

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, November 20, 2006**

**BUSINESS:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Doug McRae made a motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting and Jewel Davenport seconded the motion. The motion carried. There was no further business, so the meeting was turned over to the guest speakers.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

**Shanny Spang, Northern Cheyenne Tribe Coalbed Methane Coordinator:** Shanny updated the group on the November 7 tribal vote. She said the vote wasn't actually a referendum, it was a confidence vote. The results for coal indicated that 664 were in support of developing their coal reserves and 572 were against. The results for coal bed methane were 365 in favor of developing their coalbed methane reserves and 841 against. According to Shanny, the tribal chairman, Eugene Little Coyote, said that the tribe will approach development in a careful, cautious manner. Allan Clubfoot told the group that an energy plan/policy will be developed and then presented to the tribe for comments. After that it will have to be approved by the council. The tribe plans to bring in experts to help with the plan. We will be updated as things progress.

**Banning Starr, Department of Environmental Quality:** Banning told the group that he is the new TMDL coordinator for the Powder River Basin, which includes the Powder, Tongue and Rosebud. He will also coordinate the TMDL for the Bitterroot. He told the group that the initial effort will be the Bitterroot and then the Tongue because of Coalbed methane issues there and the Wyoming/Montana controversy. Banning distributed a handout entitled "Stakeholder Involvement and Opportunities for Input (9-16-05)". The document outlined the role of stakeholders during the TMDL development process. He told the group that he is putting together a structured plan with deliverables to keep the process moving along. Once he is finished with the plan, he will bring it back and review it with the group.

**John Wheaton, Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology:** John spoke to the group about well and spring monitoring. He said it is important to take enough measurements to define a curve. It is also important to understand recharge time, which means you have to understand the aquifers you are dealing with.

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Many things impact recharge:

- Summer fallow recharges, while CRP consumes.
- Pine trees don't drink much per day, but they drink 365 days a year.
- Cottonwoods drink 4-10' water per year in a 3-4 month growing season
- Salt Cedar drinks 100-300 gallons of water per day, per tree and they eventually become a monoculture. They migrate and alter genetically.

Data gathering: John said it doesn't really matter who gathers the data, as long as it is supervised, it is considered good data. There have been many instances where students gather data under the direction of MBMG or another agency. The data is considered reliable because the students were under the direction of an entity that is considered trustworthy. The important thing is to get the data out where the public can see it. For this he recommends putting the information on this site: <http://mbmgwic.mtech.edu> . John told the members to check to see if their wells are listed. Well drillers are supposed to turn the logs into the Bureau, who will then post it on the site and keep the paper documentation. If the well is not documented, it is imperative that the well is monitored and recorded so that there is public record of its existence and of its flow rate. John suggested that each landowner set up a book to leave in their vehicle. Whenever they are in an area with a well or spring, record the flow and put it in the book. Eventually all of the water sources will have been inventoried. For the really important water sources, John told the group to set up a monitoring schedule, be consistent, and keep the data. Early February, and August or September are good months to record. According to John, the time to monitor is after a time of rest for the water source, so measure before the season of use has begun. It is better to do a few logs well, rather than a lot poorly.

John gave us a tour through the website, showing the group where to find well log reports, how to view well logs, and how to plot them on a topographic map. The group viewed hydrographs and John explained their significance. John pointed out that the website is an invaluable tool and one that should be utilized.

The next portion of the meeting was hands on. The group learned how to measure wells and springs through a variety of devices that John brought with him.

Door prizes were given out and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm.