



Water Planning News

Consultant Selection Begins in the Northeast and Powder / Tongue Basins

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Special points of interest:

- Come visit our new events calendar.
- Our website will be the home for many basin planning products. Turn to page 3 to see how it can help you.
- The 2000 Legislature is completed, see the results on page 3.

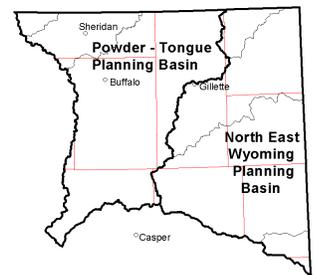
The Wyoming Water Development Commission and the Select Water Committee of the Legislature jointly recommended that the Commission receive authorization and funding to pursue river basin planning in the Northeast Wyoming Planning Basin and the Powder/Tongue Planning Basin. This authorization and funding was granted by the 2000 legislative session.

The first step in the basin planning process is to procure consulting services. The initial action is to advertise that consulting services are going to be needed. Interested consultants submit statements of qualification and statements of interest in providing the desired services. Six consulting teams showed interest in the Northeast Wyoming Planning Basin and three consulting teams were interested in the Powder/Tongue Planning Basin. The standard WWDC procedure is to reduce the number of firms that are requested to submit detailed written proposals to no more than five in most cases. The Northeast Wyoming Planning Basin was reduced to five consultant teams while the Powder/Tongue Planning Basin remained at three teams.

The selected consulting teams that were asked to prepare detailed proposals have until April 10, 2000, to submit their propos-

als to the WWDC. On April 10th the proposals will be opened and assigned to a consultant selection committee who will review the proposals and rank the proposals in their individual order of preference. The selection committee will be made up of two commissioners, the river basin planning administrator, a representative of the State Engineer's office, a representative of the Water Resources Data System at the University of Wyoming and one or more representatives from the local area. After compiling the rankings, three firms will be asked to appear before the consultant selection committee for a formal interview. The consultant selection committee will rank the three consulting teams in the order of preference and recommend that ranking to the full commission.

The Commission will vote on the recommendation and direct the WWDC Director to initiate negotiations with the top ranked firm. The Commission may give specific negotiation instructions. The WWDC Director will take the negotiated contract to the full Commission and the Select Water Committee of the Legislature for final approval on May 31, 2000. Upon final



Northeast and Powder / Tongue Basins

approval and signing of the contract by all parties, the study process is ready to commence.

In addition to the two river basin studies, the WWDC is in the process of procuring consulting services for a facilitator to work with the river basin plans and for consulting services for fifteen other projects.

The selection process is fairly long and drawn out and can be fairly expensive for both the WWDC and the prospective consultants, however, the commission goes to great lengths to insure that the selection process is a fair and impartial process.

Progress Report from the Green and Bear River Basins

Since publication of our last newsletter, the basin consultants have completed irrigated lands mapping and water rights attribution. The major structures (diversions greater than 10 cfs) have been inventoried in the Bear Basin, and that work is nearing completion in the Green Basin. Historical operation information for Sulphur Creek Reservoir and Woodruff Narrows Reservoir has been collected in the Bear. Diversion records have been compiled, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Wyoming Geological Survey oil & gas, trona, and coal maps have been obtained in digital form. Technical Memoranda on reservoirs, instream flows, environmental uses, and salinity control programs are under preparation.

The consultants are research-

ing future markets and growth potential of the trona industry, and trends in regional, national, and international agricultural markets. A spreadsheet tool has been prepared to develop regression relationships for extending streamgauge records, and that work is about 50% complete for monthly wet, dry, and normal year flows.

Identification of average wet, dry, and normal year consumptive use values at key climate stations is underway, and United States Geological Survey gaging station data for relevant Colorado and Utah gages has been obtained. Assumptions and schematics for hydrologic modeling have been prepared and presented to the Basin Advisory Groups (BAG), and modeling work is underway. Irrigation districts

have begun to respond to requests for information on their operations, and the Forest Service and BLM have been requested to provide their near-term plans regarding water resources on the lands they manage.

The Water Resources Data System is working on the "look" for the River Basin Plans to be presented on the Waterplan website. This website continues to maintain and update the information currently being generated by the water planning process

Please check the Waterplan website regularly at:

<http://waterplan.state.wy.us/>
We are constantly updating existing material and adding new work products.



Basin Advisory Group meeting in Farson, Wyoming.

Water Planning Calendar



April 11, 2000 - Green River Basin Advisory Group Meeting - Sublette County Library, Pinedale. 1 pm. Topics: Consultant update, water quality issues, coal methane development, Wyoming Water Law.

April 26, 2000 - Northeast Wyoming Basin Advisory Group Meeting - Sundance High School Auditorium, Sundance. 6 pm. Topics: Basin Advisory Group formation.

April 27, 2000 - Powder/Tongue Basin Advisory Group Meeting - Sheridan College Presentation Hall,

Sheridan. 6 pm. Topics: Basin Advisory Group formation.

May 2, 2000 - Water Forum - "Water Planning Round Table" - Wyoming State Engineer's Office, Room 1699, 10 am. Discussion of water planning activities and collaboration by federal, state, and county agencies.

May 4, 2000 - River Basin Planning Consultant Interviews - Wyoming Water Development Commission, Herschler Building, Cheyenne. All day. Consultant interviews for selection of

firm(s) to produce Northeast Wyoming and Powder/Tongue River Basin Plans.

May 5, 2000 - Wyoming Water Development Commission Meeting, Herschler Building, Room 1699, Cheyenne. Consultant selection.

May 8, 2000 - Bear River Basin Advisory Group Meeting - Uinta County Library, Evanston. 6 pm. Topics: Consultant update, population growth and demand projections.

May 9, 2000 - Green River Basin Advisory Group Meeting - TBA, Baggs. 5 pm. Topics: TBA.

May 31, 2000 - Wyoming Water Development Commission / Select Water Committee Joint Meeting - Cheyenne. Contract approval for NE Wyoming and Powder/Tongue River Basin Plans.

June 13, 2000 - Green River Basin Advisory Group Meeting - TBA, Marbleton. 5 pm. Topics: Consultant update, US Forest Service watershed management plans, TBA.

June 14, 2000 - Powder/Tongue Basin Advisory Group Meeting - TBA

June 15, 2000 - Northeast Wyoming Basin Advisory

The Water Plan Website: Your Source for Planning Products

The Water Resources Data System (WRDS) provides hydrological and climatological data as a service to the public and to federal, state, and local agencies. WRDS databases offer extensive historical and current spatial data in digital and hard copy formats. WRDS is located in the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering at the University of Wyoming, and is primarily funded by the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC). As part of the water planning team, WRDS is working with the WWDC to place all river basin planning information on-line. You can visit the Wyoming State Water Plan website at the following address:

<http://waterplan.state.wy.us/>

The website contains a number of options:

- Summary of the water planning process
- News Releases
- Quarterly Newsletters
- E-mail the WWDC Water Planning Staff
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Basin Planning

• Feasibility Study Products

The basin planning section provides a link to each basin, when the following information is available:

- Basin Advisory Group: Final report of the feasibility studies, and minutes from meetings
- Agenda of the Upcoming Basin Advisory Group meeting
- Basin Issue Summary: A report concerning the current issues of the Basin Advisory Groups
- Statewide Data Inventory: Contains an index of data set themes
- Basin Advisory Group Reference Notebook: A briefing or reference book

The feasibility study products section of the web site includes the following information:

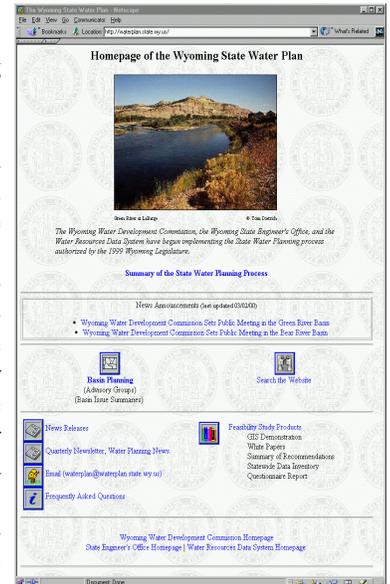
- GIS technology demonstration
- Public interest group white papers
- Executive Summary of Recommendations for 1999 Planning
- Statewide Data Inventory

(another link to the inventory)

- the State Water Planning Questionnaire Report

The site will also include a wide variety of spatial and tabular data developed by the river basin planning consultants. Information such as irrigated lands, surface hydrology, and groundwater usage will be available for download in a variety of file formats and projections. Our goal is to serve this data for a variety of users, from individuals who may not have a lot of computer skills but still want to view and print the wide array of maps and associated data, to educators who want to use the spatial data in their classrooms, to technical personnel who will analyze the data with a geographic information system.

The Wyoming State Water Plan website is designed to serve the citizens of Wyoming, and help us understand Wyoming's most vital resource, water. Take a few minutes to browse this site, and let us know what you think.



The Water Plan website homepage

“Our Goal is to serve this data for a wide variety of users...”

Legislative news from Cheyenne

The 2000 Session of the Wyoming Legislature approved several bills of interest to the Statewide Water Planning Process. Enrolled Act No. 15 (SF 48) authorizes \$3,030,000 for Level I and II Water Development Commission planning projects. Included in that authorization is \$800,000 for River Basin Planning in Northeast Wyoming. Enrolled Act No. 61 (HB 113) author-

izes \$30,648,986 for Level III Water Development Commission construction projects.

The 2000 Legislature also modified the funding mechanisms for the State's earmarked accounts, including the Water Development Accounts. House Bill 195 essentially re-distributes the severance taxes among the earmarked accounts, and changes the percentages on those distri-

butions. In brief, that means a reduction in funding to the Water Development Accounts of approximately \$1.9 million this year. While this figure will change each year depending on mineral prices, this year it will be a 3% reduction in funding to our accounts. That will not prevent our agency from funding any of our programs, but may create a delay for some.





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• PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN THE ENCLOSED FLYER. YOUR RESPONSE IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US.



Newcastle Open House

Open Houses Held in the Northeast and Powder/Tongue Basins

The River Basin Planning Team (Wyoming Water Development Commission, State Engineer's Office, and Water Resources Data System) recently hosted two open houses, January 25th in Buffalo, and January 26th in Newcastle. The purpose of these informal meetings was to introduce basin residents to the State of Wyoming river basin planning process, explain activities currently underway in the Bear and Green River Basins in Southwestern Wyoming, and highlight proposed activities for Northeastern Wyoming. *[Development of river basin plans for the Powder/Tongue and Northeast Wyoming River Basins has since been approved by the 2000 Wyoming State Legislature. See*

front page for related story.]

Keen interest in the state's river basin planning process was exhibited with more than 80 people turning out in Buffalo and more than 50 people attending the Newcastle meeting. Participants listened to presentations and viewed displays not only by the water planning team, but from other cooperating natural resource agencies, including the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, and the United States Geological Survey. The meetings also afforded the opportunity for attendees to ask water resource questions of the various agency representatives in attendance.

The next "round" of meetings has been set and will start the process of forming basin advisory groups in each of the two slated basins. The Northeast Wyoming River Basin (Little Missouri, Belle Fourche, Cheyenne and Niobrara) Advisory Group formation meeting is set for the Sundance High School Auditorium, Wednesday, April 26th at 6 pm, while the Powder/Tongue River Basin Advisory Group formation meeting is set for the Sheridan College Presentation Hall, Thursday, April 27th, also at 6 pm. Both meetings are open to the public, with individuals interested in participating in one or both of the advisory groups being encouraged to attend the appropriate meeting for the basin(s) of their choice.