This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Montana Section of the American Water Resources Association to be held at Big Sky on October 2nd and 3rd.

Big Sky is a fitting location for this year’s conference theme “Water Sustainability: Challenges for Montana”. The activities will be located at the base of the ski hill at Huntley Lodge which will offer government room rates to those that qualify.

As usual, the conference kicks off Thursday morning with a field trip led by Dr. Larry Smith of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology that will tour the spectacular geology and hydrology of the Big Sky area. Attendance at this year’s conference is anticipated to be high so be sure to register early for the field trip as space on the bus is limited.

The field trip buses will return in time to grab lunch, and then at 1:00 pm sharp the plenary session will begin. To address the conference theme, “Water Sustainability: Challenges for Montana”, we have invited former Montana Congressman Pat Williams to open our plenary session as keynote speaker. Also included in this stellar line-up are DEQ Director Richard Opper and Tom Osborne of Hydro Solutions Inc, and Eloise Kendy of the Nature Conservancy. To round out the plenary session, we are very fortunate to have GSA Birdssall-Dreiss Distinguished Lecturer Dr. Larry McKay from the University of Tennessee to present one of his talks titled “Germs and Geology”.

About Big Sky

Located halfway between Bozeman and Yellowstone National Park, Big Sky, Montana is nestled on the fringe of the Gallatin National Forest at the base of the towering 11,166 foot Lone Mountain. This resort community supports two ski areas, over 25 bars, restaurants and eateries, and local shopping.

For outdoor enthusiasts, there are plenty of options including hiking, fishing, mountain biking, trail running, photography, and wildlife viewing. The Big Sky chair lift ride not only provides breathtaking scenery of the Madison Range and Gallatin River drainage, but also trail access for hikers, runners, and mountain bikers who enjoy good downhill trek. For more details you may visit http://www.bigskymontana.org/.

Thursday morning Field Trip: 8:00 - Noon

This year’s field trip will be conducted entirely within about 10 miles of the Big Sky Resort, so there will be ample time to view the fascinating geology high in the Northern Rockies. Buses will load beginning at 7:45 Thursday morning.

The area is known for a very thick section of Cretaceous shales and sandstones, dacite “Christmas-tree” laccoliths (Big Mountain and Fan Mountain), folding and faulting of various ages, major reverse faults, Archean basement rocks, valley glaciers and rock glaciers, and enigmatic deposits of pre-Bull Lake glaciation. On top of that (literally) are small to very large landslides developed in the shales.

On the trip we will introduce the sedimentary rock section along roadcuts, get up close with a deflated rock glacier, and see one or more of the landslides. The actual stops and quality of the outcrops will very much depend on the snow cover; anything is possible in very early October. Space is limited, so register early.

Larry Smith, Geologist, Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
Lewistown 2007 - A Conference of Many Starts

Montana AWRA seeks to bring water scientists together to create and strengthen the work we do by fostering communication, building cross-organizational relationships, and encouraging dialogue about the scientific issues that confront and challenge our state and our citizens. We also seek to encourage the younger of our profession by fostering the educational opportunities of the our college and university students. Under the direction of our 2006 President, Tammy Crone, we undertook a new tradition: acknowledging the best of the student talks and rewarding that student with a trip to the National AWRA conference. National AWRA welcomed this with open arms and our student, Margie Kinnersley, of the University of Montana.

This conference also marked the first time that we held the conference in the center of the state. And it marked the second conference that hosted a workshop. It also marked the end of a wet and cold week with three brilliant days of warm fall sunshine in a classic display of a Montanan Indian Summer. And more importantly marked the first conference that hosted a workshop. It also marked the end of a wet and cold week with three brilliant days of warm fall sunshine in a classic display of a Montanan Indian Summer. And more importantly marked the first conference that hosted a workshop. It also marked the end of a wet and cold week with three brilliant days of warm fall sunshine in a classic display of a Montanan Indian Summer.

The conference started off with a delightful geologic tour of the Lewistown area. Led by the veteran geologists Lee Woodward and Dick Berg we had a spectacular morning. Though Lee taught at the University of New Mexico, he lives in Lewistown and was the perfect host to help Dick Berg on Dick's very well planned out geologic tour of the area. Though some of the participants had a near miss with a topple into a ditch, all us survived to attend the rest of the conference, which was marked by a great plenary session Thursday afternoon and collection of talks on Friday.

The plenary session was highlighted by great talks from Walt Sales, Dorothy Bradley, John Tubbs, Larry Dolan, Chris Gammons and Scott Irvin. During the concurrent sessions we chose from 28 talks that spanned topics from irrigation effects on surface and ground-water to ground-water-surface water interactions, to issues of surface water quality, general hydrogeology to whose medicine are we drinking anyway? Though the trip to the center of the state was wonderful and beautiful, our next venue promises to be spectacular: We look forward to seeing you there, in Big Sky!

Banquet

Our 25th anniversary banquet will feature Lemon Thyme Roasted Chicken and London Broil with Sauce Robert, accompanied by fresh fruit, tossed green salad, sweet potato salad, rainbow rotini salad, fresh seasonal vegetables, and garlic and herb mashed potatoes. There will be fresh fruit pie and cream pie for dessert. A baked vegetable tower (an array of fresh seasonal veggies, wrapped, baked, and served with a polenta wedge and finished with a light roasted scallion horseradish sauce) will be available for those who would like a vegetarian option. No one should go hungry at this event!

During dinner, the 25th Anniversary Water Legend will be announced! The history of the Montana Section AWRA will be highlighted, accompanied by a photo contest focusing on old photographs of AWRA members and events. Please plan to attend and enjoy this landmark event!

Kirk Warren, Treasurer

2008 Poster Session

Let's come to grips with the reality of the situation. We come to the annual conference because we look forward to getting together with our comrades from all over the state, from other agencies, private companies and organizations to drink some good beer and just catch up. It is great to listen to the various research being conducted throughout the state, but it is the small group or one-on-one communication after the plenary session where friendships are renewed, created, and professional dialogue and collaboration is born. So come this year to Big Sky to celebrate the 25th year of Bob Delk, Joe Moreland, Gail Dahl and others whose vision for MT AWRA began with the desire for professional commraderie. Join us for the poster session, have a beer and catch up with all of us. Stay with us for dinner and hear our story from the founding members. I will see you there.

Camela Carstarphen, Vice-president

Montana AWRA conference early years, circa 1983.

2008 Photo Contest

Last year’s photos were a step up on spectacular scenery and photographic skill. We did see among those amazing shots, a return to working photos with those of Mike Cannon’s and a few others. This year’s photo contest will be special, for we would like to showcase photos from the early years like those to the left, and other older photos showcasing work in action! They don’t have to be spectacular in scenery to mean a lot. I have enjoyed looking through some of the older archived photos. Let us know if you have some good prints that you cannot turn into a digital image and we will help! Call me, Camela Carstarphen 406.490.1167 or email me at ccarstarphen@mtech.edu.

Camela Carstarphen, Vice-president

A field trip study group on the banks of Big Springs Creek; Lewistown.