

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY  
WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
Helena, MT 59601  
316 N. Park, Room 226  
May 24, 2011

Members Present

Gary Ingman  
Chris Deveny  
Chris Anderson  
Kammy Johnson  
Mike Murray  
Spencer Shropshire

Staff

Kathy Moore  
James Swierc  
Jennifer McBroom  
Jolene Loomis  
Melanie Reynolds

Members Absent

John Rundquist  
Eric Woodland  
Stan Frasier

Guests Present

Rod Caldwell, USGS

Gary Ingman called the 172<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Lewis and Clark County Water Quality Protection District (WQPD) Board of Directors to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was established. Introductions of attending board members and staff were made.

**MINUTES**

Gary Ingman asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes from April 26, 2011. Spencer Shropshire moved to accept the minutes as written. Mike Murray seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**PRESENTATION**

Rod Caldwell with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the radioactive elements found in wells in Jefferson County and the surrounding area, including southern Lewis & Clark County. Mr. Caldwell defined what radioactive elements are and how they are measured and tested. Mr. Caldwell stated that the USGS began to study the wells in Jefferson County in 2007 when one well was reported having uranium levels of 2,000 parts per billion which is more than 60 times the approved level for drinking water of 30 ppb. Through a grant to Jefferson County, the USGS sampled 40 wells for uranium and other radioactive elements. For uranium, 5 of the 40 wells were above the drinking standard; 16 of the 39 wells sampled were above the drinking standard for Radon; 8 of the 12 wells above the drinking standard for gross alpha; 4 of the 12 well were above the drinking standard for radium 226 & 228. Mr. Caldwell noted that uranium is a common constituent in the Boulder Batholith which is a large part of Jefferson County. The batholith also extends into parts of Lewis and Clark County, Silver Bow County, and Broadwater County.

Radioactive elements were also found in wells in alluvial aquifers and adjacent Tertiary sediments, which led to further studying of 85 additional wells in 2009-2010. These wells were sampled for major ions, uranium, gross alpha, and beta radioactivity. Out of the 125 wells tested, the USGS picked 40 wells that were the most elevated and re-sampled to look at the variability and added polonium 210. The USGS also extended the sampling to Wolf Creek, the Tobacco Roots, and to the east side of Canyon Ferry Lake. All the wells tested had some radioactive constituent in it. 18 of the 125 wells that were sampled had levels above the drinking standard. The USGS is continuing to interpret the data to determine cause, and public education of their private drinking wells.

### **FINANCE MANAGER'S REPORT**

Kathy Moore, Division Administrator, presented the finance memo and cash flow statement and comparison to budget for the WQPD on pages 9-10 of the board packet. As of April 30, 2011, we are 83% through the year, beginning cash is \$71,855; total revenues received are \$207,117 or 68% amount budgeted; total expenditures are \$235,769 or 77% amount budgeted; revenues are under expenditures by \$28,651; ending cash balance is \$43,203. Kathy noted that staff will need to present the WQPD budget fee increase to the City of Helena Commissioners and the East Helena City Council before it is presented to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) for approval.

### **DRUMLUMMON MINE UPDATE**

James Swierc, hydrologist for the Environmental Services Division, presented an update on the Drumlummon Mine in Marysville (See Attachment "A"). James stated that the main water quality and environmental issues with the mine's operation are related to the depletion of the local ground water table and water quality impacts to surface and/or ground water. James highlighted the permitting and operations concerns along with the environmental impacts that are related to mines operation and development. James stated that the mine is operating under an exploration license with a small miner's exclusion but with current operation appearing to exceed the small miner's exclusion criteria, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is requiring the mine to obtain an operations permit. Chris Deveny stated that she will ask the Board of Health to issue a letter to the DEQ requesting a timeline regarding the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Drumlummon Mine.

### **UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Watershed Activities: Jennifer McBroom, Watershed Outreach Coordinator, stated that the Flood Awareness Day for local 6<sup>th</sup> graders was held on May 13, 2011 at the East Valley Middle School.

Carroll College Intern: Jennifer introduced Carroll College intern, Evan Kelly. Evan will be working from May through December 2011 and will assist the District with data management and ground and surface water monitoring.

MBMG Studies: James Swierc, Hydrologist, stated that the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) is still in the process of writing the reports on the Helena Scratchgravel and North Hills studies and hopes to have them ready for the public soon.

### **BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION**

Kathy Moore attended a planning charrett regarding the future and redevelopment of the City of East Helena after the Superfund. The group came up with ideas for a growth plan for East Helena such as a land use plan, Prickly Pear riparian corridor, developing the old Asarco Plant Manager's house into a museum, and a trail system along the Prickly Pear Creek that would connect with Montana City,

Canyon Ferry Road and Highway 12. A public meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on May 24 at the St. Cyrils & Methodius Catholic Church to discuss ideas from that meeting with the public.

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

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Gary Ingman, chair