

AGENDA
MONTANA WETLAND COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday January 9, 2007
9:30 am – 4:00 pm

DEQ Directors Conference Room
1520 East 6th Avenue, Helena MT

9:30 Welcome, Introductions and Wetland Council Report.

Lynda Saul, Wetland Program Manager, MT Dept of Environmental Quality.
Round-robin self-introductions and review meeting agenda. Follow up from the winter Wetland Council meeting on water rights and water availability for wetland restoration. Update on new wetland issues including Supreme Court cases and proposed mitigation rule. Introduce stream and wetland setbacks as theme for Council meeting Riparian areas occupy about 3% of Montana and make up the state's largest ecological wetland type.

**9:45 Wetland Conservation Strategy – Assessment of last 10-years.
Vision for next decade.**

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Karin Boyd, Geomorphologist, Applied Geomorphology, Inc.
Channel migration zones (CMZ's) delineate geomorphologic hazards within stream corridors based on historic and projected rates of channel migration. This information can be utilized to develop process-based stream corridor management zones that incorporate natural variability in river dynamics. Boyd will describe the process of developing CMZ's with examples from the Missouri, Yellowstone, Big Hole, and Boulder Rivers and discuss how this information can be used in the development or modification of setbacks.

10:15 6 Categories – champions

Break

11:00 Using Land Use Planning to Protect MT Wetlands & Riparian Areas.

Janet Ellis, Executive Director, Montana Audubon
Learn how different local governments - from Lake County to the city of Missoula, and from Choteau County to Meagher County - are protecting wetlands and riparian areas in local land use planning regulations. Author of "A Planning Guide for Protecting Montana's Wetlands and Riparian Areas", Ellis will describe how Montana communities are effectively using this information to determine a buffer size to protect sensitive aquatic areas from new buildings. She will also discuss effort by non-governmental organizations to pass state-wide setback legislation in 2005 and what's proposed for the 2007 Montana Legislature.

11:45 Breaking working groups

Governor's Riparian Best Management Practices Workgroup.

Hal Harper, Chief Policy Advisor, Governor's Office

“Development along rivers and streams that destroys protective riparian areas is possibly the single most urgent ecosystem threat facing Montana today.” This statement is from Governor Schweitzer’s March 8, 2006 letter to DEQ, DFWP and DNRC Directors requesting that the State establish voluntary best management practices to protect the integrity of Montana’s rivers and streams. Harper chairs the workgroup leading this new effort and will share the progress and goals and seek input from the Wetland Council.

12:00 Lunch Break* - Catered lunch and presentations on new wetland information

Demonstration of New Wetland Mapping Capabilities.

Tom Schemm, Wetland Digitizing Technician, Montana Wetland and Riparian Mapping Center, MTNHP

Use of Natural heritage information portal for viewing of color air photos and wetland images – Bryce Maxell, Senior...

1:00 Assemble in working groups

1:25 Big Hole River Conservation Development Standards.

Rick Hartz, Beaverhead County Planner.

Silver Bow, Madison, Deer Lodge and Beaverhead Counties all adopted uniform Standards of Development for the entire 150 mile length of the Big Hole River. Hartz will describe the unique inter-local agreement that was developed and features such as the variance review board made up of resident landowners from the basin. This citizen driven initiative took almost 7 years to develop. Hartz will discuss how and why these four Counties accomplish this planning mechanism and how it’s working.

1:50 Discussion on Stream and Wetland Setbacks.

Wetland Council attendees and speakers.

Please think about the following two questions for Council discussion:

- How to translate the science of stream migration corridors and wetland-upland transitional environments to the policy of setbacks?
- How to support setback policy that is both consistent statewide and flexible for local physiographic variability?

2:45 Break

3:00 Wetland Updates and Coordination Reports.

Brief round-robin reports from State, Federal, Tribal, Universities, non-governmental organizations, consultants, Watershed Coordination Council and others on ongoing and upcoming wetland issues and activities. Please bring written copy for Council summary.

3:55 Next Wetland Council Meeting – Set Date and Potential Agenda Items.

4:00 Adjourn.

* Lunch is on your own. There are several restaurants within walking distance or you are welcome to bring your lunch and join others in the conference room or at outside picnic tables.

The Montana Wetland Council meets three times a year in Helena and is an informational forum for wetland protection and management. Everyone is welcome to attend. For additional information please contact Lynda Saul, Montana DEQ, (406) 444-6652 or lsaul@mt.gov