

Special Report October 2, 2001:

Pat Tyrrell, Wyoming State Engineer, will be discussing the Platte River settlement agreement. While much of the information still is not available for discussion Mr. Tyrrell will be able to provide us with a very informative and understandable presentation. Please plan on attending.

SPECIAL REPORT

Leah Kraft began by providing Water Forum members with the Water Quality Regulations, Chapter 1, Wyoming Surface Water Quality Standards. Her topic was based on the Chapter 1 revisions applicable to the National Pollutant Discharge System (NPDES) for discharged water as a byproduct of coal bed methane (CBM) production. The Chapter 1 revisions were promulgated July 2001. With that, a new stream classification was developed generally stating that all streams can hold aquatic life unless scientifically proved otherwise. In short, this new classification will require a more stringent limit on discharged Coal Bed Methane produced water. Another change was the elimination of Points of Compliance (POCs) in CBM permits. Aside from the revisions, all discharged waters with downstream water rights, are required to have the necessary water quality to meet standards for agricultural irrigation. Ms. Kraft briefly touched on the Wyoming-Montana MOA, and then described the three new permitting options resulting from the Chapter 1 revisions.

The permit options are titled 1A, 1B, and 2. Option 1A addresses off channel storage facilities. These facilities are to be located so that they cannot collect any natural runoff and must be sized and built so that there can be no release from the reservoir. Option 1B addresses on channel reservoirs in a Class 3 basin. CBM produced water cannot be discharged, there can be no downstream water rights, and effluent quality must comply to agricultural irrigation, aquatic species, wildlife, and stock watering quality standards. Option 2 addresses discharge to class 2 drainages or tributaries. This effluent must meet the standards set for Option 1B plus fisheries and drinking water standards. As for sodium adsorption rates (SARs) and specific conductance limits under Option 2, there are different standards per major drainage; in the Powder River drainage, if there is no downstream irrigation, then there are no effluent limits for SARs nor specific conductance, but do require water quality monitoring. In the Belle Fourche drainage the SAR limit is ten and the specific conductance is 2000. In the Tongue River drainage only Options 1A and 1B apply so far.

Ms. Kraft summarized by stating that the permitting is more stringent, and detailed information is available on the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality web site.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.