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**Summary of CBM Hydrology Task Group Meeting**

1/15/04

Teleconference Call

(Notes taken by Andy Bobst, BLM-Miles City)

**Participants:**

Andy Bobst, BLM-Miles City, MT  
Dan Fox, BLM-Miles City, MT  
Rick Schuler – WY BLM  
Rick Huber – WY Game and Fish  
Chad Schopp – USFS Custer National Forest  
John Wheaton – MBMG  
Melanie Clark – USGS – WY  
John Lambing – USGS MT  
Paul Beels – BLM – Buffalo, WY  
Pete Ramirez – Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne, WY  
Karen Hamilton – R8 EPA  
Mike McKinley – BLM, Buffalo, WY  
Claudette Moore – USFS, Wyoming  
John Barnes – WY-SEO  
Dan Hengle – WY-DEQ

**Proceedings (an agenda is attached):**

0900 – Introductions and start of meeting

The MT-DEQ is not able to join us since they are involved in rearranging their work relating to the planning process for reassessing TMDLs over the next 2 years.

There was discussion of the development of a common water quality database for the WY-DEQ, BLM, and WY-O&G. There is a map server project currently underway. A budget submission exists. No one on the call was sure if they were developing data standards or not. Paul Beels will talk to them and let us know/try to keep us on the same page.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> there will be a IAWG meeting in Billings. Task Groups will give updates. One point that we wanted added to our charter was to “Coordinate at a staff levels with other agencies to avoid or minimize administrative conflicts between agencies.” So that it would be clear that the coordination that we are doing is part of the mission of this group.

One monitoring plan needs to be developed for each watershed in which CBNG development is anticipated. There was a question as to the size of the watershed we would be looking at (4<sup>th</sup> Order, 5<sup>th</sup> Order...). The general consensus was that we were talking about major perennial streams such as the Tongue, Powder, Rosebud, Belle Fouche, and Cheyenne, and not splitting it out based on some acreage level.

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There was a question concerning if WY-DEQ was going to permitting on a watershed scale. Dan Hengle indicated that they were moving in that direction, however right now they were starting with 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> order watersheds to figure out the process. Funding is still needed to get things going in this direction.

It was also asked if MT-DEQ was going to look at a similar process. A MT-DEQ representative was not available. Karen Hamilton (R8 EPA) indicated that they were not sure of MT-DEQ's plans, however EPA could look into it. She also indicated that she was not aware of anywhere that was actually implementing permitting on that scale.

An update of the TMDL process for the Tongue, Powder, and Rosebud, was provided by Andy Bobst (BLM-MT-MCFO), Dan Hengle (WY-DEQ), since a representative from the MT-DEQ (lead agency for TMDLs in MT) was not available. Andy, and Dan are on the modeling committee for these TMDLs. The models for the TMDLs are still under development. It is hoped that they will be functioning (reasonably predicts past conditions) by the end of May. Discussions of assimilative capacity will follow the completion of the models, and the model runs for different situations. The next TMDL meeting will be in March.

An inquiry was made of the EPA as to the status of the Northern Cheyenne "Treatment as a State" application. A public comment period is currently underway. It will go until February 9<sup>th</sup>. If "Treatment as a State" is granted the Northern Cheyenne standards would then be reviewed by the EPA. These standards could be approved by the EPA following a 30 day comment period. If they were approved by the EPA at that point they would have Clean Water Act standing.

Mike McKinley inquired if monitoring plans were going to be developed for the Belle Fourche and Cheyenne. Karen Hamilton (EPA) indicated that the budget for these had not come through yet so a definite answer was not possible. She indicated that most funding was currently going to MT, however usually 1-2 projects per state can be funded by other funds.

Dan Hengle is asking for funding to monitor stations that industry had been monitoring on the Tongue, Powder, Belle Fourche, and Cheyenne watersheds in WY. There are 60+ stations in this network, however they do not yet know if it is funded.

John Lambing (USGS) indicated that at this time the focus is to document current conditions across the network of sites, provide the data to the public, and determine if any sites display persistent exceedances of water-quality standards. After adequate data have been collected, it is anticipated that there will be an effort to evaluate trends in water quality over time and examine possible cause-effect processes.

John Wheaton (MBMG) indicated that there are currently ~150 wells included in the regional groundwater monitoring network and ~12 springs. This monitoring occurs from ~ the Powder River on the east to the Crow Reservation on the west. 25 of these wells are new, being installed to fill data gaps, while the remainder were installed from past

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research programs. MBMG is currently gauging these wells ~ once per month and representative baseline water quality samples are being collected. MBMG is also planning to install ~ 1 site per township along the MT-WY state line. All of this information is available on MBMG's GWIC database website (<http://mbmggwic.mtech.edu/>). This can also be retrieved as a special project website by going to the GWIC database, signing in, then clicking on MBMG Projects, and finding the CBM project.

It was also discussed that MBMG will provide a pdf type map of these well locations and water levels to Paul to put on the IAWG website, and to put on the CBM Clearinghouse. Paul or Richard Zander will talk to Diana Holm about putting MBMG data onto the clearinghouse and then let John know what they need.

It was asked if water levels and water quality would be done or just water levels. John Barnes knows of 8 sites with water levels, but is not sure of water quality. John Wheaton indicated that for their sites MBMG has wells finished in the coal seams and in the best sand above the coal seam.

Wyoming has also been collecting groundwater monitoring data. Some sampling is occurring with the NPDES program. Cindi Rice (USGS) is building a groundwater database for CBM. Manifolded data is available from WY-DEQ (coal seams mixed). A representative well from each coal seam is now required. Some monitoring well pods are also installed with CBM development. Joe Meyer (BLM-Casper) also has data on overburden head. On channel, off channel, and alluvial. These are site specific data.

MBMG is also involved in site specific studies of Burger Draw infiltration basins.

It was discussed that the site specific information should be shown on the Clearinghouse if possible. In particular it was determined that the long term regional data should be included as maps (for now just pdf type; non-interactive). The site specific information should also be provided, however it should be displayed differently since it is fundamentally different data. The locations of these study sites should be shown.

Shapefiles showing where all these sites are location should be gotten together. John Wheaton suggested that MBMG could pull them all together and make the map so long as the data was provided with appropriate metadata (projections etc.).

The next teleconference call will be on March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9am. Andy Bobst will again set up the bridge and send out information.

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## **Agenda**

CBNG Interagency Hydrology Task Group

Thursday January 15th, 2003

Teleconference

Bridge #: 406-896-5333

Pass Code: 0852

9am Introductions

Updates from last meeting

Status of example Monitoring Plan

Waiting for information on existing monitoring

Roundtable discussion of the data that each agency has been collecting.

BLM

MBMG

DEQs

USGS

Others

Status of TMDLs and implications for different agencies in both states

Discuss any interagency process problems at the staff level and attempt to resolve, suggest resolution to next level for discussion if needed.

Other topics as needed

Determine next meeting venue, time, and topics.

12 Noon - Meeting Closeout – End of Bridge Reservation