

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Prepared Panelist Questions

The following questions were given to today's panelists ahead of time to help them prepare for this event. Hopefully, these questions will be addressed during the discussion. There may be additional questions that you came here hoping to have answered. As you think of these questions, please write them down on a note card and raise your hand. One of our hosts will take the card. Questions and comments will be compiled and presented to the panelists as the discussion progresses. Please write clearly, and if you would like your question directed to a specific panelist please indicate that at the beginning of your question. If you feel that your question was not answered by the panelists, there will be an additional Q&A session during the wrap up where you can ask again. Thank you for your participation.

GROUNDWATER PANEL:

1. If someone gets a groundwater discharge permit, they are usually required to collect monitoring data. Is this data available to the public? How can we find it? What sort of quality assurance do permit-holders need to meet?
2. If it doesn't already exist, how can we get DEQ to put together a webpage that illustrates monitoring data from on-site treatment systems for the West Gallatin watershed? If it does exist, how can we find it?

TREATMENT PANEL:

1. What happens to river quality after 40-50 years when the ability for a drainfield to store nutrients (soil capacity) is maxed? Is there breakthrough? How can this be remediated? Do soils have to be excavated and replaced? At what cost?
2. How is the effectiveness of on-site systems affected when residences and communities are occupied only a fraction of each year (peak loads in summer and at Christmas – dormant the rest of the year?)
3. When a permit is issued to a developer, what happens when the subdivision (i.e. Antler Ridge) is turned over the Homeowners Association – typically comprised of out of state owners – do they assume liability for compliance?

FUTURE PROTECTION PANEL:

1. If ORW status is established how will it be implemented and who implements and enforces the ORW status?
2. Is it correct that in some locations designation as an ORW has led to a restriction on recreational uses of the river?

3. Some local property owners fear that their property will become essentially undevelopable under ORW status. Is this possible? If so, under what conditions? Are some locations grandfathered? Is there any recourse?
4. Under ORW status, will there be limits set on discharge pollution? Once those limits are reached, will there be some sort of moratorium on new building--even with state-of-the-art treatment?
5. Is it correct that once an ORW is established there will be a rush to develop the land that is impacted by the ORW (i.e., within the footprint)?
6. Who will decide whether and when to submit the ORW to the legislature? Will there be any further opportunity for public involvement, comments, testimony?
7. What happens if the ORW is either not introduced this legislation session or it is not passed? Was the EIS all for nothing?
8. Can the Gallatin River be protected via the TMDL process?
9. As an alternative to designating the Gallatin River as an ORW, could we connect the Canyon area to the Big Sky Water Sewer District? If so what steps would need to be taken and how long will that process be?
10. If it was in the works for the Canyon to be connected to Big Sky Water and Sewer District would developers have to wait to develop their projects until they could come on line with the BSWSD or could they be allowed to switch their systems once the BSWSD extension? How would this effect them (either way)?
11. If the ORW does not pass or is put on hold, does this end the discussion of cumulative impacts? Currently the DEQ permitting process does not provide a way to address cumulative impacts of treatment systems. Does DEQ have any plans to change that?
12. What can unincorporated Big Sky residents do to up the priority for river protection? Who can we go to? By what process?
13. How would incorporation of Big Sky help us to protect the watershed? Could on-site (septic drainfields) treatment be banned by ordinance? Have other communities done this?
14. A question for the "business community" – after reading the EIS, it was unclear why anyone would object to the ORW designation. The available scientific data clearly indicate that the watershed is experiencing measurable degradation – particularly from on-site treatment systems in use at large developments such as Firelight, Ramshorn, Antler Ridge, and elsewhere. If the Big Sky business community is opposed the ORW, then what tangible approaches would you support for protection of the river?...or is it jobs and development and profit at any cost?