Aquatics Task Group Meeting, February 5, 2008

Bill Ostheimer	BLM Buffalo
Trevor Selch	MFWP
Bob Bukantis	MT DEQ
Hannah Griscom	WYNDD
Kevin Gelwicks	WGFD
Peter Wright	USGS
Courtney Frost	BLM
Robert McDougal	USGS
Jeremy Zumberg	WY DEQ
Tom Bills	BLM BFO
Dave Peterson	USGS
Travis Cundy	WGFD
Larry Gerard	BLM
Joe Platz	BLM
Jim Verplancke	BLM

Present via phone: Bob Bramblett, Aida Farag, Gretchen Meyer, Sam Cox, and Terry Booth.

- Meeting started at 9:10am

Overview of the meeting: 1) Aerial Imagery by Robert McDougal; 2) Summary of surface water reaching the Powder River, by Jeremy Zumberg; 3) Toxicity Research Proposed Studies, by Aida Farag, via phone; 4) USGS Monitoring/ Funding Needs, by Dave Peterson; 5) Funding Priorities.

Aerial Imagery Update

- Usefulness of imagery was discussed. Images must be taken at low turbidity for variable depth flow to be quantified. Best time for images to be taken is July, or late August/ early September for trying to classify variable depth flow (pools, runs, riffles).
- The Office of Surface Mining acquired Quickbird Imagery of the PRB in 2005 and is willing to share. The data can be used to address several questions: mapping facilities, infrastructure, surface disturbance, identify islands and oxbows, invasive species mapping, change detection within area covered by ATG 2007.
- Imagery can be used for long term monitoring of vegetation, slope, water depth, bank erosion, baseline data, monitoring invasive species, vegetation depth.
- 60K bill for imaging.

Surface Discharge Reaching the Powder

- Approx 10-15 cfs reaching Powder via surface discharge. 10x this is permitted. 5-10 cfs reaching Powder in our 'reach'.
- Lots of flow variability during the year, with 20 days below 20cfs, and 63 days below 60cfs. A proposition to get images in late August/ early September to get another reference point, and one under 20cfs.

Proposed Studies for Aquatic Life Effects with CBM

- Proposed more studies, broken down into three areas:
- Task I: Report Writing and Chemistry
- Task II: Mixing Zone Characterization and Additional Species
- Task III: Acute and Chronic Experiments with Bivalves
- MTDEQ might be able to put 25-30K towards these. EPA may also help fund.

USGS Monitoring/ Funding Needs

- Would like to make inverts and fish priority for funding. Inverts consist of riffle and multi-habitat. Would like to monitor at all 47 sites if possible.

Prioritizing of funds

- Available funding that the ATG has:

MT BLM- 150K
105K for herptiles
WY BLM- 143K
WY DEQ- 40K
USGS- 44K match
MT DEQ- ?
EPA- ?
377K Total, without herptiles

- Proposed Needs:

USGS: 300K
Toxicity: 146.5K
Aerial: 60K
506.5K Total

- On a vote, present members of the ATG decided to amend the proposed needs so that all areas could be met to some degree:

Proposed Funding:
232K, cutting monitoring sites (approximately 10 sites)
100K with no mixing zone research
45K, no IMU/GPS unit
377K Total

Other Information:

- 10K for processing the chironomids; split between the two states (DEQ) if possible.
- BLM Buffalo to continue funding for the Huber leopard frog site specific study for baseline data. (~4.5K).
- Split the 105K herptile funding between the two states.
- PowerPoint Presentation in May for IWG. Break up presentation into Windy Davis' research, toxicity, aerial imagery, herptiles, and USGS Monitoring.