

**Powder River Basin Interagency Working Group**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**May 9-10**  
**Buffalo, WY**

**Water Task Group Presentations**

**Andy Bobst**, (BLM Miles City)

Reviewed past and planned surface water work.

See [SW Update](#) presentation

**John Wheaton** (MT Bureau of Mines) & **Mike McKinley** (BLM, Buffalo)

Reviewed ground water monitoring program

See [Wheaton\\_regional\\_IAWG](#) presentation

PRB water production at 18% of PRB EIS prediction.

USGS monitoring report should be available in Oct 2007

**John Wheaton** (MT Bureau of Mines)

Reviewed a CBNG pond infiltration study

See [Wheaton\\_ponds\\_IAWG](#) presentation

30% of discharged water evaporated & 70% infiltrated.

Salts flushed from near surface down about 20 ft.

Water quality changes are temporary and salts do not move far.

**Don Fisher** (WY DEQ)

Described impoundment ground water monitoring program

See [Impoundment Data Update](#) presentation

Groundwater monitoring in association with discharge impoundments started in 2004.

**Aquatic Task Group Presentations**

**Mike Sweat** (USGS, WY)

Provided an overview of USGS aquatic species monitoring

See [IWG May 2007](#) presentation

2007 plans include macroinvertebrates, algae, and some fisheries.

Gordon Edwards (WY Game & Fish Dept)

Provided an overview of fish, fish habitat, and herptile monitoring projects.

See [Edwards\\_Gordon\\_Powder](#) presentation

Aida Farag (USGS)

Presented research results from CBNG water effects on aquatic life.

See [IWG mtg 07 farag](#) presentation.

## **Task Group Updates**

### **Air** (Dave Klemp, MT DEQ)

Existing air monitoring stations in place and in operation  
Two additional stations are needed in MT

### **Aquatics** (Larry Gerard, BLM Buffalo)

Accomplishments were highlighted in the earlier presentations.  
Aquatic and herptile monitoring to continue in 2007.  
Looking into aerial riparian monitoring.

### **Water** (Andy Bobst, BLM Miles City)

Accomplishments were highlighted in the earlier presentations.  
Groundwater and surface water monitoring to continue.  
Annual reports forthcoming.

### **Wildlife** (Jenny Morton, BLM Buffalo)

No IWG funding per say, units have received funding to individually monitor wildlife.

## **Agency Round Table**

### **John Ford** (US Dept. of Energy)

DOE curtailing funding of environmental effect research (DOE/BLM program), instead will emphasize exploration and production research.

### **John Barnes** (WY State Engineer's Office)

Applications for direct surface discharge are decreasing.  
Reservoir leaking appears to be increasing in rougher terrain.  
Some companies pumping the leaking water back into the impoundments.  
Dam safety standards apply if capacity exceeds 50 acre feet.

### **Tom Johnson** (Army Corps of Engineers, WY)

There could be a change in COE jurisdictional levels in near future resulting from a Supreme Court ruling from Michigan related to identifying nexus to navigable waters.  
Reservoirs are being constructed to avoid waters of the US.

### **Bud Stewart** (Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

The presentation that Gordon Edwards gave yesterday did an excellent job of summarizing the fish, fish habitat and amphibian work the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has been doing the last 3 years. The fish and fish habitat data will be included in the USGS interpretive report that will be written later this year. A report summarizing the amphibian data is nearing completion. That report will be submitted to the EPA as a requirement of the funding received from that federal agency.

A University of Wyoming graduate research project will begin this year with data collection scheduled to begin in June. This project will be looking at shallow water habitats and how they change with changes in flow.

**Bill DiRienzo (WY DEQ)**

The Governor did not sign Chapter 2 revisions.

Still working on Chapter 1 revisions.

Funding a study through Univ. WY for livestock water protection.

Assimilative Capacity Study to comply with MT water quality standards.

About 2/3 complete

Three tier decision making process

I. default EC and SAR limits

II. Default limits are refined to equal local background conditions.

III. Effluent limits may be established of lower quality than predischarge background with appropriate justification.

**Mike Sweat (USGS, WY)**

Continuing water and aquatic species monitoring efforts.

**John Kilpatrick (USGS, MT)**

Will continue water quality monitoring as funding allows.

**Steve Welch (MT DEQ)**

Looking at adding three positions from BLM pilot program.

Three active discharge permits, discharge application pending for Deer Creek.

**Dave Breisch (BLM, Miles City)**

Two CBNG operators in MT, Fidelity and Pinnacle

Draft Supplemental EIS out for public comment.

Final expected in October, EPA air quality model concerns may delay.

Approximately 1,100 non-federal CBNG wells have been authorized.

**Chris Hanson (BLM, Buffalo)**

Congress may increase funding for regulatory compliance.

APD target still in 3,000 neighborhood; received 3,800 applications last year.

Several new positions have been approved through pilot program, emphasis on compliance

BLM has requested that CBNG operators increase voluntary sage-grouse mitigation efforts.

Fortification Creek elk herd – initiating a resource management plan amendment to deal with planning issues.

Not permitting within elk range while BLM conducts a cumulative effects analysis and decides on a permitting strategy.

**Air Task Group Status (Dave Klemp, MT DEQ)**

Not much interest within group, has not met in past year (but no issues to discuss either)

BLM should take a more active role and possibly lead the task group.  
BLM MT does not have an air specialist, BLM WY has one air specialist in state office but spread thin.

Air quality is one of the driving forces of the MT Supplemental EIS.

Primary players – BLM, EPA, state DEQs

**BLM managers to approach their state offices to determine direction for air group.**

### **Water Quality Reports** (Andy Bobst, BLM Miles City)

Recommendation was made to combine ground water and surface water into one report.

Task group feels the two are not comparable and therefore separate reports are better.

Plan to continue annual data summaries and an interpretive report every 2-3 years.

Suggested a summary report combining all water and aquatic resources.

Suggested an accomplishment report for all task groups to identify how BLM is accomplishing monitoring tasks identified in the two EISs

### **Task Group Budgets**

[Updated task group budget spreadsheet.](#)

Recommendation to separate spread sheets by task group as funding sources vary with task group.

Recommendation to itemize budgets as done by wildlife task group.

### **Marketing Strategy**

Marketing strategy no longer seen as necessary, CBNG operators not interested.

Funding requests to concentrate on priority items, air quality and sage-grouse.

Recommend next years meeting to include IWG executive level.

Again recommended to develop a IWG summary report.

### **Decisions/Assignments**

Task groups to itemize their budgets by individual project and prioritize tasks.

Task groups to develop summaries (1 pg) of accomplishments to identify how BLM is accomplishing monitoring tasks identified in the two EISs

Confirm if CBM Clearinghouse website is willing to house MT data

Link IWG web site and CBM Clearinghouse to MT water web site.

BLM managers to approach their state offices to determine direction for air group.

MT DEQ/BLM MT to approach MT CBNG operators for air monitoring funding assistance.

BLM WY (Chris Hanson) to approach industry regarding sage-grouse funding.

2008 IWG meeting to be executive level (state and regional directors), focus on monitoring accomplishments and funding.

**Powder River Basin Interagency Working Group Meeting  
 Bozeman Trail Steakhouse  
 Buffalo, Wyoming  
 May 9-10, 2007**

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