>th</sup>
    - [Big Hole River group sues DEQ over water quality standards](#)
      - Montana Standard, May 13<sup>th</sup>
    - [Casting after mysteries: State survey offers mixed report in trout numbers for SW Montana](#)
      - Montana Standard, May 13<sup>th</sup>
    - [Closure of USGS water science centers could harm western producers](#)
      - Western Landowners Alliance: On Land, May 9<sup>th</sup>



**The Wildlife Speaker Series of  
Southwest Montana  
Presents**



**July 16, 2025**

**SANDHILL CRANES**

*What: Join us for a free and informative presentation on sandhill cranes! In the Big Hole Valley, these magnificent, prehistoric birds grace our skies (and ears) each year. The original "snowbird", they make a special effort to return to this part of the world again and again. Come and learn what they find so valuable about Southwest Montana!*

*Event includes a potluck dinner with the main course and beverages supplied by Big Hole Watershed Committee board members. Please bring a side, salad, or dessert!*

*Who: Patrick Donnelly, Senior Scientist with Ducks Unlimited*

*When: July 16, 2025 (Dinner at 6:00 pm, Presentation at 7:00 pm)*

*Where: Trapper Creek Ranch, 1100 Trapper Creek Rd, Melrose, MT*

*Sponsored by: Big Hole Watershed Committee*

 [info@bhwc.org](mailto:info@bhwc.org) (406) 960-4855

- [Chet Robertson: Keeping Livestock & Wildlife in Balance](#)
    - Big Hole Breezes, May 2025 edition
  - BHWC Summer Newsletter coming soon!
- Wildlife:
  - Carcass removal
    - Done for the season
    - Truck on loan from Benton Lake NWR
  - Range Rider
    - Season starts July 1<sup>st</sup>
    - Looking for used 4-wheeler to purchase
  - Funding:
    - America the Beautiful Challenge grant secured (\$194,000 over 3 years)
      - Administered by HRI through MFWP
    - 2025 Livestock Loss Board (LLB) grant secured: (\$17,500)
    - 2026 LLB proposal submitted: requested \$8,500 (reduced ask due to HRI funding)

### **New Business**

- None

### **Break – 10 minutes**

### **Meeting Topic:**

### ***Logging for the Company: Marcus Daly and Flume Logging Near Anaconda, 1883-1917***

Presented by: Jack Losensky, Author

*Background:* After decades of research, Jack authored the book *Logging for the Company: Marcus Daly and Flume Logging Near Anaconda, 1883-1917*. Get your copy of Amazon, here:

<https://www.amazon.com/Logging-Company-Marcus-Anaconda-1883-1917/dp/1591523370>.

Jack's presentation included a series of 57 historical photos showing the logging and flume construction & use that occurred on what is now the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area, off Highway 569 (Mill Creek Road) between Wise River and Anaconda. To learn more about Jack's research and the history of the area, purchase Jack's book at the link above or view the recording of our June monthly meeting, here:

<https://youtu.be/ekTlCtjsEY4>.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

- BHWC does not meet in July
- Wednesday, August 20, 2025: BHWC Monthly Meeting
  - 7:00 PM at the Divide Grange Hall - Topic: Conifer Reduction in the Eastern Pioneers

### **Adjourn**