

WSGA WATER WWGA WATER

Tuesday December 8, 2009

Chair: Joe Glode started the meeting at 10:17am. He discussed his background regarding water issues, and how they are not well understood. He encouraged everyone to keep current on water rights. He handed out a paper that was put together in 1998 on water policy.

Audience comments: BAG meetings in the basin need to be attended by producers. It was suggested at the next meeting to have someone come and explain to producers about the BAG system.

The Clean Water Restoration Act was discussed by Maggie Beal (congressional representative). The bill would give EPA authority over all waters. There appears to be lots of opposition from agriculture and there representatives on this bill. Also discussed was the issue of the Bighorn River regarding the Department of Interior and Montana in regards to the dams on the river.

The State Engineers Office: Harry LaBonde discussed the petition to list the Sage grouse on the Endangered Species Act and the effects that may have on agriculture, this latest decision will be out in February 2010. The Governor is working to keep the Sage Grouse off the list. He handed out a map showing Sage Grouse critical habitat and a draft letter to be used in 2010 for use in filing water rights, which incorporates 5 options to mitigate potential negative Sage Grouse effects. Also the State Engineers Office is putting out this next year a E-permit system via home computers. There was discussion about Co-Applications on water rights in regard with the Forest Service and BLM. Both agencies do not want to be listed as Co-applicant, but the Forest Service wants to be notified and have signed a memorandum of Understanding. Water rights can be issued to lessees and it is attached to the land.

Brian Lovett with DEQ discussed EPA and the new final rules for CAFO, there is a new permit and documents which will go into effect this year. Also there are very few feedlots currently that are in compliance with recordkeeping. There is going to be more enforcement this year. Every AFO will be visited by DEQ each year. Also all corrals and areas degrading water by livestock need to be mitigated.

Water Quality Challenges were discussed by Nephi Cole. He discussed the Chesapeake Bay initiative, which is to clean up the nations waters. EPA has said 60% of the pollution from non point pollution is from Agriculture, so they are going to target them. He encouraged everyone to implement Best Management practices and document it. There was also discussion on the possibility of changing the status of streams from Recreational Streams to Secondary Contact status.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

Recorder Scott Hininger