



State Engineer's Office

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PATRICK T. TYRRELL
STATE ENGINEER

November 5, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the State Water Forum

FROM: Patrick Tyrrell, Chairman

SUBJECT: Attached for your review and information is a copy of the November 2, 2004 Water Forum meeting minutes. Please take a few moments and pencil into your calendar the Water Forum dates for this year.

WATER FORUM SCHEDULE 2004-2005 1ST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

DATE	INVITED GUEST	DISCUSSION ITEM
December 7 th	Joe Deschamp	Casper Refinery Water Usage
January 4 th	Brad Anderson	Midvale Conservation Program
February 1 st	Tom Annear	Behavioral and Physiological Effects of Winter Habitat on Trout
March 1 st	Brad Anderson	Midvale Conservation Program
April 5 th	John Lawson	Water Forecast
May 3 rd	Rik Gay	Kendrick Selenium Watershed Project

SPECIAL REPORT

The next meeting of the Water Forum will be December 7, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. in the State Engineer's Office conference room. Our special guest will be Joe Deschamp, who is the Environmental Manager with BP Amoco. Mr. Deschamp will be talking to us about water usage at the Casper Refinery.

WYOMING STATE WATER FORUM MEETING MINUTES

November 2, 2004

Jodee Pring called the two hundred and forty-second meeting of the State Water Forum to order at 10:00 a.m. The following were in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Liberty Blain	LCCD	liberty@lccdnet.org
Jan Curtis	WRDS/State Climatologist	jcurtis@uwyo.edu
Rick Huber	WY G&F	rick.huber@wgf.state.wy.us
Laura Hudson	UW	lhudson@uwyo.edu
Mike Jennings	WARWS	mikejennings@wyoming.com
Ed Kouma	USBR	ekouma@gp.usbr.gov
Harry LaBonde	SEO	hlabon@state.wy.us
Britt Long	AG	blong2@state.wy.us
Hugh McFadden	AG	hmcfad@state.wy.us
Justin Mulbay	WRDS	jmulbay@uwyo.edu
Erika Olson	AG	eolson@state.wy.us
Mark Opitz	NRCS	mark.opitz@wy.usda.gov
Jodee Pring	SEO	jpring@state.wy.us
John Shields	SEO	jshiel@state.wy.us
Phil Stump	SEO	pstump@state.wy.us
Mike Sweat	USGS	mjsweat@usgs.gov
Patrick Zimmerer	Hageman & Brighton	pzimmerer@hblawoffice.com

AGENCY REPORTS

In order to assure accuracy in the reporting of the minutes, forms are passed out at the meeting to be completed by the representative of each agency. These minutes consist of a compilation of the written reports received. Please complete a form either at the Forum meeting or return within a couple of days to Jodee Pring, State Engineer's Office. This will increase the efficiency and accuracy of completing the minutes for the Water Forum. Reports can also be sent via e-mail to: jpring@state.wy.us. For more information on the following reports, please contact the agency representative listed above.

STATE ENGINEER'S OFFICE (SEO)

Phil Stump reported the following:

The fall North Platte Decree Committee (NPDC) meeting was held on October 19, 2004 in Torrington, Wyoming. Highlights reported at the NPDC meeting were as follows:

- 1) Finance Subcommittee: The NPDC has selected the Wyoming Community Foundation to handle the accounts and pay bills for the NPDC. The subcommittee is working on agreements needed to provide a funding mechanism for the NPDC.
- 2) Consumptive Use Subcommittee: The subcommittee is working on various tasks to study consumptive use in the North Platte Basin above Guernsey Reservoir; such as the installation of two weather stations, installing equipment to measure evapotranspiration directly, and mailing questionnaires to producers/irrigators about consumptive use this winter.

Harry LaBonde reported the following:

Phase I of the SEO IT Initiative is almost complete. This phase entailed evaluating of all of our business processes. The Request for Proposals for Phase II should be out the week of November 15, 2004. Phase II is the system design phase of the project. We hope to have a consultant ready to proceed by the middle of February. The last phase of the project, Phase III is the implementation and startup. The SEO is anticipating that it will be 2-3 years before we are fully operational under this initiative.

Basin Electric (BE) has been working with the SEO on storage in Greyrocks Reservoir. It is anticipated that, if the drought continues, BE will be out of water for cooling in August. BE has been working on entering into temporary water use agreements with irrigators. At the present time, BE has been able to transfer enough irrigation rights to get through the next two winter seasons.

Employees of the SEO and Bureau of Reclamation conducted a comprehensive dam safety review on Jackson Lake Dam. There is a group, Geologists of Jackson Hole, who are concerned about the stability of the dam if a quake occurs that is magnitude 7.5 or higher.

Jodee Pring reported the following:

The State Engineer's Office Board of Control will be meeting next week, Nov. 8-12 in Cheyenne. The meeting will be held in the Herschler Bldg. and will start at 1:30 p.m. on the 8th.

The SEO and the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) are looking at completing a framework water plan. This framework will take a look at the seven completed water basin plans and compile pertinent information from all of those plans into one document. The WWDC will ask for an appropriation, which will be included in the Omnibus bill, to hire a consultant to complete this framework and produce a final report.

The next step for the SEO and WWDC will then be to discuss where water planning will go after the Platte Basin plan is completed. That basin plan is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2005. Discussion has taken place as to whether the Bear should be the plan that gets revisited first since it was the first one completed or whether the next round of basin planning should start in an area where there are some concerns.

The next Platte Basin Advisory Group (BAG) meeting will be held December 14th in Wheatland. The next round of interim BAG meetings will be held March 22-24 and April 4-6, 2005. Please visit the WWDC website at <http://waterplan.state.wy.us/> for the most current information.

John Shields reported the following:

The Upper Colorado River Commission met in Durango Colorado on October 6 and 7th. The meeting included a tour of the Ridges Basin Reservoir dams site and the Animas LaPlata Project pumping plant facilities now being constructed by the Weeminuche Construction Authority for the Bureau of Reclamation. The Commission adopted an in memoriam resolution honoring the late Frank E. "Sam" Maynes who was a tireless advocate for the A-LP Project.

At the recent Commission meeting, the Upper Colorado River Division States representatives finished a letter to the Lower Division States requesting a state to state dialogue on reservoir releases from Lake Powell are necessary to meet United States obligations under the Mexican Water Treaty, and more

specifically, whether a deficiency exists under Article III(c) of the Colorado River Compact, which would trigger an obligation of the Upper Basin to share in any such deficiency. The letter stated in part, "As you are aware, it has been our consistent position that because no such deficiency has been shown to exist, the Upper Basin has no obligation in this regard. This position implicates other questions concerning the Law of the River. Because of an abundance of water supply and relative lack of demand, it has not been necessary to address these issues until now ... additionally, since the Secretary will reassess in April the Lake Powell release, it is important that we coordinate soon on the Basin States' position with respect to this review ... we believe the time has come to begin a formal dialogue between the States on these issues. As necessary, the Department of the Interior and others should be involved, but we believe these are manifestly state-to-state matters, and should remain so. We seek to avoid having such issues determined by the federal government or by acrimonious and expensive litigation." Efforts are underway to schedule a seven Basin States meeting to address these matters.

The Colorado River Basin States' technical committee met on November 1st in Phoenix, Arizona. Shields provided a brief rundown on the committee's efforts to develop shortage criteria, analysis being done as to how to implement the "extraordinary drought" provisions of the Mexican Water Treaty that provides that deliveries of Colorado River water to Mexico may be reduced in the same proportion as consumptive uses in the United States are reduced, and in developing management actions to reduce or reduce the impact of reservoir drawdowns due to the ongoing drought in the Colorado River Basin.

Shields noted the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, Forum's Work Group and the Colorado River Basin Salinity Advisory Council (a FACA committee established by the 1974 Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act) had met in Yuma, Arizona during the week of October 18th. The Advisory Council received reports on the progress made in reducing the salinity concentrations of the River's water during the past fiscal year and will be preparing its report to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior and the U.S. EPA Administrator in the coming weeks. The meeting venue provided an opportunity for Forum members to tour the Yuma Desalting Plant constructed by the United States Bureau of Reclamation to meet the international water quality commitments to Mexico.

The Wyoming Water Association (WWA) held its Education Seminar and Annual Meeting in Casper on October 27-29th. The conference theme was "Water Conservation: Challenges and Opportunities" and was well attended. Shields highlighted Governor Freudenthal's remarks to the Association and distributed copies of an editorial that appeared in the October 24th edition of the *Wyoming Livestock Roundup*. A copy of the editorial as transcribed from the *Wyoming Livestock Roundup* newspaper is attached. Other featured speakers included Deputy Commissioner of Reclamation Mark Limbaugh on the role of water conservation in the Dept. of Interior's Water 2025 initiative and Senator Bill Vasey of the Select Water Committee. The winter meeting of the WWA's Board of Directors is scheduled for January 13, 2005 and will be followed by a Legislative Review Session sponsored by the Association. For those seeking to pen in calendar dates for 2005, the Association's annual meeting for next year will be held on November 2nd through 4th in Casper.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION / WYOMING AREA OFFICE

John Lawson submitted the following:

1. Water Supply Conditions of the North Platte River Basin.

October 31, 2004 Reservoir Conditions

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Elev. (Ft)</u>	<u>Content (AF)</u>	<u>% Full</u> <u>Conservation Storage</u>	<u>% Avg.</u>
Seminole	6300.00	277,035	27	41
Pathfinder	5789.51	220,593	22	40
Alcova	5489.00	158,303	86	102
Glendo	4593.44	162,604	31	96
Guernsey	4401.77	11,686	26	254

October 31, 2003 Reservoir Conditions

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Elev. (Ft)</u>	<u>Content (AF)</u>	<u>30 Year Average (AF)</u>
Seminole	6304.35	311,077	669,700
Pathfinder	5799.50	293,241	551,900
Alcova	5488.95	158,189	155,500
Glendo	4596.45	180,053	168,600
Guernsey	4398.26	7,967	4,600

October Inflows

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Inflows</u>	<u>% Of Average</u>
Seminole	39.6	142
Pathfinder (Includes Sweetwater R.)	4.4	72
Alcova to Glendo Gains	4.6	32
Glendo to Guernsey Gains	1.3	54

Seminole Reservoir was the third lowest October storage in the last 30 years. Pathfinder Reservoir storage was the second lowest October storage in the last 30 years. The total North Platte system storage was the second lowest October storage in the last 30 years.

Ownership of North Platte River Storage Water

Kendrick ownership was 641,971 acre-feet (AF) on October 31, 2004, and approximately 67% of average (958,800 AF), which compares to the 749,400 AF of Kendrick ownership on this date last year. The Kendrick ownership was the fourth lowest October ownership in the last 30 years. The Kendrick ownership has not come into priority to accrue water since water year 2000. The October 31, 2004, North Platte ownership was 120,700 AF, which was approximately 27% of average (440,000 AF), which compares to 88,100 AF of North Platte ownership on this date last year. The Glendo ownership was 63,700 AF on October 31, 2004, which was approximately 46% of average (137,100 AF), which compares to 103,100 AF of Glendo ownership on this date last year. The Glendo ownership was the second lowest October ownership in the last 30 years.

Flows in the Miracle Mile below Kortes Dam are approximately 520 cubic feet per second (cfs). Releases from Gray Reef Reservoir are approximately 500 cfs. Due to current water supply conditions, the Bureau of Reclamation will not be conducting flushing flows below Gray Reef this fall.

The annual drawdown of Alcova Reservoir began on October 1, 2004. The reservoir will be lowered approximately 2 feet per week until the reservoir reaches the normal winter operating range of 5488+ one foot on October 31, 2004.

2. Water Supply Conditions of the Big Horn Basin

October 31, 2004 Reservoir Conditions

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Elev. (Ft)</u>	<u>Content (AF)</u>	<u>% Full Conservation Storage</u>	<u>% Avg.</u>
Bull Lake	5786.20	97,489	64	129
Boysen	4714.48	557,732	75	99
Buffalo Bill	5366.04	440,183	68	108
Pilot Butte	5453.14	27,795	82	123

October 31, 2003 Reservoir Conditions

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Elev. (Ft)</u>	<u>Content (AF)</u>	<u>30 Year Average (AF)</u>
Bull Lake	5769.97	57,522	75,600
Boysen	4699.16	358,897	563,100
Buffalo Bill	5366.73	444,733	406,300*
Pilot Butte	5453.54	28,126	22,600

* The average used for Buffalo Bill Reservoir reflects data from 1993 through 2004. In 1992, the capacity of the reservoir was increased to approximately 646,565 AF as a result of raising the dam. A long-term average cannot be calculated until several years of operation occur under the increased storage.

October Inflows

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Inflows</u>	<u>% Of Average</u>
Bull Lake	10.0	200
Boysen	67.4	110
Buffalo Bill	36.0	153

The total release from Buffalo Bill Reservoir to the river is currently 150 cfs as measured at the Cody river gage. The release from Boysen Dam is currently 400 cfs.

Reclamation has been working with the Wyoming Water Development Commission, the Game and Fish Department, and the State Engineer's Office to develop a new Winter Release Agreement to continue to provide winter flows below Buffalo Bill Dam in the Shoshone River.

WATER RESOURCES DATA SYSTEMS (WRDS)

Jan Curtis submitted the following report:

Recently Jan Curtis spoke with Ron Tabler, [Tabler and Associates](http://www.tablerassociates.com/images/NoMoreBS.pdf):
<http://www.tablerassociates.com/images/NoMoreBS.pdf>.

Ron is an expert in snow fence design and Ron has offered to let us use some of his findings for the on-line Wyoming climate atlas. There may also be some collaboration with the WWDC (small water projects).

Jan Curtis will be attending the Multistate Research Coordinating Committee/Information Exchange Group, WCC102, "Climate Data and Analyses for Applications in Agriculture and Natural Resources" meeting in Albuquerque 8-10 November. This forum discusses issues pertaining to water and climate over the western US. BLM, NRCS, and the state climate offices are usually in attendance.

On 18 November, Jan will be in Lander to give a drought presentation to the BLM: Post Season Fire/Aviation Annual meeting.

There is general interest in the future expansion of the WWDC and how WRDS will play a part in it. The Governor's steady approach on water development based on growing revenues is encouraging, if not challenging.

Tony Bergantino (WRDS) has been in contact with Jon Wade (WWDC) about WRDS taking on responsibility for the new Powder-Tongue initiative sponsored by WWDC and the WSGS.

Recent UW firewall problems have been resolved by essentially changing the WWDC URLs. These changes are transparent to the user and hopefully, through redirects, the customer will not notice any degrading of on-line service.

Recent precipitation is certainly encouraging, especially west of the continental divide, but we still have a long way to go before the hydrological drought is over.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Mark Opitz submitted the following:

Financial Assistance funds for 2005 for Farm Bill programs have been allocated. The NRCS in Wyoming was allocated \$15,787,391 for EQIP, EQIP-Ground and Surface Water, Agricultural Management Assistance, Grassland Reserve, Wetland Reserve, Wildlife Habitat Incentives, and Farm and Ranchland Protection.

Discretionary funding for such programs Watershed and Flood Prevention, and Watershed Rehabilitation has not been released yet. Allison Draw Flood Channel final phase of construction is waiting for funding. Watershed rehabilitation assessments have been completed on four NRCS dams; Toltec Dam, Boulder Dam, Dull Knife Dam, and Beaver Meadows Dam. The assessment reports are in progress. Breach analysis has been performed on three of the four dams to establish current hazard classification.

SPECIAL REPORT

Ms. Laura Hudson, who is a PhD candidate with the Department of Botany at the University of Wyoming, was our special speaker for today. Ms. Hudson gave a very interesting presentation entitled “Identifying spatiotemporal drought in SE Wyoming using limber pine tree-ring widths and stable carbon isotopes”. A copy of Ms. Hudson’s powerpoint presentation can be found on the State Engineer’s Office website under State Water Forum meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

ATTACHMENT

**Guest editorial that appeared in the
October 25, 2004 issue of the
*Wyoming Livestock Roundup newspaper***

Water Development: Focus on Storage by Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal

As the numbers begin to take shape for the upcoming legislative session, it looks as though we are in for another year of revenue exceeding expectations. Mineral prices continue to be good to us. In short, Wyoming has money and probably will for the next several years.

I propose we invest these present resources in those things that can build our state for the future. I want to see us help local communities become inviting places for businesses to thrive. I want to see us preserve our wildlife heritage, one part of what makes Wyoming the state it is.

And I want to see us develop our water resources. From agriculture to small business development, water plays an integral role in Wyoming's future.

To this end, I will propose legislation during in the 2005 legislative session to create a Dam and Reservoir Division within the Water Development Office. This legislation will provide a funding and staff support for the identification of dam and reservoir development as a priority of this state.

I don't need to tell agricultural producers that the ongoing drought in Wyoming and most of the West reemphasizes the need for reservoirs. With ample revenues, now is the time for the state to invest in water development projects that will provide an inheritance for future generations.

The state's water loan program has tended to focus on delivery rather than storage. My proposed shift in focus would return to the earlier, basic intent of the Wyoming Water Development Commission: to build dams and retain our rightful portion of what is arguably the most precious resource in the state. While the smaller water distribution projects and improvements have certainly been important to our water development efforts, the larger water projects must become a priority again.

Additionally, we have continually called for water conservation as a centerpiece of our water infrastructure. I have to wonder, though, what benefit other than philanthropy, there is in conservation if we cannot store and use what we save. Put simply, this is our opportunity to build accounts to hold the savings we have long advocated.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Commission's major function was to secure storage for Wyoming's portion of the water flowing through the state. But the federal government did not recognize our statement of purpose for water projects as meeting the federal definition of purpose and need.

Importantly, we are not asking for the money to do the projects. We are only asking for our right to the use of the water that already belongs to us. About \$500,000 in funding for the new division, which will look at the whole state for possible sites, will be included in the state omnibus water bill.

As mentioned, the Wyoming Water Development Commission and the Select Water Committee would decide on the final sites before the Legislature approves funding for the projects. Final approval would be mine.

I don't want anyone to be mistaken: It's very unlikely than any of us will see the results any time soon from our taking these proactive steps toward larger water storage projects. It could easily take a decade, and more likely longer, before we seek any of the projects that we discuss now actually built. But I believe the people that live in this state thirty years from now will appreciate any progress we can make while the state is flush.

With a large part of Wyoming still suffering from the impacts of a five-year drought, there is plenty of proof that developing water storage is a must so the state can survive future drought. This states needs to be prepared when these times come again.

At one time, we all thought the current spike in the state's revenues would be short-lived. But now, it looks as though we aren't looking at a spike at all, but a plateau. With projections of a more sustained upturn in state revenues, we can prudently work towards projects and programs that, even two years ago, would have been a pie-in-the-sky.

But time is not on our side. It took nearly twenty years to put the High Savery Dam project into place, after the time planning, permitting and construction were complete. So we must have the resolve and wherewithal to look beyond short-term gains for long-term prosperity.