Water Policy Interim Committee Jason Mohr, research analyst and lead staff



2019-20 WPIC WORKPLAN

Introduction and background

This is the draft work plan for the Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) for the 2019-20 interim. This document is meant to be comprehensive, yet flexible. Invariably, topics of interest will rise and fall away during the next 15 months. The work plan approved by the committee is designed to provide direction to staff.¹

WHAT DOES WPIC DO?

The WPIC was created in 2009 to study water policy. During the legislative interim, the WPIC may focus on the study topics assigned to it as well as any water policy issue. In 2015, the Montana Legislature expanded and focused WPIC duties to include oversight of issues "where the primary concern is the quality or quantity of water."

The WPIC establishes a work plan at the beginning of the interim. The draft work plan and the accompanying work plan decision matrix (beginning on page 12) are decision-making tools to help the committee set priorities and decide how and where to spend the WPIC's time and resources. The committee's presiding officer, in consultation with the committee, works with staff to determine specific agenda items. (See **Appendix A** on page 6 for a list of past presiding officers.)

The primary constraints limiting the agenda for the interim are the number of issues that can be effectively addressed within the available time and resources of the committee and staff. However, the work plan is constructed with enough flexibility to accommodate emerging topics.

The adopted work plan is a road map for the 2019-20 interim. Staff develops detailed draft work plans and timetables for each task. A draft timeline, which illustrates the overall schedule that these work plans will fit into once the meeting

schedule and work plan are finalized, is presented at the end of this document.

Conducts interim studies

Monitors a gencies

Reviews a dministrative rules

Reviews councils, reports

Determines water policies to examine

Proposes and reviews legislation

What does statute require?

Three statutes provide primary guidance for interim committees. (See **Appendix B** on page 7 for these sections of law.)

¹ See page 15 for a staff list and contact information.

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For water issues, WPIC provides oversight of the ...

Department of Environmental Quality

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

First, all interim committees² are expected to review administrative rules, conduct interim studies, monitor assigned executive branch agencies, review advisory councils and reports, review agency legislation, and provide any other relevant information.

Second, the WPIC is established by law to provide oversight "for issues where the primary concern is the quality or quantity of water" ³ in programs of the

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP); and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). The WPIC may determine what issues it examines and to conduct program evaluations of programs under its oversight. The program evaluation process allows for an in-depth and contextual review of a program, including applicable laws, rules, funding, and implementation. (See page 14 within the work plan decision matrix for a full description of a performance evaluation.)

And finally, a third section of law provides for additional statutory duties, such as analyzing the state water plan, water-related research, and the water information system.⁴

Interim studies

The Legislative Council referred two studies passed by the 2019 Legislature to the WPIC.

	2 studies assigned to WAC		
H114 Study of future of the Water Court		Study of future of the Water Court	
	HI40	Study of weather modification	

House Joint Resolution 14 (HJ14) proposes a study of the Water Court to review the court's future role in the administration of water rights in Montana. The

court is primarily concerned with adjudication of pre-1973 water rights, although district courts rely on the Water Court's expertise to resolve water rights controversies. And, after a 2017 legislative change, at least one applicant has appealed a DNRC determination on a change of water right to the Water Court for resolution.

HJ40 proposes a study of weather modification "to review current state laws...and to propose changes in order to encourage use of this scientific technique." Weather modification research was pioneered in the 1940s; Montana state laws on the subject date back to then. The DNRC may investigate, use, and coordinate weather modification efforts for the state of Montana. The department must also license and permit private weather modification activities. County residents may also petition to form their own weather modification authority.

The study resolutions may be found beginning on page 19.

² Section 5-5-215, MCA.

³ Section 5-5-231, MCA.

⁴ Section 85-2-105, MCA.

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Administrative rules

The Legislature often authorizes administrative agencies to carry out the Legislature's intent by adopting administrative rules. These rules have the full force and effect of law. These rules may be adopted and revised throughout the year. Administrative rule functions are governed by the Montana Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA).

MAPA and court opinions govern the procedures and requirements for administrative rulemaking. However, only the Legislature may delegate the authority to an agency to adopt rules.

State law allows the WPIC to review and monitor administrative rules promulgated by the DNRC, FWP, and DNRC, where the primary concern is the quality or quantity of water. The committee may participate in the rulemaking process, ranging from offering comments or suggestions to objecting and delaying a rule implementation. (See attached memo beginning on page 16 for a more-thorough explanation of administrative rulemaking and the committee's role.)

During the 2017-18 interim, the WPIC reviewed 4 notices of administrative rulemaking. The committee objected to one notice related to exempt groundwater wells, delaying its implementation.

THE INTERIMIS COMPRISED OF 7 MEETINGS.

June 10, 2018	Sept. 16-17	Jan. 6-7, 2019	March 9-10	May 18-19	July 13-14	Sept. 14-15
Draft work plan	Finalize work plan	Revise work plan, as necessary				-
Regin statutory duties	Continue statutory duties					-
Consider study resolutions	Regin studies	Gather background	Identify options _	-	Consider draft findings, recommendations	Finalize findings, recommendations
Prioritize member topics	Explore member topics					-
				Propose draft legislation	Reviewdraft legislation	Approve legislation for preintroduction
						Approve agency legislation for preintroduction

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Monitor agencies

The 2015 Legislature delegated certain oversight duties to the WPIC. Following the passage of Senate Bill 82, the WPIC reviews administrative rules and draft legislation, conducts program evaluations and monitor the functions of the Water Resources Division (DNRC) and the Water Quality Division (DEQ).

The committee's oversight duties do not stop there, however, as issues of "the quality or quantity of water" may arise in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks—or even other agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture's groundwater monitoring program. Additionally, certain agencies have reporting requirements to the WPIC, which are listed in the table at tirhg. For example, the DNRC is required to consult the committee as it updates the state water plan.

Review legislation

As stated earlier, the committee's duties include reviewing and preintroducing legislation. In 2018, the WPIC approved 8 bills for preintroduction: 6 for the DNRC and 2 for the DEQ (see **Appendix C** on page 8 for more details).

The 2017-18 WPIC proposed 8 pieces of legislation, which were preintroduced at the 2019 session. This legislation was a result of the committee's studies and discussion over the interim. Unique to other interim committees, the WPIC requires 6 votes (of 8) to advance as a committee bill to the next legislative session. Six of these bills passed the 2019 Legislature (see **Appendix C**).

Member topics

Committee member suggestions drive much of the WPIC's work. These suggestions usually cover a variety of water topics and may be answered with a single memo or presentation.

12 laws require 12 reports to WPIC

Summary of numeric nutrient standards and variances (DEQ)

Total maximum daily loads (IMDs) for impaired and threatened water bodies

Consultation on the State Water Plan

Economic and environmental feasibility of small-scale hydroelectric power generating facility on a state water project (DEQ)

The status of the Renevable Resource Grant and Loan Program (DNC)

Progress of the adjudication of pre-1973 water rights (DNC and Water Court)

Areview of state water reservations by 2026 (DNO)

Upper Clark Fork River Basin Steering Committee report to the Legislature

Clark Fork River Task Force annual report

Appropriation rights changed to instreamflow (FWP)

US Forest Service state water reservation applications (DNO)

Temporary leases of appropriation rights (DNO)

Other topics may need a more-comprehensive review. The committee must decide which of these issues to include in the 2019-20 work plan. Past committees have reserved significant staff time for emerging topics, such as the state's stream gauge network over two meetings in 2018. Committee member topics submitted to staff (as of May 22, 2019) include:

- Geocoding and water right transfers
- Formation of stream gauge oversight work group (SB32)
- Milk River Project infrastructure
- Effects of basin transfers of water

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- Use of greywater
- The role of carry water in irrigation systems
- Water commissioner powers and duties
- Use of eminent domain for municipal water rights
- Watershed tour
- Follow-up on the effects of HB286 (Revise water right laws related to state water claims)

Topics of recent interest to a past committee or water-related issues that arose during the 2019 session include:

- Water quality standards
- Federal court ruling on Montana's nutrient variances
- Implementation of Indian water right settlements
- Climate change and the prior appropriation doctrine
- Ageing water infrastructure
- Exempt groundwater wells
- Irrigation efficiency
- Water of the United States (WoTUS)
- Aquatic invasive species
- Determination of historic (pre-1973) water rights

Time allocation for committee work

As indicated in the graphic on page 6, the WPIC meets 7 times during an interim to work on studies, statutory duties, and member topics. At the end of the 7 meetings, the committee will have developed findings and recommendations for one or more reports. The committee may have also drafted legislation. The work plan timeline (see **Appendix D** on page 9) plots out a general idea of the committee's agenda at each meeting. This agenda will change once the committee identifies specific studies and member topics. The work plan timeline does not account for any field trips, which may be added if the committee elects to do so.

The WPIC's workload is limited only by the number of meetings and hours of available staff time. There is approximately 0.75 FTE of staff time available to conduct the work identified by the committee. Please keep in mind the basic workload equation:



This equation can be computed by referring to the Work Plan Decision Matrix (**Appendix E** on page 11). This matrix allows the committee to select an appropriate level of review, analysis, and discussion for studies, member topics, statutory duties, and anything else.

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APPENDIXA: WPICIFADESHPHAS ALTERNATED BYPOLITICAL AFFILLATION

	Presiding officer	Vice Presiding officer
2007-08	Sen. JimHliott (D)	Sen. Gary Perry (R)
2009-10	Rep. Walt McNitt (R)	Sen. Dave Wanzenried (D)
2011-12	Sen. Brad Harrlett (D)	Rep. Walt MeNitt (R)
2013-14	Sen. Chas Vincent (R)	Rep. Kathleen Williams (D)
2015-16	Sen. Brad Harrlett (D)	Rep. Garl Gimm(R)
2017-18	Sen. Pat Connell (R)	Rep. Zach Brown (D)

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Appendix B Laws that guide WPICs interimwork

- **5-5-215. Duties of interim committees.** (1) Each interim committee shall:
 - (a) review administrative rules within its jurisdiction;
 - (b) subject to 5-5-217(3), conduct interim studies as assigned;
 - (c) monitor the operation of assigned executive branch agencies with specific attention to the following:
 - (i) identification of issues likely to require future legislative attention;
- (ii) opportunities to improve existing law through the analysis of problems experienced with the application of the law by an agency; and
- (iii) experiences of the state's citizens with the operation of an agency that may be amenable to improvement through legislative action;
- (d) review, if requested by any member of the interim committee, the statutorily established advisory councils and required reports of assigned agencies to make recommendations to the next legislature on retention or elimination of any advisory council or required reports pursuant to 5-11-210;
 - (e) review proposed legislation of assigned agencies or entities as provided in the joint legislative rules; and
- (f) accumulate, compile, analyze, and furnish information bearing upon its assignment and relevant to existing or prospective legislation as it determines, on its own initiative, to be pertinent to the adequate completion of its work.
- (2) Each interim committee shall prepare bills and resolutions that, in its opinion, the welfare of the state may require for presentation to the next regular session of the legislature.
- (3) The legislative services division shall keep accurate records of the activities and proceedings of each interim committee.
- **5-5-231. Water policy committee.** (1) There is a water policy committee. The committee shall:
 - (a) determine which water policy issues it examines;
 - (b) conduct interim studies as assigned pursuant to 5-5-217;
- (c) subject to the provisions of 5-5-202(4), coordinate with the environmental quality council and other interim committees to avoid duplication of efforts;
 - (d) report its activities, findings, recommendations, and any proposed legislation as provided in 5-11-210; and
- (e) in accordance with 5-5-215, for issues where the primary concern is the quality or quantity of water, perform the administrative rule review, draft legislation review, program evaluation, and monitoring functions of an interim committee for the following executive branch agencies and the entities attached to the agencies for administrative purposes:
 - (i) department of environmental quality;
 - (ii) department of fish, wildlife, and parks; and
 - (iii) department of natural resources and conservation.
 - (2) At least two members of the committee must possess experience in agriculture.
- **85-2-105.** Water policy committee duties. (1) The water policy committee established in 5-5-231 shall meet as often as necessary, including during the interim between sessions, to perform the duties specified within this section.
 - (2) On a continuing basis, the water policy committee may:
- (a) advise the legislature on the adequacy of the state's water policy and on important state, regional, national, and international developments that affect Montana's water resources;
- (b) oversee the policies and activities of the department, other state executive agencies, and other state institutions as those policies and activities affect the water resources of the state;
 - (c) assist with interagency coordination related to Montana's water resources; and
 - (d) communicate with the public on matters of water policy as well as the water resources of the state.
 - (3) On a regular basis, the water policy committee shall:
 - (a) analyze and comment on the state water plan required by 85-1-203, when filed by the department;
- (b) analyze and comment on the report of the status of the state's renewable resource grant and loan program required by 85-1-621, when filed by the department;
 - (c) analyze and comment on water-related research undertaken by any state agency, institution, college, or university;
- (d) analyze, verify, and comment on the adequacy of and information contained in the water information system maintained by the natural resource information system under 90-15-305; and
 - (e) report to the legislature as provided in 5-11-210.

APPENDIX C WATER-RELATED BILLS AT 2019 LEGISLATURE

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Bill No.	Short title	Status
HB45	Clarify criteria for water right permit relying on waiver of adverse effect	Passed, signed by governor
HB14	Clarify criteria for water rights change applications	Passed, signed by governor
SB32	Geate streamgauge oversight work group	Passed, signed by governor
SE81	Extend deadline to correct an application for water right permit or change	Passed, signed by governor
SB45	Revise certain water right adjudication processes	Tabled in House Natural Resources Committee
SB4 6	Revise laws related to distribution lists	Passed, signed by governor
SB47	Revise laws related to river basin councils	Tabled in House Natural Resources Committee
SB7 2	Revising supplemental notice laws in the Mintana Administrative Procedure At	Passed, signed by governor

2019 LEGS ATTUEPASSES 6 CF 8 ACENCYBILS

Bill No.	Short title (and proposing agency)	Status
SB49	Amend method for measuring water for aquifer recharge or mitigation (DNC)	Passed, signed by governor
HB114	Amend process to appoint water mediator (DNC)	Missed deadline for general bill transmittal
H 5 7	Clarify placement of definitions in water law(DRC)	Passed, signed by governor
HB118	Geate grant programto remove lead fromschool water supplied (DIQ)	Tabled in House Natural Resources Committee
SB34	Revise hearings process for drange of water right application (DNO)	Tabled in House Natural Resources Committee
H58	Revise report requirement fromdrought and water supply advisory committee (DRC)	Passed, signed by governor
SB48	Pevise variances to water quality standards (DKQ)	Passed, signed by governor
HB80	Revise water reservation process in Missouri, Little Missouri rivers (DNC)	Tabled in House Natural Resources Committee

Appendix D WPICs work plan time line

	Tasks
June 10, 2019	 Hect officers Review2017 water legislation Discuss and adopt draft work plan Identify committee studies Identify and prioritize committee member topics Adopt committee rules Reviewbudget Adopt meeting dates Agency/programoverviews - DIQ DNC, FWP, Ag, MBMG Nitrient standards update (75-5-313, MCA) - DIQ Adjudication update (85-2-281, MCA) - DNC, WC Update on drought, water supply, wildfires
Sept. 16-17, 2019	 Adoption of final work plan Committee studies: Receive background information Committee member topics Adjudication update (85-2-281, MZ) - DNC, WC Temporary leasing report (85-2-427) - DNC Clark Fork River Basin Task Force update (85-2-350, MZ) Implementation of State Water Plan (85-1-203, MZ) - DNC Analyze and comment on water-related research (85-2-105, MZ) Water supply/fire update - DNC Agency rulemaking update - LSDstaff
Jan. 6-7, 2020	 Committee studies: Receive additional background information Identify further issues and options Committee member topics Adjudication update (85-2-281, MCA) - DNC, WC Water studies - MBMG Instreamleasing report, (85-2-436, MCA) - FWP US Forest Service water reservations (85-20-1401, MCA) - DNC, USFS Agency rulemaking update - ISDstaff
March 9-10, 2020	 Committee studies: Identify further issues and options Committee member topics Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Programupdate, (85-1-621, MCA) – DNC Analyze and comment on water-related research (85-2-105, MCA) Agency rulemaking update – ISDstaff

	Tasks
May 18-19, 2020	 Committee studies: Discuss options Propose recommendations Committee member topics State Water Plan update, (85-1-203, MA) – DNC Adjudication update (85-2-281, MA) – DNC, WC Nutrient standards update (75-5-313, MA) – DQ Water studies – MBMG Update on drought, water supply – DNC Agency rulemaking update – ISDstaff
July 13-14, 2020	 Committee studies: Draft recommendations, legislation Discuss draft report(s) Committee member topics Nutrient Work Group – biennial summary report (75-5-313, MCA) TML list update (75-5-703, MCA) – DEQ Hydroelectric potential report (85-1-501, MCA) Temporary leasing report (85-2-427, MCA) Clark Fork River Bisin Task Force update (85-2-350, MCA) Clark Fork River Bisin Steering Committee update (85-2-338, MCA) Water and Wastewater Operators' Advisory Gouncil (2-15-2105, MCA) Water Pollution Control Advisory Gouncil (2-15-2107, MCA) Drought, water supply, wildfire update – DNC Agency rulemaking update – ISDstaff
Sept. 14-15, 2020	 Committee studies: Review public comment on draft report, committee legislation Revise draft report, committee legislation, if necessary Approve final report(s) Consider proposed agency legislation - DNC, DIQ FWP Approve other WPIC report(s), if necessary Adjudication update (85-2-281, MCA) - DNC, Water Court Agency rulemaking update - ISD staff Consider/propose areas of study for 2021-22 interim

Appendix E 2019-20 WPIC work plan decision matrix

	Full review	Medium review	Mnimum review	Resources Allocated
Sample study	0.3 FIE	0.2 FIE	0.1 FIE	
2000	•All components of medium review •In-depth legal analysis of study	All components of minimum review	Peviewrelevant laws, policies, and legal decisions	
	issues	Field trip(s) Analyze relevant laws, actions,	• Summarize related information in other states	
	Deliverables: •Final report with	policies, legal decisions, and experiences in other states	• Panel discussion	
	recommendations • Legislation	Greate work group of interested parties to suggest options	Deliverables: • Legislation	
		Deliverables: •Report	•Biefreport	
		• Legislation		

May 29, 2019

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Full review Medium review Minimum review	Resources
	Allocated
Statutory 0.25 FIE 0.1 FIE duties	
• All components of medium review • Participate in water-related meetings (agencies, outside groups) • Accept reports and select some for WPC review, analysis, and comment • Background summaries and legal analysis • Peview and discuss applicability of statutory responsibilities related to water policy issues Deliverables: • Recommendations or WPC position letters • Legislation to address statutory responsibilities Period of the water policy issues Period of the water policy issues of water policy issues Period of the water issues identified during 2017-18 interim Public involvement through WPIC meetings Palsic involvement and oversight Review reports related to: Nitrient standards TMIS State Water Han Small scale hydro on state water projects Penewable Resource grants and loans Upper Cark Fork Rver Basin Securing Committee Clark Fork Rver Task Force FWP instreamflowrights User Task Force PWP instreamflowrights Period of the water is a very securing the properties of the properties o	

May 29, 2019

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	Full review	Medium review	Mnimum review	Resources
				Allocated
D	0.0 + 1700/	0.000.02 FWE	0.00.000	
Program	0.2+ FIE(per programevaluated)	0.06-0.2 FIE(per program	0.02-0.06 FIE(per program	
evaluation) (1) (1) (M)	evaluated)	evaluated)	
(as	•Multiple staff reports on issues			
selected by	within program, including history,	• Staff report on program, including	• Staff summary of program May	
the	overview of applicable laws and	history, overview of applicable	include interview with program	
committee)	rules, and summary of timely	laws and rules, and summary of	lead	
	issues	timely issues within program	Agency presentation	
	•Interview with program	•Interview with program	• Regulated community panel	
	personnel	personnel	•Bbliography or related materials,	
	Possible multiple staff site visits	Possible staff site visit	including audits, fiscal analyses,	
	Multiple agency presentations	Multiple agency presentations	court decisions	
	Multiple regulated community	Multiple regulated community	Limited followup by WPICstaff	
	panels	panels		
	• Staff summaries on related	• Staff summaries on related	Deliverables:	
	audits, fiscal analyses, court	audits, fiscal analyses, court	• Recommendations	
	decisions	decisions	• Legislation	
	Possible presentations from LAD,	Possible presentations from LAD,		
	IFD on issues of interest	IFD on issues of interest		
	Possible legal review of specific	Possible legal review of specific		
	issues	issue		
	Additional staff research in	Additional staff research in		
	particular areas	particular areas		
	Additional information from	Additional information from		
	agency and staff analysis	agency and staff analysis		
	Possible subcommittees or work	Possible field trip		
	groups			
	• One or more field trips	Deliverables:		
		•Staffreport		
	Deliverables:	• Recommendations		
	•Staff report(s)	• Legislation		
	• Recommendations			
	• Legislations			

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	Full review	Medium review	Mnimum review	Resources Allocated
Member topics (as		0.1 FIE(per issue selected)	0.03 FTE(per issue selected)	
selected by		• All components of minimum	Agency or expert presentation on	
the		review	member issue	
committee)		 Review of relevant laws, policies, 		
		legal decisions	Deliverables:	
		Panel discussion	•Short report or "white paper"	
		Possible field trip	• Legislation	
		Deliverables:		
		•Report		
		Legislation		

Hourly breakdown of WPICinterimFIE

0.02 FTE= 54 hours

0.03 FIE= 82 hours

0.05 FTE= 136 hours

0.06 FTE= 163 hours

0.1 FIE= 272 hours

0.2 FIE= 544 hours

0.25 FIE= 680 hours

0.3 FIE= 816 hours

0.75 FIE= 2,040 hours

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