

APPENDIX F
PRESS RELEASES DURING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Trader's Dispatch, March, 2003

Comments sought on Teton Water Quality Document

Today the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) released a draft of the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for salinity in Priest Butte Lake and the Tet River. Also addressed is sediment, nutrient, temperature and metal TMDLs for the Teton River and its tributaries. The document addresses all necessary TMDLs in the Teton TMDL Planning Area. The Teton Watershed is found in Teton and Choteau counties northwest of Great Falls, Montana.

The DEQ invites the public to an open house on March 17, 2003 at the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks conference room, 4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, Montana. Open house hours are from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. The public is encouraged to stop by at a time convenient to them to speak with a water quality specialist about their questions and comments. No formal presentation is planned. Copies of the plan will be available along with maps of the affected area.

The Department will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this open house or who need an alternative accessible format of this notice. If you require an accommodation, please contact the Department no later than 5:00 p.m., March 14, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact Carole Mackin DEQ, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901; phone (406) 444-7425; fax (406) 444-6836, email cmakin@state.gov.us.

The draft document is available for review on the DEQ web site: <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/pubcom.asp>. Public comments will be accepted until 5 p.m., March 27, 2003. The comments may be mailed to Montana Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901. To comment or for more information please contact Robert Ray, DEQ Watershed Program Manager, 406-444-5319, r-ray@state.mt.us or Michael Pipp, 406-444-7424, mpipp@state.mt.us.

• Choteau Acornha • Wednesday, March 5, 2003

State DEQ seeks comment on Teton River plan

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on Feb. 21 released a draft of the Water Quality Management Plan and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for non-point-source pollutants in the Teton River Watershed in Teton and Chouteau counties northwest of Great Falls.

The draft addresses salinity, sediment, nutrient, temperature and metal TMDLs for Priest Lake, the Teton River and its tributaries. The document addresses all necessary TMDLs in the Teton TMDL Planning Area.

DEQ invites the public to an open house from 4 to 7 p.m. on March 17 at the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks conference room, 4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls. The public is encouraged to speak with a water quality specialist about their questions and comments. No formal presentation is planned. Copies of the plan will be available along with maps of the affected area.

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Choteau Acantha • Wednesday, March 12, 2003

Watershed group earns award

By Nancy Thornton
Acantha reporter

The Teton River Watershed Group got the "Weed Fighters United" award for 2002 at the Montana Weed Control Association's annual meeting last month.

Teton County Weed District Coordinator Paul Wick nominated the watershed group and presented the prize, a wall clock with a nameplate, to TRWG President Clay Crawford at the TRWG meeting on Feb. 11.

Wick said everyone should be pleased with the increased cooperation occurring between landowners who want to tackle weeds. Their interest in weed control has kept pace with increased grant funding to fight weeds and that has evolved into more cooperation.

Crawford, who said he expects to spend a significant amount of money on weed control next year, said he would be interested in seeing what the next few years will bring in the way of weed control.

Wick said that he and several volunteers would attend the Noxious Weed Trust Fund board meeting where he will request \$16,170, the money to fund a two-season herbicide program tailored to private landowners or to small weed management districts.

The Nature Conservancy's representative, Mark Korte, reported that the upper Teton Weed Group obtained a \$2,800 Partners for Wildlife grant to fund two weeks work, hand pulling knapweed.

On another matter, TRWG Coordinator Alan Rollo said he submitted the Environmental Protection Agency 319 grant application last month to fund the watershed group's activities for the next two years.

He said he asked for \$140,000, however TRWG's request is one of 40 requests totaling \$40 million. With only \$2 million available to fund watershed activities, the competition will be fierce, he said.

He asked several members to attend the water activities work group meeting in Helena to make the grant request in person. "It is critical that we communicate effectively," he said.

The work group is an oversight committee that gives input to the state Department of Environmental Quality, the final arbiter of the 319 grant funds. Rollo is a member of the 20-member work group and he said he would abstain from voting on TRWG's request for funding.

Landowners, Diane Walker of Chouteau County, and Crawford and Bonnie Cray, both of Teton County, said they would attend

the Helena meeting.

Rollo said the proposed two-year budget is about the same as in previous years. Besides the cash that would be obtained from the 319 grant, the watershed group's activities are supported by in-kind contributions from other agencies and volunteers that yield a TRWG budget of \$219,400.

In other business:

•The TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) plan to improve the Teton River watershed was released on Feb. 21. (See accompanying article.) The deadline for comments is 5 p.m. on March 27.

DEQ will host a meeting at the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks conference room, 4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls on March 17 from 4 to 7 p.m. At that time individuals can ask questions and submit written comments that

will be incorporated into the final document.

•The members voted to contribute \$400 toward Rollo's expenses of \$1,200 to travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials about earmarking \$1.5 million for watershed activities in Montana.

The money would be distributed among the 50 watershed groups in the state. Rollo said he would ask the Sun River Watershed Group to also contribute \$400. He is the part-time coordinator for both the Teton River and the Sun River watershed groups.

•TRWG has tentatively scheduled a July 15 field trip and bus tour of Freezeout Lake Wildlife Management Area and the upper Teton River to highlight work done to rebuild several diversions and outlets in riparian areas.

THE RIVER PRESS • Fort Benton, MT - Wed., Mar. 12, 2003 •

3 Comments sought on Teton water quality document

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Teton River. Also addressed is sediment, nutrient, temperature, and metal TMDLs for the Teton River and its tributaries. The document addresses all necessary TMDLs in

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PAGE 10 • *Choteau Acantha* • Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Water users comment on Teton plan

By Nancy Thornton
Acantha reporter

The public has until March 27 to comment on the Teton River Water Quality Management Plan that provides a blueprint for change on the Teton River.

Teton River Watershed Group members discussed the river's condition and the plan with Department of Environmental Quality water resource specialist Michael Pipp at a public meeting in Great Falls on Monday.

Choteau County landowner Diane Walker said she is unable to irrigate any more because there isn't enough river water. Added to that the river banks have eroded at a much faster clip since the 1964 flood.

She gave an example to highlight the chronic and frustrating problems in her area. Last Saturday the Choteau County Conservation District worked with a rancher to put Christmas trees along an eroding bank and the next day, the ice break-up took them out.

Pipp said it was a "shoddy project, just bad timing. The intent of the water quality management plan, Pipp said, is to show what conditions exist now, to give goals and targets for the future and to give a road map on how to get there. "It's up to individuals in the watershed to find out what works best," he said.

DEQ has requested comments from landowners and governmental-agency representatives who have an interest in the beneficial uses of the impaired Teton River and its tributaries. Beneficial uses include fisheries, aquatic life, human consumption, and agriculture.

The 150-page management plan is available on the Internet at



Acantha photo by Nancy Thornton

In November workers used root wads and quarry rock to stabilize 100 feet of eroding Teton River stream bank on Clay Crawford's ranch northwest of Choteau. Sponsored by the Teton River Watershed Group and the Teton County Conservation District, the \$5,000 project by T&L Construction of Lincoln was paid for with a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The five-foot high bank had been eroding at about two feet per year, according to TRWG coordinator Alan Rolfo. A second project to place root wads and rock on 200 feet of riverbank on the Charles Fellows ranch south of Choteau cost \$7,000 and was completed in five days.

www.deq.state.mt.us. It contains tables, graphs, maps and data on the condition of the river and its tributaries gleaned from state censuses and volunteer monitors over the past 50 years. It sets targets for pollutant levels and offers a three-stage plan of action that would begin to repair river problems. The targets would be reviewed and revised if necessary in five years.

TRWG President Clay Crawford said the plan is needed and the Teton County Conservation District supports it. The Teton River flows through four miles of his ranch.

"We need a base line of what is happening on the river. We have to look at what's there," he said, and explained that he is also look-

ing for solutions to erosion problems. "I am losing lots of my ground. I pay taxes on it and it's floating down the river," he said.

The state in 1996 and again in 2002 determined that the Teton River and some of its tributaries do not fully support all of the beneficial uses that a river should have under state and federal water-quality standards. As a result the state is required to formulate a plan that would change the condition of the Teton River and all other rivers in Montana that are listed as impaired.

The plan sets targets for acidity, sediment, total dissolved solids, selenium, nutrients, dissolved oxygen, and temperature along some or all sections of the Teton River, Spring Creek, Deep Creek and Priest Butte Lakes, which feed into the river through a man-made ditch.

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks wildlife biologist Quentin Kujala said FWP is reviewing the plan because water quality influences the Fremont Lake Management Area that flows into Priest Butte Lakes.

Supported by federal grant funds, the Teton River Watershed Group through its part-time coordinator Alan Rolfo of Great Falls would have an active role in working with landowners and affected parties who would voluntarily implement the Teton River water quality management plan.

For more than 150 years, farmers have diverted water from the Teton River to irrigate cropland and that would not change under the management plan. No adjudicated water rights may be diminished, according to Pipp.

At a recent TRWG meeting, Rolfo agreed that the plan is voluntary and that no water right would be affected. He also noted that a district court has determined that a minimum stream flow is not a water-quality target that would be set by the water quality