

**Tongue River Watershed Alliance  
August 9, 2005 Meeting Minutes**

**Attending were:**

Donna Wilson	Keith Harwood
Brett Emmons	Kathy Hirst
Tom Emmons	Charlie Gephart
Bill Isaacs	Roger Muggli
Randy Shannon	Mike Blum
Mark Bloxham	Ray Muggli
Jim Rogers	Terry Punt
John Wilkinson	Watty Taylor
Kyle Shaw	Marc Stevens
Leal Brimmer	Nan Stevens
Ronald Hauso	Charles Bumgardner
Audrey Snodgrass	Brad Schmitz
Tim Hamilton	Patricia Ramos
Frank Rollefson	Art Hayes
Allan Clubfoot	Megan Sweedland
Laurie Kelley	

Others came in late and did not sign in.

Meeting was called to order by Laurie Kelley.

**WELCOME:**

Art Hayes started the meeting by telling the group that in the past few years, there have been many changes in the Tongue River Basin. The Tongue River Water Users have spent a lot of time and money gathering flow and usage data to back up the compact data if it is necessary to go to court. However, more information needs to be gathered on flow and return flow rates. It is time to have an unbiased, third party source gather and evaluate soil and water data. The Tongue River Water Users have put in for a lot of grants, but were turned down because they were not a watershed group. This is the opportunity to form an alliance that will have a positive impact on the watershed.

**OPERATING GUIDELINES:**

The operating guidelines were handed out for the group's review and revision. Jim Rogers asked for clarification as to whether the chairman

of the board of directors is elected by the whole group or from within the board itself. According to the proposed guidelines, the chairman is elected annually from within the Board of Directors. Laurie mentioned that in the draft version, 3 members would be elected every other year, but that was before the change was made from six to ten board members. She asked if the group would like to amend it to say 5 members (half of the board) would be elected every other year, and the group agreed.

One stakeholder, noting the structure of the board districts, suggested that the Otter, Pumpkin and Hanging Woman drainages should have a representative. Art commented that he felt the group should start with the main stem and have the smaller ones join later. The stakeholder said he felt landowners in the other drainages should have representation since the decisions made by the group affect them. Another attendee said that he felt there should be a cross-section of people represented. Another attendee was concerned that the geographic divisions didn't allow for representation from Birney to Ashland, except for on the river. Brad Schmitz replied that the districts were just geographic divisions; it didn't mean that they couldn't still be members. The group decided to leave the districts as they were in the proposed operating guidelines.

Watty Taylor suggested that if the guidelines were amended to say that the watershed would include the Tongue River and its tributaries, it would give people not directly on the Tongue River an opportunity to serve on the board of directors. The group agreed to the change.

Laurie asked the group if there were any other questions, concerns or areas for revision and there were none.

Laurie asked the group for a show of hands for those in favor of approving the operating guidelines as amended. The group voted unanimously to approve.

Laurie asked everyone to turn over their copy of the guidelines. One lucky winner had a pink smiley on the back and was given a Rosebud Conservation District cap.

#### **UPDATE ON OUTREACH EFFORTS:**

Laurie reported that the meeting notice had been sent out to every radio station and newspaper in the area. Copies of the press release had been hung up in Forsyth and Miles City and sent out to the members of the interim board to disperse. A group is only as

successful as its members make it; without public input it won't fly. The group needs people who are passionate about their watershed and will commit time and effort to making the group work.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Mark Stevens asked whether the guidelines meant that everyone could vote for every district or if members could only vote on the board member from their own district. The group decided that everyone could vote for all of the districts.

Laurie handed out Tongue River Watershed Alliance business cards that read "To determine if your watershed group is going to be successful, ask yourself: are you dedicated or are you committed? Liken it to a bacon and eggs breakfast: The chicken was dedicated, but the pig was committed."

Nominations from the interim board and the membership were:

<b>District:</b>	<b>Candidate:</b>	<b>Votes received:</b>
Stateline to Birney:	Bill Carroll	1
	Matt McKinney	1
	<b>Art Hayes</b>	18
	<b>Denise Wood</b>	7
Birney to Brandenburg:	<b>Mark Bloxham</b>	14
	<b>Ron Hauso</b>	12
	Mick Melin	1
	Brett Emmons	11
	Rick Rice	8
Cheyenne Reservation:	<b>Allan Clubfoot</b>	no vote taken
	<b>Patricia Ramos</b>	no vote taken
Brandenburg to Miles City:	<b>Ray Muggli</b>	15
	Brett Emmons	9
	<b>Tim Hamilton</b>	13
Miles City Urban/T & Y	<b>Mike Blum</b> Need another member	no vote taken

\*\*successful candidates are in **bold** print

Mark Stevens strongly opposed the voting, stating that in order for directors to most accurately represent their district, members should only be allowed to vote for the directors for their own district. Otherwise, a minority opinion may be represented because the district's directors were voted in by people who live outside that district. It is extremely important for directors to reflect the attitudes of their district.

Several people suggested Brad Schmitz (Fish Wildlife & Parks region fisheries manager) run for the open Miles City Urban/T & Y slot, but he declined, citing the operating guideline section that states "Federal and state agencies may serve in an advisory capacity only".

## **BREAK**

### **WATERSHED PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE GRANT (WPA)**

Laurie told the members that the grant is due on 9-29. There is a \$10,000 maximum available to help with start-up costs. In order to write the grant, a lot of information needs to be gathered, including previously collected soil and water samples. The more complete the grant application is, the better the chance of being funded.

WPA grants will pay for facilitation and/or coordination of public scoping meetings, development of a watershed plan, and the training of local people in the various aspects of watershed planning. They also pay for planning and carrying out educational activities, such as workshops, tours, and the producing and distributing of educational materials. Incidental costs such as supplies, postage, photocopies and meeting rooms are also covered. Other activities, such as baseline resource information gathering and temporary staffing tied to a specific task or product can also be funded by the WPA grant. Local commitment and participation is extremely important in determining whether or not WPA grant funding is obtained.

Laurie asked the group if they would like to pursue a grant. Comments were:

"We have to try for a grant; we don't have the funds ourselves."

"Get some money and take some time to get organized."

Question: "Do you need some basic goals to start with?"

Answer: Laurie: "Yes, you have to show the funder that you have given it some thought."

Question: "Should the board get together to discuss issues at a meeting before the grant is written?"

Answer: "The board will get together after the meeting and set a date for a board meeting to work on the grant application."

Question: "What does the group want to accomplish?"

Answer: "Gather baseline data on water, soils, and weeds".  
"Protect and improve the land, water and resources of the watershed".  
"I am concerned that this group will focus only on the river."

Laurie: "That's why everyone needs to show up and make their voices heard!"

Question: "If Otter, Pumpkin and Hanging Woman want to form their own group, where do they go?"

Answer: Laurie: "The bulk of your land lies in Powder River Conservation District, but I will be happy to help put you in touch with people who can help you."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A brief meeting was held with the attending board members. They decided to hold a formal board meeting on August 23 at the REA office in Ashland. The group will rough out a plan for the WPA grant. Laurie will write a rough draft which will be presented at the next general membership meeting to be held on September 6 at the Ashland Public School at 7 pm.