

# **Gallatin Local Water Quality District Five-Year Strategic Plan For Fiscal Years 2010 Through 2014**

Prepared  
For  
Gallatin Local Water Quality District Board of Directors  
And  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

By

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**View Looking northeast at the West Gallatin River in the Central Park Area**

## **ADOPTION**

The Gallatin Local Water Quality District Board of Directors adopted this five-year strategic plan by motion at the April 2, 2009 meeting of the Board of Directors.

## **AMENDMENTS**

On November 4, 2010 the Board approved revisions to the five-year strategic plan to incorporate work plans for areas recently added to the District boundary on the North, West, and South sides.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this five-year strategic plan is to provide long-range guidance to the Gallatin Local Water Quality District (District) Board of Directors and staff for the five-year period from Fiscal-Year 2010 through Fiscal-Year 2014 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2014). Fiscal years are used for the five-year strategic plan to coincide with budget years. The plan is intentionally general in nature and is focused on achieving the District's Mission based on long-range goals and objectives.

More specific guidance is provided each fiscal-year by an Annual Work Plan outlining the District's priorities for the year. The five-year strategic plan is designed to provide the basis for setting priorities each fiscal-year. The Board recognizes that new objectives may be identified during the 5-year period, and some of the objectives listed may be removed or postponed based on new information, budget limitations, and staff workload. Any amendments to the five-year strategic plan will be made by Board motion, and documented in the Amendments section of the plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Creation**

The Gallatin County Commission created the Gallatin Local Water Quality District on December 5, 1995, by Resolution Number 1995-55. A Gallatin Local Water Quality District Program Application was submitted to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) on April 25, 1997. Based on a review of the District's Program Application, and an Environmental Assessment completed by MDEQ, the State of Montana Board of Environmental Review approved the Gallatin Local Water Quality District on June 20, 1997.

### **District Expansion**

In February 2010 the Board approved two resolutions to change the District Boundary, adding lands to the West of the original boundary (Amsterdam/Churchill area), and lands to the south of the original boundary (Big Sky area). In May 2010 the Board approved a third resolution to add lands to the north of the original boundary (Dry Creek-Logan area).

## **District Board**

The District was originally contained within the Environmental Health Division of the Gallatin City-County Health Department and governed by the Gallatin City-County Board of Health, with the addition of one Board member from the Gallatin Conservation District, and representatives from the City Councils of Bozeman, Belgrade and Manhattan. The District was reorganized in 1999 and is now a separate Department within Gallatin County and is governed by a dedicated Water Quality District Board of Directors consisting of members selected as required by Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 7-13-4516.

The Board of Directors consists of the following representatives:

Gallatin County Commissioner  
Gallatin Conservation District Supervisor  
Gallatin City-County Board of Health Member  
Bozeman City Commission Member  
City of Bozeman At-Large Member  
Belgrade City Council Member  
City of Belgrade At-Large Member  
Manhattan Town Council Member  
Town of Manhattan At-Large Member

## **Board Liaisons**

No incorporated areas were included in the three expansion areas recently approved by the Board. However, the Board has in recent years added several liaisons, which are non-voting representatives from other County Departments. Currently liaisons have been appointed to represent the Health Department (Environmental Health), the Planning Board, and the Planning Department. The potential for liaisons from the expansion areas will be evaluated and pursued to increase communication and effectiveness in these areas.

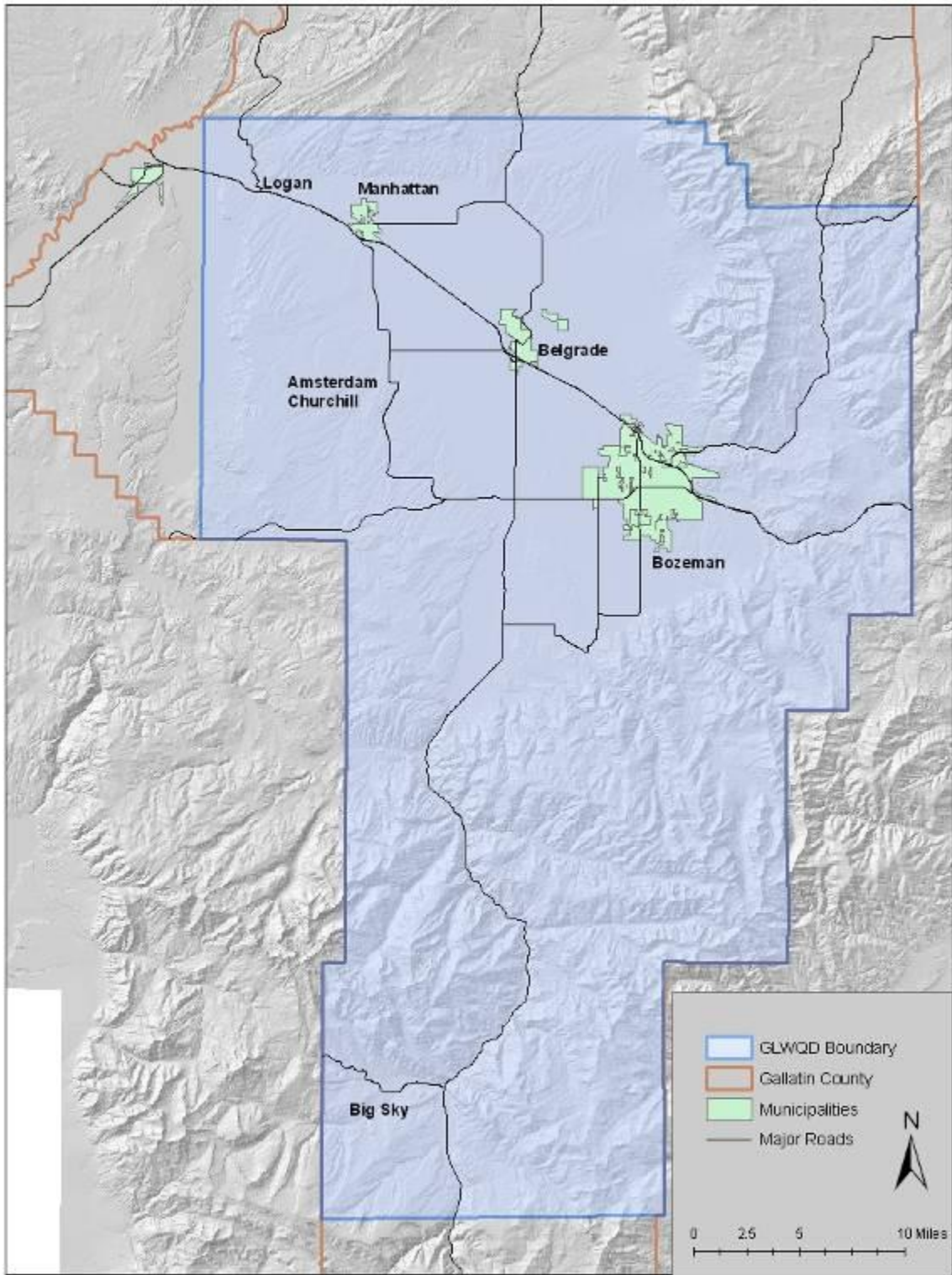
## **Staff**

District staff currently consists of a permanent full-time Manager, one permanent full-time Water Quality Specialist, one temporary Water Quality Specialist, and a permanent half-time Administrative Assistant. In addition, interns, and other temporary employees, including students from Montana State University, may be hired to assist with various projects.

Staffing is considered sufficient to address the workload in the new expansion areas. This is in part because existing staff have been providing some services in these areas already. Once District fees begin being collected in the expansion areas, funding for the second Water Quality Specialist position should also be more stable.

## **District Boundary**

The District overlays the middle portion of Gallatin County, covering an area of 1,299 square miles as shown in Figure 1. The District includes the City of Bozeman, City of Belgrade, and Town of Manhattan, and the Town of Churchill. The unincorporated areas of Big Sky (Gallatin County portion), Four Corners, Gallatin Gateway, and Logan area also included within boundaries of the District.



**Figure 1.** Map showing the location of the Gallatin Local Water Quality District, which covers 1,299 square miles within Gallatin County. The District includes the incorporated areas of Bozeman, Belgrade, and Manhattan, and the unincorporated communities of Big Sky, Churchill, Logan, and Four Corners.

## **WATER QUALITY DISTRICT MISSION AND PROGRAM APPROACH**

### **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Gallatin Local Water Quality District is

*“To protect, preserve, and improve the quality of surface waters and ground waters within the Local Water Quality District”.*

While the District’s mission statement is focused on surface-water and ground-water quality, water-quantity issues are related to water-quality issues and are also considered.

### **District Service**

Built into all of the District’s programs and activities will be the general philosophy that the District is a place where citizens can get satisfactory answers to questions related to water resource issues. The District will strive to be a clearinghouse for information, and assist citizens with contacting other agencies and organizations as needed. This same level of service will be extended to local groups, organizations, and governmental agencies.

### **Watershed Perspective-Ground Water/Surface Water Interaction**

To aid in meeting the Mission of the District, programs and activities of the District will be based on a watershed perspective. Using this approach, the flow system is viewed as an interconnected whole rather than focusing on ground-water and surface-water features as separate resources. Development of a better understanding of the interactions between ground water and surface water is an important objective of the District. Although limited data are available, the hydrogeologic setting within the District suggests there is significant interaction between ground water and surface water due to the presence of shallow ground water in many areas, an extensive network of surface-water features, and the extensive use of irrigation within the boundaries of the District. Protecting and improving ground-water resources has a positive impact on surface-water resources and vice-versa.

### **Non-Regulatory Focus**

The District’s programs and activities will be focused on non-regulatory activities. Activities are not anticipated to include development of any District regulations. However, the Board of Directors, with concurrence from the Gallatin County Commission, may authorize the District to pursue enforcement authority from the State to enforce provisions of the Montana Water Quality Act as allowed by Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.30.1806 if warranted.

While the District’s programs will not include development of local regulations, this does not preclude other agencies or interested organizations from developing regulations based on data collected by the District. The District may be indirectly involved in regulatory issues by providing data or comments to other agencies or organizations, when the regulatory issue(s) pertain to water resources within the District and the regulatory activities may have a positive or negative impact on the District’s Mission. To aid in protecting water resources within the boundaries of the District, staff will aid local citizens by forwarding valid complaints regarding regulatory issues to the agencies responsible for enforcement of regulations designed to protect water resources.

## WORK PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Goals

The District's programs and activities will be focused on 1) maintaining an effective public education program, 2) maintaining a long-term water-quality and water-quantity monitoring network, and 3) collecting, compiling, and disseminating water resource information.

Research activities will be conducted as needed to complement these goals, and evaluate local water resource issues. As appropriate, the District will also track known water quality problems and advocate for remedial activities or corrective actions to protect water resources.

The following goals are established to guide the District during the strategic planning period:

**I. Education Goal:** *Conduct public education to increase public awareness and understanding of the importance of protecting and improving water resources within the District through District education programs and cooperation with educational programs conducted by other organizations.*

**II. Monitoring Goal:** *Maintain a long-term, water quality and quantity monitoring network, consisting of dedicated monitoring wells and selected surface-water sampling sites, to establish baseline data and begin long-term water quality and quantity monitoring.*

**III. Information Collection and Dissemination Goal:** *Collect, compile, and disseminate water-resource data and information for the benefit of all citizens, organizations, groups, and governmental agencies interested in water resources within the District.*

### Objectives

During the five-year strategic plan period District efforts will be focused on meeting the objectives listed below. Possible tasks to be completed to help meet each objective are listed below the objective. Many of these tasks are on-going activities.

#### *Education and Outreach Objectives*

#### **1. Coordinate District education activities with other organizations and agencies**

- Conduct outreach to educate other organizations and groups about the District
- Evaluate and use educational resources available from other organizations
- Participate with other organizations in cooperative education activities

#### **2. Develop District education resources**

- Maintain and Improve the District's Web site
- Provide links to other useful water resource web sites on the District web site
- Maintain and Improve the District's in-house reading library
- Develop and provide educational brochures and fact sheets on topics of interest
- Develop and provide educational presentations on topics of interest

#### **3. Develop District educational programs to supplement existing programs concerning:**

- District ground-water and surface-water interaction education
- Household hazardous waste minimization and disposal
- Pollution Prevention and proper handling of hazardous materials
- Non-point sources (stormwater, construction, agriculture, livestock)

- Wetlands (importance and protection)
- Source water protection for Public Water Supplies
- Water conservation practices
- Participate with and assist citizen groups interested in special studies
- Public education on private well and septic system care and maintenance.

**4. Conduct District outreach to improve public awareness of the District**

- Develop and distribute a periodic newsletter with educational information and a summary of District activities
- Develop and distribute an annual report summarizing yearly activities
- Provide presentations to home owners associations
- Provide presentations to area business, trade, and social organizations
- Participate in seminars, conferences, tours etc.
- Interact with and assist other County and City departments, and other agencies
- Use public media to increase public awareness of the District
- Offer information and assistance to District Public Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment Plant operators
- Assist other agencies with developing solutions for hazardous waste disposal

*District Monitoring Objectives*

**5. Maintain and improve a District-wide ground-water monitoring well network**

- Cooperate with the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) to maintain and improve wells included in the Statewide Monitoring Program
- Incorporate continuous water-level monitoring into the monitoring well network
- Obtain access to existing monitoring wells installed by others when appropriate
- Secure grant funds for well construction, maintenance, and water quality sampling
- Establish new monitoring well location in the expansion areas and update the District's Long Term monitoring plan

**6. Monitor known sources of ground water contamination and advocate for remediation and/or infrastructure improvements to protect ground water quality**

- Track remediation activities at established State and Federal Superfund Sites and work with DEQ and EPA to advocate for timely and effective remediation (Bozeman Solvent Site, Idaho Pole, others)
- Track remediation activities at known leaking underground storage tank sites and work with DEQ to advocate for timely and effective remediation.
- Track ground water monitoring activities required by DEQ at landfills, wastewater treatment plants, and other sites, and advocate for corrective actions when appropriate
- Work with EPA to evaluate the use of Class V injections wells for disposal of non-domestic wastewater and advocate for improved treatment or closure when appropriate

**7. Establish a District-wide surface-water monitoring network**

- Evaluate and select surface water sites for long-term monitoring including the West Fork of the Gallatin in Big Sky, Dry Creek in the north expansion area, and Camp Creek and Godfrey Creek in the Amsterdam/Churchill area.
- Collect and compile surface-water quality data to establish baselines and trends
- Collect and compile surface-water flow data within District to the extent practical

**8. Develop a program to monitor stormwater quality in cooperation with municipalities and Gallatin County**

- Conduct sampling to document stormwater quality
- Assess current methods of stormwater treatment and recommend improvements to protect water quality

*Information Collection and Dissemination Objectives*

**9. Cooperate with others to develop and maintain District-wide databases**

- Provide ground-water data within the District to the MBMG Ground Water information Center (GWIC)
- Develop and maintain a GIS compatible database for ground-water quality data to supplement the GWIC database
- Develop and maintain a GIS compatible database for surface-water quality data to supplement the EPA STORET and Montana's EQuIS databases
- Assist DEQ with updating its public water supply database
- Coordinate with other departments, agencies and groups for data collection

**10. Compile historical water resource data and enter in GIS data sets**

- Compile water resource data from old subdivision files
- Compile water-quality and water-quantity data from published reports
- Compile aquifer property data from published reports and agency files
- This effort will be expanded to include data from the new areas of the District

**11. Construct GIS data layers for incorporation into the County's Internet map site**

- Post a map layer showing the District's ground water monitoring well network
- Create and post a map layer showing the District's surface water monitoring sites
- Create and post a map layer showing known sources of ground water contamination
- Post the map layer previously created for wetland and riparian areas

**12. Support and conduct water resource research within the District**

- Encourage and support research projects at MSU and other Universities
- Encourage and support research by other agencies or groups
- Evaluate stormwater impacts to water resources
- Study ground-water level trends in District (declining water levels)
- Study impacts to ground water and surface water from growth, including disposal of wastewater
- Study hydrogeologic subareas within the District
- Compile water resource data dealing with disaster response, in cooperation with Public Health, Environmental Health, and Emergency Response agencies
- Conduct research to assess local water quality problems as they arise
- Develop educational information for disaster related water resource issues
- Conduct a hydrogeologic assessment in the Logan area to evaluate potential sources of contamination (nitrate, coliform bacteria, organic chemicals, arsenic)
- Sample wells in the Amsterdam/Churchill area to determine the nature and extent of arsenic contamination in ground water in the area.

## *Development Review*

### **13. Review and comment on proposed developments with regards to potential impacts to water resources**

- Review and comment on proposed major subdivisions in cooperation with other County departments.
- Review and comment on proposed minor subdivisions and conditional use permits when requested by other County departments
- Review and comment on other proposed developments or projects that may impact water resources on a discretionary basis.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Gallatin Local Water Quality District office is located in the Judge Guenther Memorial Building at the following address:

**Judge Guenther Memorial Building  
1709 West College Street, Suite 104  
Bozeman, Montana  
59715**

For information or questions regarding this work plan, or the current status of District activities, contact Alan English at the address listed above, or by phone at (406) 582-3148, or email at [alan.english@gallatin.mt.gov](mailto:alan.english@gallatin.mt.gov). You can also visit our website at [www.gallatin.mt.gov/GLWQD](http://www.gallatin.mt.gov/GLWQD).

Additional staff contacts:

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