SUMMARY
MONTANA WETLAND COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday November 15th, 2012
DEQ Directors Conference Room
1520 East 6th Avenue, Helena MT

9:00 am. Welcome, Round-Robin Introductions, and Participant Updates.

Lynda Saul, DEQ Wetland Program Coordinator/Wetland Council Chair.

Lynda welcomed participants to the Council meeting and thanked the more than 70 people who attended the meeting for part of all of the day, please see attached sign-in sheet and participant announcements. She explained that the DEQ Wetland Program provides state leadership to conserve wetlands for their water quality, water quantity, habitat, and flood control benefits and provides leadership to help implement the state's 2008-2012 wetland plan. The **next Council meeting will be January 30, 2013 in Helena** and will be a working meeting to assess and update the Wetland/Riparian Strategic Framework through 2017. All are encouraged to attend. **May 30, 2013** will be the Council's biannual Wetland and Watershed Stewardship Award Ceremony in the State Capitol. The call for Nominations for Montana Wetland Stewards will issued around January 1st.

Wetland Council 2008-2012 Strategic Framework Working Group Updates:

Vulnerable Wetlands, Public Policy, and Local Government, Lynda Saul, Montana DEQ

- Major focus has been on riparian wetlands and floodplains environments – both are poorly protected and in path of development. DNRC has been updating Model Floodplain Regulations, which provides a template that local communities can modify and adopt to implement local floodplain ordinances. DNRC finalized the template this fall to meet minimum state and federal floodplain regulation requirements and sent it to FEMA for approval. Working group participants provided several additions to recognize the value of maintaining natural floodplains in reducing flood volume and velocities. Next document will identify higher standards that local communities can voluntarily adopt.
- Approximate floodplain mapping for Big Hole River: 4 counties, 2 NGO, 2 state agencies. This pilot is developing rapid methods to map approximate Regulated Flood Hazard Area at a lower cost and provide state-wide standard approach. The maps will provide local communities with information they need to regulate development in floodplains.
- New research project is getting underway funded by EPA Healthy Watershed Initiative- determining the ecologic limits of hydrologic alteration of prairie wetlands/aquatic systems. Potential data uses include water permitting, to inform restoration, and help determine physical and biological CWA components.
- SWS speaker's series on 11/14 – heard about DEQ exploring the feasibility of modifying Water Quality Standards (WQS) to improve the protection of wetlands and water quality. CWA's goal of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters so that they can support "the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water." Past emphasis was on chemical integrity and point source pollution, then added non-point source, now investigating incorporating physical and biological integrity into WQS.

Public Education and Professional Training, Steve Carpenedo, Montana DEQ

The public education and professional training ad hoc work group supports a variety of wetland education and trainings provided in the state. Since the last council meeting MDEQ's Wetland Program has been involved with two different trainings. The first was the "Wetland Restoration: Planning for Success" course at MSU. This 3-day training was attended by 31 wetland professionals from Montana and surrounding states. All participants completing the course were eligible to receive 2.9 continuing education units. Montana Natural Heritage Program Botanist, with support from MDEQ, also provided five wetland plant identification trainings around the state. These training were attended by 114 people. The participants were mainly from the federal government, followed by state government, consultants, tribal government, local governments, and NGOs. Other work that

has been going on under public education and professional trainings was a training by CSKT on Wetland Restoration in August.

Restoration, Tom Hinz, DFWP Montana Wetland Legacy Partnership
The restoration working group has made progress on the Council's 5 year goals. Tom acknowledged Fish Wildlife and Park, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Services, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and Ducks Unlimited. Partners are completing a two year EPA Wetland Program Development Grant for offsetting wetland mitigation. Montana Aquatic Resources Services (MARS) will deliver a state-wide In Lieu Fee mitigation program. The Big Hole Watershed Committee and the Greater Gallatin Watershed Coalition completed a wetland integration project with MDEQ and MWLP. This project looked at the health of two watersheds and where focusing attention on wetland restoration could improve water quality. The Beaver working group is moving forward with projects, assembling information on their presence or absence around the state. The working group is also looking for locations for beaver relocation where they will not do damage and improve the watershed health. A five member group has approved acquisition of a property for Beaver project in the middle Madison. Currently, there are several social barriers to relocating beaver. Tom and groups are looking for areas where there will be minimal conflicts (headwater areas) and addressing any issues prior to moving them across watershed boundaries.

Mapping, Assessment, and Monitoring, Karen Newlon, Montana Natural Heritage Program
Assessment and Monitoring:

- Completed the Southwest Montana basin-wide wetland assessment project. The report is available online at: http://mtnhp.org/Reports/SWMT_Wet_Assess.pdf
- Wrapped up field work on the Southeast Montana basin-wide wetland assessment project. Data analysis will continue through this winter with a final report expected in June 2013.
- Received an EPA Wetland Program Development Grant to intensify wetland assessments in the Blackfoot and Swan watersheds. This grant will also fund the creation of new wetland and riparian mapping in the Blackfoot watershed.

Wetland and Riparian Mapping:

- MTNHP welcomed Jamul Hahn, Clea Klagstad, and Alexis Buchwald as our newest Photo Interpreter/GIS Specialists.
- Wetland and riparian mapping is now available for viewing in the MTNHP MapViewer: http://mtnhp.org/mapviewer/?t=8. Users can also run summary reports for watersheds and other areas of interest.
- A Wetland and Riparian Web Map Service is available at:

http://gisservice.mt.gov/ArcGIS/rest/services/MSDI_Framework/WetlandsRiparian/MapServer

- The Montana Wetland and Riparian Framework data are available for download from the Montana GIS Portal here: ftp://ftp.gis.mt.gov/WetlandsFramework/Wetland_Riparian_2012.zip
- To date, the MTNHP has mapped 1.3 million acres of wetlands and 433,000 acres of riparian area throughout Montana. http://mtnhp.org/nwi/NWI_Status_map.asp
- MTNHP received funding from the BLM to map a large portion of central Montana where the BLM holds subsurface rights. http://mtnhp.org/nwi/images/partners.jpg

Restoration:

- Completed a report on Restoration Guidelines for Wetlands of the Western Prairie Pothole Region.

http://mtnhp.org/reports/Restoration_Guidelines_Report.pdf
Linda Vance, also highlighted MTNHP field surveys of groundwater dependent ecosystems and headwater wetlands (higher elevation undisturbed wetlands). Currently analyzing data and ability to incorporate sites into mapping. Also MTNHP is working with BLM to determine if good water quality indicates good riparian condition and good wetland quality and how those resources are managed.

Meeting Focus – Targeted wetland restoration for water quality improvement, habitat, flood storage, and overall watershed management.

Lynda introduced the focus of this Council meeting as a sampling of targeted integrated wetland and riparian restoration work and tools. Presentation abstracts are provided below. PowerPoint presentations are linked to the talk title. Speaker bios and contact information are at the end of this summary.

Montana's Reference Wetland Network: A Tool for Wetland Restoration

Karen Newlon, Ecologist/Project Manager, Montana Natural Heritage Program

The Montana Natural Heritage Program has developed a reference wetland network consisting of wetland sites that represent multiple wetland systems along a gradient of condition. This reference network helps define characteristic levels of integrity while also establishing the range and variability of multiple wetland attributes. These wetlands can provide a framework for comparing observed differences in integrity between restored wetlands and natural wetlands. The ecological integrity of restored wetlands can be improved if information from reference network wetlands is used to both design restoration projects and to evaluate their success. The use of these data to guide the design of restoration projects helps to ensure that the appropriate ecological integrity endpoints are selected and allow for restoration practitioners to adaptively manage the restoration process.

A Montana Specific Web-based Tool for Addressing Water Quality Impairments through Wetland Restoration and Protection

Steve Carpenedo, Montana DEQ, Wetlands Environmental Science Specialist

A new interactive web application allows users to explore where protecting and restoring wetlands can help address water quality and water quantity impairments identified in the TMDL planning process. This tool provides information on which wetlands types have the best ability to address water quality impairments for a contributing area and which specific wetland functions should be targeted to address those impairments. It also provides wetland location so that field-based investigations for restoration and/or protection needs could be conducted. While this project concentrated on two pilot watersheds, the interactive web application was designed to provide similar information for any watershed in Montana. This talk will describe the interactive web tool.

Applying the Web-based Tool: Big Hole Watershed Committee and Greater Gallatin Watershed Committee Approach and Experiences

Jen Titus, Executive Director Big Hole Watershed Committee
Tammy Crone, Water Quality Specialist, Gallatin Local Water Quality District
Tom Hinz, Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership

MDEQs Wetland Program, Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership, Big Hole Watershed Committee, and Greater Gallatin Watershed Council will talk about their work using wetland restoration and protection to address water quality impairments. This was a two-year pilot project focusing on site identification and planning. The goals of this project were: 1) increase the capacity of local governments and watershed groups to develop comprehensive watershed restoration plans; 2) demonstrate the steps, techniques, and tools necessary for incorporating wetlands into watershed planning; and 3) demonstrate how the incorporation of wetlands into watershed restoration plans can contribute to reducing pollutant loads.

Shiloh Conservation Area--Wetland Development for Water Quality, Flood Water Detention and Recreation/Aesthetics

Wade Irion, P. E., Regional Manager, Dowl-HKM and
Tom Parker, Principal Ecologist, Geum Environmental Consulting, Inc.

The City of Billings acquired a 70 acre parcel for development of the Shiloh Conservation Area (SCA) where agricultural lands are being converted to residential and commercial uses. Anticipating the effects of urban growth, the SCA will balance the objectives of water quality improvement, flood control and recreational benefits to the community. A series of wetlands and open water features will function to trap sediment; remove nutrients from the water column; provide secondary flood detention; and be distributed within a public park. A preliminary design was completed in August by Dowl-HKM, Inc. with support from Land Design Inc. and Geum Environmental Consulting. Over the next two years, the project design will be completed and constructed, and then monitored to evaluate its effectiveness for water quality improvement and flood control. Lessons learned from this project will apply to future projects as the City plans and extends its infrastructure to anticipate growth from development.

Mission Creek Water Quality Improvement

Rusty Sydnor, Botanist, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Fisheries Program

Numerous monitoring projects have identified Mission Creek on the Flathead Indian Reservation as one of the largest sources of sediment and nutrients to the Clark Fork River system. Two irrigation waste-water canals that flow into Mission Creek are largely responsible for reductions in water quality within the drainage. Both waterways enter Mission Creek across a single property which the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes purchased in 2005 to address the problem. From 2008 to 2012, the Tribes constructed about 19 acres of remedial wetlands on the property. Irrigation waste water is diverted first into settling ponds to remove sediment and then into a series of shallow wetlands to remove nutrients. Preliminary comparisons between inflow and outflow from the wetland system indicate substantial reductions in total water volume, turbidity and nutrients.

Targeting Conservation Practices in Agricultural Watersheds

Eloise Kendy, Senior Freshwater Scientist, North America Region, The Nature Conservancy

Historically, NRCS has awarded contracts for agricultural conservation practices under the Farm Bill more-or-less on an opportunistic basis. The Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) is demonstrating a more systematic approach of targeting suites of practices to reduce nutrient loads from selected agricultural watersheds. To achieve watershed-scale results, conservation practices must be applied not only on farm fields, but also in the wetlands and waterways that process and convey pollutants. Two MRBI watersheds – Boone River in northern Iowa and Root River in southeastern Minnesota – show how model-driven targeting is playing out on the ground and the integral role of constructed and restored wetlands.
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS//nrcs143_008142.pdf

Re-plumbing More Than A Century of Stream Manipulation to Address Contaminated Groundwater

Jim Ford, Hydrogeologist/Project Manager, Montana Environmental Trust Group (METG)

METG assumed responsibility for cleanup of the former Asarco Lead Smelter in East Helena, which is being implemented under EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The cleanup is focused primarily on arsenic and selenium contaminated groundwater. One of the cleanup plans is intended to: (1) eliminate surface water recharging site groundwater; (2) reduce the amount of groundwater in direct contact with highly contaminated soils; and (3) decrease the rate and concentration of contaminated groundwater leaving the site. The cleanup plan involves construction of a temporary bypass channel on Prickly Pear Creek to allow removal of engineered structures, realignment of over a mile of creek, and conversion of two man-made water supply and disposal lakes to vegetated, woody wetlands. These new higher value wetlands and the enhanced riparian zone are expected to create additional habitat and provide public access for trails, fishing and other recreational uses.

Discussion.

Participants invited to discuss meeting topic, identify Council follow up and next steps.

Next Council Meeting: January 30. Assessment and 5-year update of Wetland Strategic Plan

The Montana Wetland Council meets three times a year and is an active network of diverse interests that works cooperatively to conserve and restore Montana's wetland and riparian ecosystems by implementing Montana's Wetland Plan. Everyone is welcome to attend. For additional information contact Lynda Saul, Montana DEQ, (406) 444-6652 or lsaul@mt.gov. Website: Montana Wetland Clearinghouse

Bio's and Contact Information – Nov 15, 2012 Montana Wetland Council meeting

Karen Newlon is an Ecologist/Project Manager with the Montana Natural Heritage Program responsible for developing wetland assessment protocols and conducting wetland assessment projects throughout the state. Over the past four years, the MTNHP has completed over 450 wetland assessments throughout Montana, collecting information on wetland ecological integrity, soils, vegetation, and potential wetland stressors. She also manages wetland and riparian mapping projects with the goal of a statewide wetland and riparian data layer. Karen received her M.S. in Biological Sciences from Montana State University focusing on the effect of riparian integrity on breeding bird communities.

Karen Newlon, Ecologist/Project Manager, Montana Natural Heritage Program
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Steve Carpenedo is a Wetland Environmental Science Specialist with the Wetland Program and MDEQ. He has been working on a variety of wetland projects including professional education courses at MSU, integrating wetland restoration into watershed planning, and reintroducing beavers for their water storage and wetland restoration values. Steve has a master's degree in Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development at the Odum School of Ecology, University of Georgia. His thesis involved the development of a GIS-based watershed planning tool for identifying priority areas for wetland restoration and mitigation based on desired wetland ecosystem functions. Other professional experiences include wildlife research and natural resources management, both nationally and internationally, with a focus toward conservation of habitats and species of conservation concern.

Stephen M. Carpenedo, Wetlands Environmental Science Specialist, Montana DEQ
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Jen Titus is the Executive Director of the Big Hole Watershed Committee and lives in Wise River, Montana. Jen has been with the BHWC since 2010, first as Conservation Programs Coordinator. Her background is fisheries and riparian health and non-profit management. She has worked in fisheries or natural resources in Montana since 2004 through Montana Tech, USFS, and FWP. She serves as Project Manager under the Washoe Park Foundation for the renovation of Washoe Park and Hafners Dam in Anaconda, Montana, encompassing nearly 3 miles of Warm Springs Creek and several man-made wetlands. She restructured the Wise River Community Foundation in 2009 and now serves on the Board of Directors.

Jen Titus; Executive Director; Big Hole Watershed Committee
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Tammy Crone is a Water Quality Specialist for the Gallatin Local Water Quality District where she has been conducting groundwater and surface water monitoring and educational outreach for 12 years. She has worked for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as a Water Resource Specialist and as a Research Assistant in Veterinary Molecular Biology at Montana State University. She currently serves on the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council, DFWP's Montana Wetland Protection Advisory Council, and several local committees focused on water-related issues. She is also a past president of the Montana Section-American Water Resources Association. Tammy has a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural
Resources and Molecular Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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Tom Hinz is the Coordinator of the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership in Bozeman, Montana. The Legacy is a voluntary, incentive-based public/private partnership working to protect wetlands, riparian areas, and watershed lands throughout Montana. He also works part time for the DEQ Wetland Program developing a state-wide In Lieu Fee program for aquatic mitigation. Tom is a graduate of Montana State University and has worked in the field of migratory bird and wetland conservation since 1974. In May 2005, Mr. Hinz was awarded the Montana Wetland Stewardship Award.

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Wade Irion is Eastern Region Manager of DOWL HKM and former Division Manager of the Water Resources Planning Group. Wade has over 27 years of water resources experience performing hydrologic and hydraulic analyses and designs including flood studies, storm water management, irrigation systems, bridge and highway drainage designs, river basin water availability modeling, hydraulic structure design, and stream restoration. Wade has managed a variety of water resource projects requiring orchestration of multiple tasks and disciplines and has been the lead hydrology/hydraulics engineer on a variety of irrigation and drainage projects. Wade provides technical direction for Federal Reserved Water Rights negotiations, has served as project manager for a number of river basin planning studies, and has authored Storm Drainage Criteria manuals addressing control measures both for storm water quality as well as quantity for municipal storm water management.

Wade Irion, Eastern Region Manager, Dowl HKM
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Tom Parker is the President and Principal Ecologist of Geum Environmental Consulting, Inc. He has 17 years of experience doing ecological restoration design, planning, and implementation in river and wetland ecosystems. Tom typically provides a collaborative leadership role on project management teams for large scale river restoration projects, in addition to representing the riparian and wetland ecology perspective. Tom has a Master of Science degree from University of Montana (Resource Conservation) and a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry, also from U of M. Previous jobs include coordinating a wilderness stewardship program in the Adirondacks, working as a Research Specialist at U of M, managing Bitterroot Restoration's consulting program, and managing Herrera Environmental Consultants' Missoula office. Tom is currently working toward his yoga teaching certification.

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Rusty Sydnor works as a botanist for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Fisheries Program on the Flathead Indian Reservation. As part of an inter-disciplinary team of scientists, he assists with the management of over 6,000 acres that have been acquired by the Tribes to protect and restore native fish habitat. His main responsibilities are weed management and restoration of wetland and riparian plant communities. Rusty has a Bachelor's degree in Horticulture and a Master's degree in Restoration Ecology. Prior to working for the Tribes, he worked as a consultant and project manager on several restoration projects in Colorado and California.

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Eloise Kendy joined The Nature Conservancy in 2006. She works closely with governments, water resource managers, and NGOs to advance tools and policies for protecting and restoring environmental flows. Previously, Eloise conducted water-resource assessments and hydrologic modeling and provided public education and policy support for sustainable surface and groundwater management. She has worked independently and for the U.S. Geological Survey, the International Water Management Institute, and the U.S. Senate. Eloise holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Cornell University, an M.S. in Hydrogeology from The University of Wisconsin, and a B.A. in Geological Sciences from the University of California.

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Jim Ford has over 25-yrs of both public and private sector experience with contaminated water. His public sector work has included: quantifying statewide pesticide effects on waters for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture; addressing a 16-square mile solvent contaminated drinking water supply for Washoe County in Reno, Nevada; documenting Natural Resource Damages for the National Park Service; and developing and designing a plan to

remediate Silver Bow Creek for the Montana DEQ. Currently he manages the clean-up of the former Asarco lead smelter in East Helena for the Montana Environmental Trust Group.

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Montana Wetland Council
November 15, 2012
Sign In Sheet

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