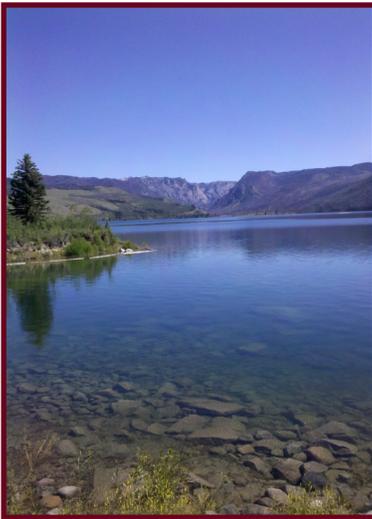


Water News

****Director Harry LaBonde has announced his retirement, effective March 15, 2019! We wish him well in his next chapter!****

Governor Mead's 'Ten in Ten' Initiative



New Fork Lake

Inside this issue:

- Lake DeSmet and Healy Reservoir** 2
- 2019 Water Development Legislative Bills** 2
- Cloud Seeding Efforts - Med Bow/ Sierra Madres** 3
- 2018 WWDC/SWC Summer Tour Recap** 3
- Calendar of Water Events** 4



The newsletter is available online at:

<http://wwdc.state.wy.us/newsletter/>

In early 2015, shortly after being sworn in for his second term, Governor Matthew H. Mead released the Wyoming Water Strategy. The root of the strategy came from opinions, collected from citizens throughout the state, on what to do regarding Wyoming water. What culminated was an action plan encompassing the management, development, conservation and protection, and restoration of this precious natural resource. The Water Development Commission (WWDC) was fittingly tasked with carrying out the area of consensus bearing its namesake. Furthermore, the projects being developed through the Water Development Office's Dam and Reservoir Division directly aligned with the water development theme's Ten in Ten initiative. The Ten in Ten initiative provided executive support and agency planning for the completion of ten small storage facilities (2,000 to 20,000 acre-feet) in the next 10 years. Now in year four since the introduction of the initiative, the WWDC is pleased to report its steady progress of fulfilling the goal of providing water use flexibility through storage, for Wyoming citizens.

The reconstruction of Middle Piney Dam began in July of this year with a groundbreaking ceremony attended by Governor Mead, Regional Forester Nora Rasure, and others representing the Middle Piney Watershed Improvement District,



Middle Piney Reservoir Ground Breaking July 18, 2018

Bridger-Teton National Forest, WWDC, local agencies, and the general public. NW Construction, Inc. out of Bozeman, Montana is completing the work and anticipates to be substantially complete in the fall of 2020. The protracted completion schedule is dictated by the abbreviated construction seasons on site, as Middle Piney Reservoir is located at 8,800 feet above sea level and receives runoff from the east slope of Wyoming Peak. The WWDC holds a 30-year special use permit with the Bridger-Teton National Forest for construction and subsequent management of the reservoir once complete. The WWDC plans to enter into an agreement with the Middle Piney Watershed Improvement District to operate, maintain, and deliver water to its members into the future.

The enlargement of Big Sandy Reservoir continues to make progress. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), recently prepared 90% design plans and draft specifications. Upon review by all involved

parties, final designs and specifications will be completed. The draft environmental assessment will then incorporate final design details and be reissued for public comment. Reclamation can then address outstanding issues, and if no significant impacts are identified, issue a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). Assuming a favorable decision can be reached, the Reclamation contracting office would then prepare a bid solicitation. It is anticipated that bids could be received, a contract awarded, and the notice to proceed issued by the end of 2019. Following this timeline, project completion would be expected in time to capture the 2021 spring runoff. Once complete, the 5-foot enlargement to Big Sandy Reservoir will result in an additional 13,000 acre-feet of storage and firm the water yield of the federally developed Eden Project for the Eden Valley Irrigation and Drainage District.

The next two Division updates comprise the Alkali Creek (Cont'd pg. 2 "Ten in Ten")

Governor Mead's 'Ten in Ten' Initiative - continued

Reservoir and Leavitt Reservoir Expansion projects for the Nowood River Watershed Improvement District and the Shell Valley Watershed Improvement District, respectively. Both projects are under NEPA review by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and a number of other cooperating agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency. The public comment periods for the draft environmental impact statements (EIS)

ended in October 2018. The 3rd party NEPA contractors are now addressing comments received and compiling the final EISs, which could be published as soon as February 2019. The Records of Decision will then be prepared, released to the public, and will stand for a 30-day protest period. If the decisions are favorable and permits are acquired; final design specifications, and bid packages will be developed in 2019. Subsequently, con-

struction could commence in 2020 with project completions anticipated before spring runoff of 2022.

The Water Development Office's Dam and Reservoir Division has an additional ten storage projects under consideration. Given that new storage project applications are accepted from sponsors every year, the status and current level of consideration of each individual project varies, however, a handful of these additional projects are nearing

readiness for permitting. In summary, with the support of the Legislature, all the agencies, organizations, consultants, and local communities involved, significant progress is occurring on Governor Mead's Ten in Ten initiative. A complete list of the Water Development Office's current dam and reservoir projects can be found at:

http://wwdc.state.wy.us/dam_reservoir/CurrentWWDCProjects.html

Lake DeSmet and Healy Reservoir

On June 26, 2018 the State of Wyoming, acting through the Wyoming Water Development Commission, purchased Lake DeSmet Reservoir assets and Healy Reservoir and Dam for \$2,487,500.00. This purchase included 62,199 acre-feet of water right permits and the south dike outlet works at Lake DeSmet Reservoir, Healy Reservoir with a capacity of 5,140 acre-feet, the Clear Creek diversion structure, associated pump station, and 6.7 miles of large diameter transmission pipeline between Healy Reservoir and Lake DeSmet. Opera-

tions of the facilities are being managed through the Water Development Office (WWDO) Dam and Reservoir Division, and carried out day to day through an agreement with a local operator familiar with the facilities. Since acquisition, the WWDO has delivered water through the Lake DeSmet transmission pipeline to satisfy new and existing water service agreements. Likewise, assigned obligations to deliver Healy Reservoir water to legacy shareholders located on Clear Creek have been fulfilled as requested during the

2018 irrigation season. As part of the 2018 Legislation that approved the funding for the purchase of the facilities, the Lake DeSmet Reservoir Account was established to fund required operations and maintenance expenses. The account collects water sale revenues derived from both Lake DeSmet and Healy Reservoir, as well as earns and retains investment income. Lastly, a Level II study will be presented to the 2019 Legislature to evaluate the feasibility of moving Lake DeSmet water to the Tongue River drainage

to replace out of priority diversions by Wyoming water users during a call for regulation by Montana. The study will also evaluate the feasibility of constructing a low level outlet in Healy Reservoir to eliminate unnecessary pumping costs. The proposed funding for this study is from Water Development Account I. Questions about the newly acquired facilities or purchasing water should be directed to Harry LaBonde or Jason Mead at the WWDO.

2019 Water Development Program Legislative Bills

Sponsored by the Legislative Select Water Committee, two Water Development Program bills will be introduced for passage by the 65th Wyoming State Legislature when it convenes in Cheyenne in January. The Omnibus Water Bill – Planning contains funding for studies under the new development, rehabilitation, and dam and reservoir accounts (Water Development Accounts I, II and III). This includes municipal master plans, a stream fore-

casting tool, irrigation rehabilitation feasibility studies, storage enlargement studies, groundwater investigations and funding for the UW Water Research Program. The total appropriation being requested through the Planning Bill is approximately \$6.5 million. The Omnibus Water Bill Construction contains funding for construction projects across the state through these same water development accounts and includes municipi-

pal well and tank projects, irrigation pipelines, canal linings, outlet and diversion structures, and dam rehabilitation projects. Additional funding for the Small Water Project Program is also being requested through the bill. Two special provisions reside in the bill, the first is the creation of a Middle Piney Reservoir account to meet facility O&M obligations, and the second is a transfer of excess funds from the Buffalo Bill

Reservoir Account to Water Development Account II. This later provision is necessary to be able to fund six of the water development rehabilitation projects (planning – 3; construction - 3) where requested project amounts exceeded available funds after a prioritization of projects took place per WWDC operating criteria. The total appropriation being requested through the Construction Bill is approximately \$28 million.

Cloud Seeding Efforts Begin Over Medicine Bow & Sierra Madre Mountain Ranges

Weather modification, more commonly known as “cloud seeding”, is not new technology to the State of Wyoming. Years of research and analysis have increased confidence in the economical and effective nature of the science as a vital tool for water resource management. The WWDO has been sponsoring ground-based cloud seeding efforts over the Wind River Range in the Green River Basin since 2014, and now a new airborne program has begun within one of Wyoming’s largest river basins: the North Platte River Basin.

This new operational airborne cloud seeding program will take place over the Sierra Madre and Medicine Bow Mountain Ranges this winter. The program follows the recommendations and suggestions from “Weather Modification – Medicine Bow/Sierra Madre Ranges Final Design and Permitting Study”, recently completed by the National Center for Atmospheric Research, leaders in cloud seeding research. The goal of the program is to augment snowpack over mountain peaks with the intention of increasing spring runoff and reservoir storage within the water-stressed North Platte River Basin.

The WWDO has hired Weather Modification International (WMI) to conduct cloud seeding efforts through March 31, 2019. One King Air C90 aircraft, based at Cheyenne’s Regional Airport, will be responsible for seeding winter-time clouds that meet specific criteria over the Medicine Bow and Sierra Madre Mountain Ranges. Additional cloud seeding flights are expected to take place over the western slope of the Never Summer Range within Colorado’s Upper North Platte River Basin (paid for by the Jackson

County Water Conservancy District), pending permit approval from the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

The WWDO is proud to be sponsoring two cloud seeding programs within the state this winter. Funding requests to continue these efforts next year will be a part of the Omnibus Water Bill funding request during the upcoming 2019 Legislative Session.



Photo Credit: Weather Modification Inc., 2018

2018 WWDC & SWC Summer Tour and Meeting Recap

Each year, the Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO) schedules a summer tour for Wyoming Water Development Commissioners (WWDC) and Select Water Committee (SWC) members to visit various WWDC projects around the state. On August 16, 2018, the WWDC Summer Tour visited construction projects in Campbell and Crook counties in northeast Wyoming. The 2018 Summer Tour included City of Gillette, Town of Sundance and Town of Pine Haven construction projects. Following is a brief description of each of the tour stops.

~City of Gillette Project Tour Stops:

*Bennor Connection Building - is part of the Phase I Extension projects that will provide water from the City of Gillette regional water system to the individual districts within the designated service area. The Phase I Extension project connected nine districts to the regional water system and was completed in June 2018.

*Donkey Creek Pump Station - is part of the Gillette regional water system and delivers water from the new Madison well field to City of Gillette through a 42-inch steel transmission pipeline. The pump station facility includes seven pumps capable of delivering approximately 16,800 gpm of water to the regional water system. Construction of the Pump Station was completed in June 2017.

*Pine Ridge Disinfection Facility - disinfects water from the Madison well fields using sodium hypochlorite. The disinfection facility has the capacity to disinfect water long-term at a maximum rate of approximately 24,000 gpm. Construction of the Facility was completed in March 2017.

*Madison Well No. 15 (M15) - is one of five Madison wells drilled by the City of Gillette to supply water to the Gillette regional water system. Upon completion of the well field project, each of the five wells will produce 1,400 gpm to the re-

gional water system. The City of Gillette will construct additional Madison wells to meet future water system demands.

~Town of Sundance Project Tour Stops

*Sundance Cole Storage Tank - This project involved relocating a 256,000-gallon bolted steel water tank from a hill that experienced movement following heavy rains in 2011. The town relocated the tank approximately ½ mile to the west where the project engineer identified suitable sub-grade foundation material for the tank. The town completed the Cole Storage Tank project in 2015.

~Town of Pine Haven Project Tour Stop:

*Pine Haven Water Storage Tank - The last stop on the tour was to the Town of Pine Haven to visit the construction site of a 300,000 gallon welded storage tank. The new storage tank will replace an existing 250,000-gallon welded storage tank and will increase the town’s water system pressure. The town anticipates completing the project in early 2019.

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CALENDAR OF WATER EVENTS

- * **January 8, 2019** - Wyoming State Legislature Convenes, Cheyenne, WY
- * **January 9-11, 2019** - Four States Irrigation Council, Fort Collins, CO
- * **February 4-8, 2019** - Board of Control meeting, WWDO Office, Cheyenne, WY
- * **February 6-8, 2019** - Wyoming Engineering Society, Cheyenne, WY
- * **February 12, March 12, April 9, May 14, 2019** - Water Forum– WWDO Office, Cheyenne, WY
- * **February 20-21, 2019** - Wyoming Watershed Conference, Casper, WY
- * **February 20-22, 2019** - WAM Winter Conference, Cheyenne, WY
- * **March 1, 2019** - Level I & II Applications Due to WWDC
- * **March 4-5, 2019** - Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) Governance Committee, Kearney, NE
- * **March 14-15, 2019** - WWDC meeting, WWDO office, Cheyenne, WY
- * **March 20-22, 2019** - Western States Water Council Meeting, Chandler, AZ
- * **April 9, 2019** - Yellowstone River Compact Commission TAC meeting, Sheridan, WY
- * **April 11, 2019** - North Platte Decree Committee, Scottsbluff, NE
- * **April 15-18, 2019** - Western Snow Council, Reno, NV
- * **April 16-19, 2019** - WARWS Spring Training Conference, Casper, WY
- * **April 16, 2019** - Bear River Commission, Salt Lake City, UT
- * **April 23-25, 2019** - WSWC/USGS Water Information Management Systems Workshop, Garretson/Sioux Falls, SD
- * **May 13-17, 2019** - Board of Control meeting, (WYDOT) Cheyenne, WY
- * **May 16, 2019** - Snake River Agency meeting, Jackson, WY
- * **May 16-17, 2019** - WWDC/SWC meeting, WWDO office, Cheyenne, WY
- * **May 21-23, 2019** - Missouri Recovery Implementation Annual Forum, Sioux Fall, SD
- * **June 3-7, 2019** - Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, Denver, CO
- * **June 11-12, 2019** - PRRIP Governance Committee, WWDO, Cheyenne, WY
- * **June 12-14, 2019** - WAM Summer Conference, Sheridan, WY
- * **June 25, 2019** - SOI-SOQs due to WWDC
- * **August 14-16, 2019** - WWDC/SWC Workshop, Summer Tour & Meeting - TBA
- * **August 12-16, 2019** - Board of Control meeting, Division III, TBA
- * **September 1, 2019** - Level III Project Applications due to WWDC