Teton Watershed

By: Teton River Watershed Group
Alan Rollo

Teton Watershed

- Teton River Watershed Group facts
- Past accomplishments
- Watershed facts
- What next
- Conclusion

Teton River Watershed Group Facts

- Started in 1994

The Teton River Watershed Group is a collaborative, locally-directed group of interested individuals, organizations, and agencies dedicated to monitoring, improving and maintaining the quality of the natural resources within the Teton River Basin.

Primary issues work on:

- Weeds
- Water quality
- Water quantity

TRWG Facts

- Group meets monthly to discuss:
  - Budget
  - Projects
  - Education programs
  - Needs

Annual meeting - every January

Discuss key topics important to all landowners in the watershed

TRWG Facts

Partners in the watershed effort

Any interested landowner, agency and group that is willing to work from a collaborative approach

Few Past Accomplishments

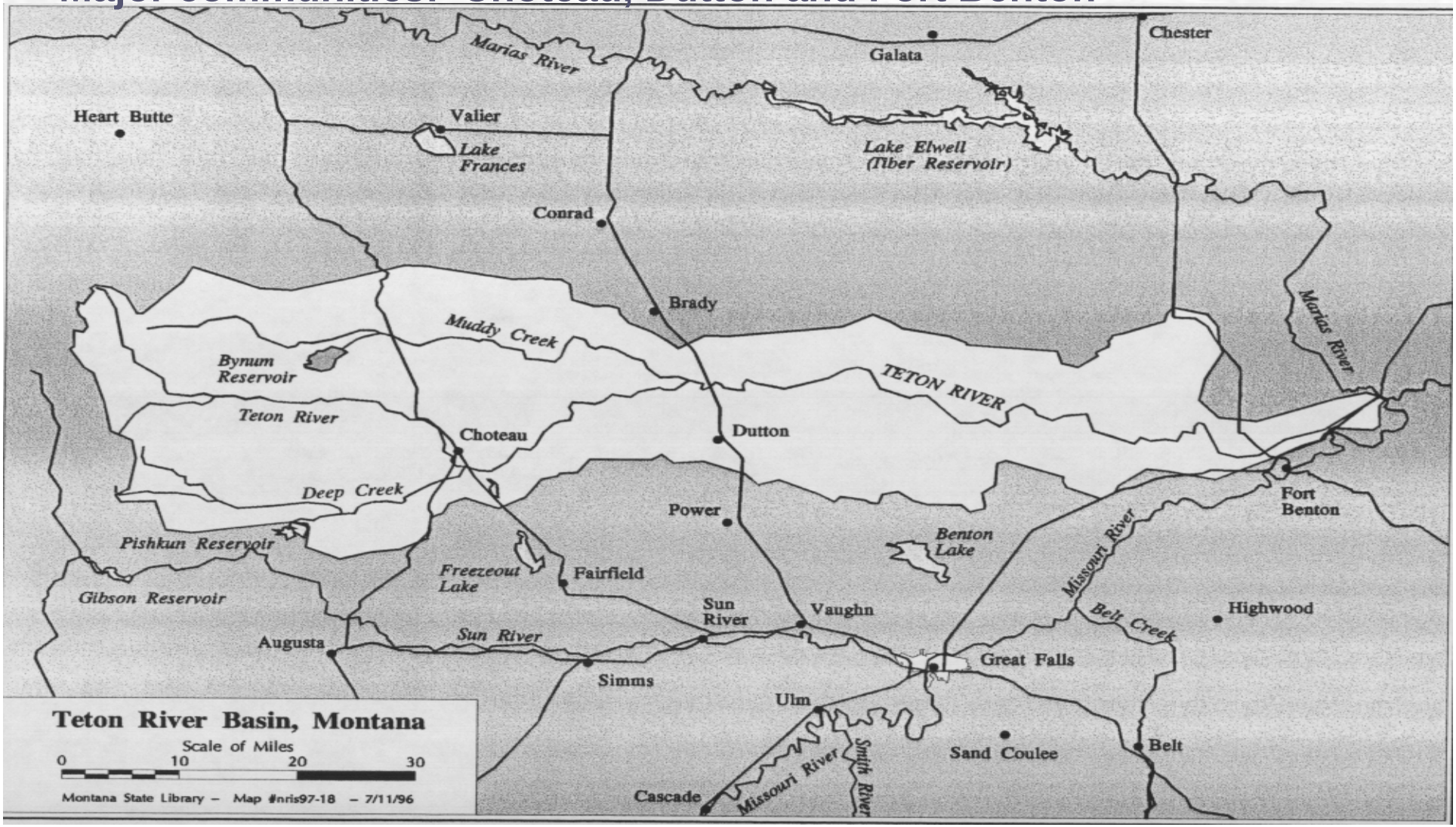
- Survey to every landowner along the Teton River for initial priorities and direction
- Aerial survey of Teton River and tributaries that assessed conditions at that time
- On-the-ground assessment and survey of all major diversions in upper Teton
- Annual weed programs
  - Workshops
  - Tours
  - Spray days
  - Bug collection days
  - Cost-share grants for chemicals

Few Past Accomplishments

- Workshops and tours on useful programs and new ideas
- Stream projects to improve water quality
- Quarterly newsletters about watershed issues
- Installed and maintain 2 USGS gauges to help with water quality and quantity facts
- Ground water assessment of critical aquifer
- Salinity study to help landowners participate Farm Programs

Watershed Facts

- In Chouteau, Teton & Pondera Counties
- 837,000 acres
- Major communities: Choteau, Dutton and Fort Benton



Watershed Facts

- Originates east of continental divide of the Rocky Mountain Front and south of Glacier National Park

Flows for approximately 110 miles to the Marias River near Loma

Watershed Facts

- Primary Ownership:
  - Private 625,750 acres
  - US Forest Service 112,640 acres
  - MT State Lands 75,520 acres
  - US BLM 14,720 acres
  - Urban 8,370 acres

Watershed Facts

- Primary Land Use:
  - Rangeland 340,000 acres 43%
  - Cropland 296,000 acres 36%
  - Hayland/pasture 100,000 acres 12%
  - Forested 96,000 acres 11%
  - Farmsteads 1,700 acres
  - Urban 1,700 acres
  - Transportation 1,300 acres

Diverse and changing system

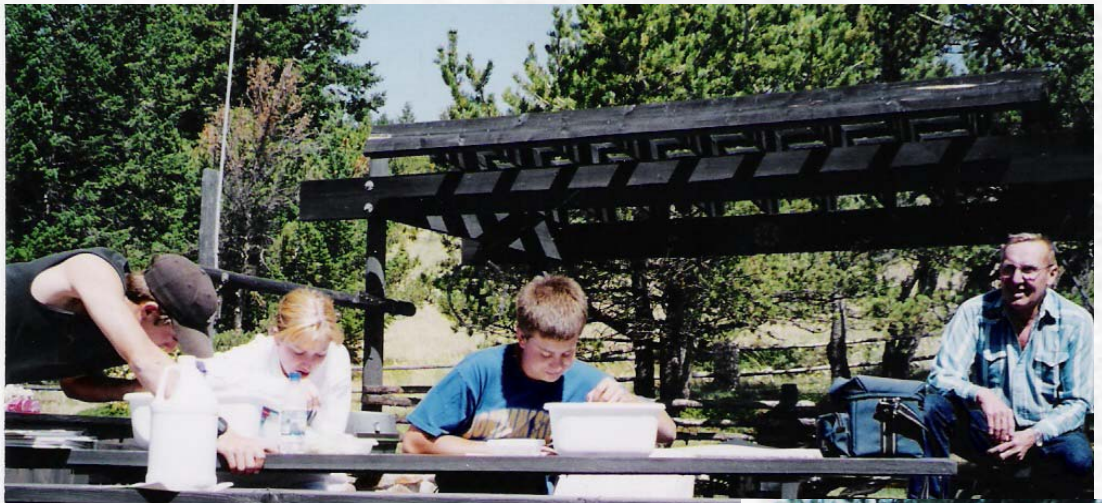
Choteau – 1964 flood

Post-flood

Stream bank work using Christmas trees and volunteers

Bug collection with experts

Water Quality Monitoring



Education programs

Past Annual Meetings

- Early on was about water quality and noxious weeds

- Then on to the tough one – water quantity, not enough to go around

- Brought in DNRC to explain about water rights and adjudication

- Then Musselshell landowner and Water Court

- Then DNRC and Water Court again

- Then DNRC for another update

Our annual meetings are about getting the facts out, not taking sides. Is that possible, depends upon who you talk to. But for the record on water rights, we only support a quick and legal resolution to the current water adjudication process

What Next?

- Continue water quality and quantity monitoring to document changes
- Aggressively fight noxious weeds
- Community outreach and education
- Improvements in water quality
- Improvements in water quantity where agreeable
- Long-term solutions, through teamwork

Conclusion

Teton River Watershed Group facts

- Past accomplishments
- Watershed facts
- What next
- Conclusion

- Our team is only as strong as the participants.
- With continued involvement, we will do good things BUT will not solve all problems.