

COMMUNITY FOCUS EVENT

**A Final Report
On the March 2, 2005
Public Outreach**

**By the
Greater Gallatin Watershed Council**



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INTRODUCTION

The Greater Gallatin Watershed Council (GGWC), a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit conservation organization based in Bozeman, Montana, has as its mission: to conserve and restore the greater Gallatin watershed's resources through focused action.

Toward that end, GGWC received funding earmarked in part for public outreach from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) via a Watershed Planning Assistance grant (WPA) for 2004/2005 and from the Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) via a Local Empowerment Program grant (LEP) for 2005. These funds were administered by the Gallatin Conservation District (GCD).

The purpose of this outreach was to conduct a public forum addressing watershed issues facing the greater Gallatin watershed. In late 2004 a Planning Committee made up of community volunteers and GGWC Board of Directors members and chaired by Bozeman watershed consultant Jennifer Boyer was formed to coordinate this event. The event was held on March 2, 2005, at the Gallatin Gateway Community Center in Gallatin Gateway, Montana.

Goals

The Planning Committee established four goals for the event:

1. Introduce/establish GGWC as a new, credible umbrella watershed group
2. Educate participants in basic watershed ecology
3. Inspire participants with watershed group success stories
4. Engage a diverse stakeholder audience in issue identification and problem-solving

COMMUNITY FOCUS EVENT

The event was heavily marketed. Advertisements ran in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, PSAs were read on local radio channels and TV, posters were placed in Bozeman and the surrounding communities, a direct mail invitation was sent to 300 invitees, an announcement was placed in the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce's February Newsletter, email listings and websites announced the event and a feature article appeared in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle.

Corporate sponsorship was solicited with an event prospectus and personal contact. Three levels of sponsorship (cash and/or in-kind) were available: signature sponsorship (\$500 and up), major sponsorship (\$250 to \$499) and contributing sponsorship (\$50 to \$249). Signature Sponsors were: The Montana Watercourse, The Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Mystery Ranch, and Clear Channel Radio. Major Sponsors were: Kestrel Aerial, Tim Crawford and Pheasant Farms, and Lone Mountain Ranch. Contributing Sponsors were: Insty Prints of Bozeman, Bozeman Direct, Gallatin Local Water Quality District, KGLT Radio, Reier Broadcasting, Montana Troutfitters, Montana Springs, Simkins-Hallin Lumber, Owenhouse Ace Hardware, Fins and Feathers Fly Shop, Manion Construction, and Sign-A-Rama. On-going Partners In Conservation were the Gallatin Conservation District, the Montana Department of Natural Resources, and the Montana Association of Conservation Districts.

During the event (held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.), 120 participants were introduced to GGWC, participants observed a Watershed 101 Powerpoint presentation, and heard success stories from 3 sub-watershed groups (the Blue Water Task Force, the Bozeman Watershed Council and the Thompson Creek Watershed Group). Participants from diverse stakeholder populations broke out into 8 small groups to identify natural resource issues, priorities and broad solutions. The small groups were led by previously selected and orientated moderators/scribes with watershed professional credentials to identify issues, priorities and broad solutions. Event emcees were Denine Schmitz, GGWC Board Chair, and Jeff Larmer, GGWC Watershed Coordinator. Facilitator, Louise Forrest, a Bozeman consultant, moderated overall group activities.

Results of Small Group Discussions

Priority natural resource issues identified from the eight small groups were (rank ordered with number one having the highest priority):

1. Understand and assess the current status of surface water/ground water interaction.
2. Address waste water/sewage treatment systems/practices.
3. Maintain in-stream flows and conditions.
4. Maintain healthy riparian and floodplain conditions.
5. Determine the state of the greater Gallatin watershed aquifer.
6. Maintain water quality (reduce pollutants).
7. Determine the impact of urban and rural development.
8. Address recreational user conflicts and public access.

Assumptions To Any Broad Solutions

1. Drought will persist.
2. Development will continue.
3. Sound science provides the best foundation for solutions.
4. Collaborative forums hold the highest potential for long-term, effective solutions.

Methodology Best Suited To GGWC

1. Scientific study
2. Educational outreach
3. Partnerships with sub-watershed groups, agencies, NGOs, educational Institutions

Broad Solution Areas

1. A comprehensive hydrologic evaluation of the entire greater Gallatin watershed
2. Public education and outreach
3. Science-based support and advocacy for “the health of the resource”

NEXT STEPS

The GGWC will use the information gained from the watershed stakeholders to:

1. Create a 2005 Program & Activities Plan detailing specific immediate actions and pursue those efforts.
2. Begin development of a long-term Strategic Plan for 2006-2011.

Since ground water/surface water interaction was identified as the highest priority among the stakeholders, the GGWC is currently pursuing an EPA Targeted Watershed Initiative grant in collaboration with local university scientists to fund a watershed-wide study of the state of the aquifer and surface water/ground water interaction and related grant opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The March 2nd Community Focus Event successfully marked the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council's introduction to the greater Gallatin watershed community and established priorities for the near and short-term benefit of the watershed. GGWC gained direction, credibility and momentum. Follow-up actions will be critical to maintain community interest and involvement.

ATTACHMENTS

- Event Income/Expense Statement
- Planning Committee Members
- Event Agenda
- Presenters and Small Group Moderators
- Event Evaluation Questionnaire
- Small Group Notes
- Sponsorship
 - Prospectus
 - Sponsor List
- Marketing & Public Relations
 - Flyer
 - Bozeman Daily Chronicle advertisement
 - Bozeman Daily Chronicle thank you ad
 - PSAs
 - Bozeman Daily Chronicle feature article
- Gallatin Conservation District Memo Report