

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Call to Order: By **MADAM CHAIR EVE FRANKLIN**, on February 7, 2005
at 8:01 A.M., in Room 102 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Eve Franklin, Chairman (D)
Sen. Don Ryan, Vice Chairman (D)
Sen. John Esp (R)
Rep. Bill E. Glaser (R)
Rep. Carol C. Juneau (D)

Members Excused: Rep. Verdell Jackson (R)
Sen. Carol Williams (D)

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Mark Bruno, OBPP
Alan Peura, Legislative Branch
Diana Williams, Committee Secretary
transcribed by Kim Leighton

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed. Tape counter notations refer to the material immediately preceding.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: University of Montana
Public Service/Research Agencies:
Bureau of Mines and Geology,
Forestry & Conservation Experiment
Station

Executive Action: None

Opening Remarks by Chair:

CHAIR FRANKLIN welcomed everyone and introduced Dr. Gilmore. She also introduced the staff.

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
PUBLIC SERVICE/RESEARCH AGENCIES HEARING

BUREAU OF MINES AND GEOLOGY, MONTANA TECH, BUTTE
OVERVIEW

Frank Gilmore, Chancellor, Montana Tech of The University of Montana (Montana Tech-UM), introduced himself to the Subcommittee. He added that the greater role will be the mapping of natural resources and water.

Dr. Ed Deal, Director, Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) and State Geologist, began by discussing the Bureau's overall programs and funding and provided a document that outlined his presentation.

EXHIBIT(jeh30a01)

Dr. Deal stated that the presentation would be broken into two parts: 1) the Bureau of Mines that deals with the General Fund; and 2) the ground-water assessment program. He continued on with his explanation of what this Bureau does and where the offices are around the state. **Dr. Deal** attested that the Bureau is an economic machine in the State and also provided a biennial report which summarized the formal projects they are working on.

EXHIBIT(jeh30a02)

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 7}

Dr. Deal added that they tend to specialize with grassroot organizations. The issue of ground water drives economic development and affects a majority of the people in the state. He pointed back to the biennial report and stated that the one thing they probably will not find is the manufacturing processing. He added that there are other areas they work in besides ground water and explained them further. **Dr. Deal** mentioned several of the major areas of concern and discussed their importance.

BUDGET REQUESTS BUREAU OF MINES (GENERAL FUND)

Dr. Deal summarized the Bureau's budget since 1985 in Exhibit 1. He also spoke about their requests on DP 68 and DP 69.

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a03\)](#)

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a04\)](#)

Dr. Deal described what the Bureau is requesting in these DPs. He explained how much money is involved and how it would be allocated to the Bureau.

Dr. Deal spoke about regional maps that people request, which are, unfortunately, unavailable at the Bureau. He discussed what they have been doing over the years to compile these maps for distribution. He also talked about a coal program they have had in place since the 1960s which has stayed alive due to federal funding. This program would likely close if DP 69 is not funded.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 7 - 24.3}

MONTANA GROUND-WATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Tom Patton, Program Leader, Ground-Water Assessment Program, introduced himself to the Subcommittee.

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a05\)](#)

Mr. Patton used slides to highlight some areas of the program. He talked about the Ground-Water Characterization Program, the Ground-Water Monitoring Program and an Interagency Steering Committee. Mr. Patton explained the workings of these separate programs. He pointed out a status report that highlights what they have been doing in different areas of the State.

Mr. Patton described what is entailed in Ground-Water Monitoring. He continued by mentioning the Ground-Water Information Center Database. He explained that this database receives approximately 3900 logins a month and there are 8200 registered users of this database, approximately one-third of the users are the general public. He explained why either the general public or the private sector may be utilizing this database. Every two years, they survey the users to find out how the database could be enhanced.

BUDGET REQUESTS: GROUND-WATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Patton reminded the Subcommittee that the funding request for this program is \$666,000; it comes from two separate sources. He explained where and how this money would be applied to the program. He discussed pay plans, transportation costs and

resources such as water-level recorders. He referred back to the filler in Exhibit 5.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 10.9}

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

QUESTIONS FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEE

None

Chancellor Gilmore pointed out that as Dr. Dennison had stated, there are two separate DP 68s. One is with the Bureau of Mines and Geology, and the other is with the Forestry and Conservation Experiment Station Program at the University of Montana.

FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION EXPERIMENT STATION, UM-MISSOULA (MFCES)
OVERVIEW

President George Dennison, University of Montana introduced Perry Brown, Dean of the College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana. He is also the Director of MFCES and would be speaking their behalf today. He added that MFCES has had a remarkable return on State dollars.

Mr. Brown provided three documents to the Subcommittee: (1) Sub-Program details and information from the College of Forestry and Conservation; (2) Montana Forest and Conservation Experiment Station 2003-04; and (3) a paper on the Montana University System--Strengthening Montana's Economy.

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a06\)](#)

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a07\)](#)

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a08\)](#)

He briefly explained the purpose of these exhibits. This program often operates like a small business. He also spoke about the individuals involved in this program and the facilities they have at their disposal.

Mr. Brown spoke about the pie graphs on Exhibit 7. He stated that this program has acted as an economic generator by working with over 100 external partners. He also spoke about the Rocky Mountain Cooperative Eco-System Studies Unit which involves several different Universities and federal partners. This serves as a vehicle to communicate with other Universities.

Mr. Brown highlighted four programs: 1) Wildfire; 2) Forest Measurement Activities; 3) Wildlife and Forest Management; and 4) Sage Grouse, Coal Bed Methane & West Nile Virus. He discussed

each of these areas. He stated that they have done research on monitoring wild fires. He added that there is also a Forest Biometrics Research Program. Mr. Brown mentioned a Growth & Yield Cooperative. **Mr. Brown** posed the question, "How does coal bed methane impact Sage Grouse?" He also posed the question, "What is the impact of West Nile Virus?"

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 7}

BUDGET REQUESTS, MFCES

Mr. Brown stated that if they could receive the amounts of funding associated with FY 2006 and FY 2007, they could maintain this program. This information is outlined in a document he provided to the Subcommittee.

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a09\)](#)

Mr. Brown wished to speak to the Subcommittee about a Wild Land Urban Interface Initiative as well. This information is outlined in Exhibit 8. He added that there is a lot of activity in this interface initiative and explained the importance of this initiative to the community. He concluded his testimony with a brief summation of MFCES.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 7 - 13.3}

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

QUESTIONS FROM SUBCOMMITTEE

REP. JACKSON asked Mr. Brown about the Wild Life Interface in regard to proper treatment of the area.

Mr. Brown stated that the situation varies with what kind of forest they are referring to. He discussed some techniques they utilize depending on the type of forest and explained older forests versus multi-level, multi-story forests. He also stated what they have been doing to monitor the growth and yield potential. He mentioned that there is a lot of value in the ponderosa pine.

REP. JACKSON stated that the biggest concern of people in the Flathead is fire. It has been treated using bio-mass; these projects produce lumber and fuel for electricity. However, none of these projects have gotten off the ground due to lack of support from the Federal Forest Service. He wondered if they had any ideas for fire prevention.

Mr. Brown attested that it is a matter of the condition of the forest. They have a lot of forests that need management of some sort. He spoke about the history of harvesting practices and what can be done to help. He emphasized the importance of stewardship contracting in the Seeley Swan area.

REP. JACKSON inquired if there had been any research on the fires they had in the Flathead area.

Mr. Brown claimed that a number of things have been done. He added that they are available on the website for him to access. He explained research and monitoring that was done on the fires.

SEN. ESP wondered if Mr. Brown had a way of translating the work they have done into a request of federal dollars. He asked, "Is it a direct, or indirect policy?"

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 13.3 - 27.1}

Mr. Brown stated that they do not have a direct mechanism into federal policy. However, they try to influence them in a number of ways. He added that they have some technical assistance and there is also the cooperative eco-system program. He mentioned that 40 percent has been technical assistance. He also posed the question, "Can we change Federal policy?"

Asked by **SEN. ESP** about selective harvesting, **Mr. Brown** spoke to the issues involved with insects and drought and discussed techniques for managing these problems. He stated that for the first few years, they are unable to harvest particular trees. One thing they can do is support the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) in regard to harvesting and salvage techniques.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 5.5}

SEN. ESP inquired if there is anything legislators can do to speed up the Federal/State funding-related issues.

Mr. Brown stated that Federal funding is relying on research and recommended continual support of DNRC and other pertinent programs.

Asked by **REP. JACKSON** about how to influence the Federal Forest Service, **Mr. Brown** stated he empathized, but was not sure how much advise he could provide. They are in a time where there are a lot of changes going on with regulations and policies. There were also some very blatant abuses in the past. As a result of

this, some regulations were strengthened. He said maybe the legislators have more effect than they realize.

SEN. RYAN wished to discuss the water issues. He moved on to DP 69 and asked for an explanation of coal bed methane and water, and why this DP is so important.

CHAIR FRANKLIN asked how this position might affect policy, as well as practical issues.

Dr. Deal provided a booklet of information to the Subcommittee at this time.

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a10\)](#)

Dr. Deal stated that they provide information to the policy makers and hope they use this information wisely. He added that this is a complicated issue.

SEN. ESP spoke about the fire issues regarding the Butte area. He wondered if they had considered any options on how to address this problem.

Dr. Deal stated that he is not directly related to snow-packed retention issues. He discussed a watershed program they are working on in Basin Creek. He referred this question to Mr. Patton.

Mr. Patton stated that they are not involved in any projects concerning water supply and fire. He added that there is not a study involved in researching the groundwater and snow retention.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 5.5 - 26}

REP. JACKSON wondered what has happened to the rainfall. He thought maybe the amount of dams has increased.

Mr. Patton said he does not have any opinions on the number of dams in relationship to the amount of precipitation.

LFD Comments

Alan Peura, Legislative Branch, pointed out the road map to the Subcommittee. He explained the process of executive action that would take place the remainder of the week.

CHAIR FRANKLIN thanked everyone for their participation and concluded with general announcements.

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 4.5}

The PowerPoint presentation was provided to the secretary along with a disc.

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a11\)](#)

After the hearing, EXHIBIT 12 was given to the Secretary.

[EXHIBIT\(jeh30a12\)](#)

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 10:05 A.M.

REP. EVE FRANKLIN, Chairman

DIANA WILLIAMS, Secretary

EF/dw

Additional Exhibits:

EXHIBIT ([jeh30aad0.PDF](#))