
GALLATIN LOCAL WATER QUALITY DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN FISCAL YEARS 2015-2019



**Prepared For
Gallatin Local Water Quality District Board of Directors**

**By
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May 10, 2014**

Approved June 5, 2014

MISSION

“To protect, preserve, and improve the quality of surface water and groundwater within District boundaries.”

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

VALUES

- We strive for competent, knowledgeable stewardship of our water resources.
 - We practice transparent and accountable service.
 - We maintain a culture of service and integrity.
 - We collaborate with partners, customers and our community to preserve, protect and improve water quality.
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APPROVAL

The Gallatin Local Water Quality District Board of Directors adopted this five-year strategic plan by motion at the **June 5, 2014** meeting of the Board of Directors.

AMENDMENTS

There are currently no amendments to the FY2015-2019 Strategic Plan.

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 2015 through Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019). Fiscal years are used for the five-year strategic plan to coincide with budget years. The plan 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 five-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.

DISTRICT 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 Fee

In April 2013, the Gallatin County Commission approved a 10% fee increase from \$6.00 to \$6.60 per Fee Assessed Unit within the District boundary.

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. It 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 approved by the Board in 2010. However, the Board has in recent years added several liaisons, which are non-voting representatives. Liaisons have been appointed to represent the Gallatin City-County Health Department (Environmental Health), the Gallatin County Planning Board, the Department of Planning & Community Development, and the Blue Water Task Force/Big Sky Area.

Staff

District staff currently consists of a permanent full-time District Manager, one permanent full-time Water Quality Specialist/Hydrogeologist, one temporary half-time Water Quality Technician 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 and activities.

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 the Town of Manhattan. In February and May 2010, the Board approved three resolutions to change the District boundary, extending it to the north, west and south of the original boundary. The unincorporated areas of Big Sky (Gallatin County portion), Four Corners, Gallatin Gateway, Amsterdam/Churchill and Logan are also included within the boundaries of the District.

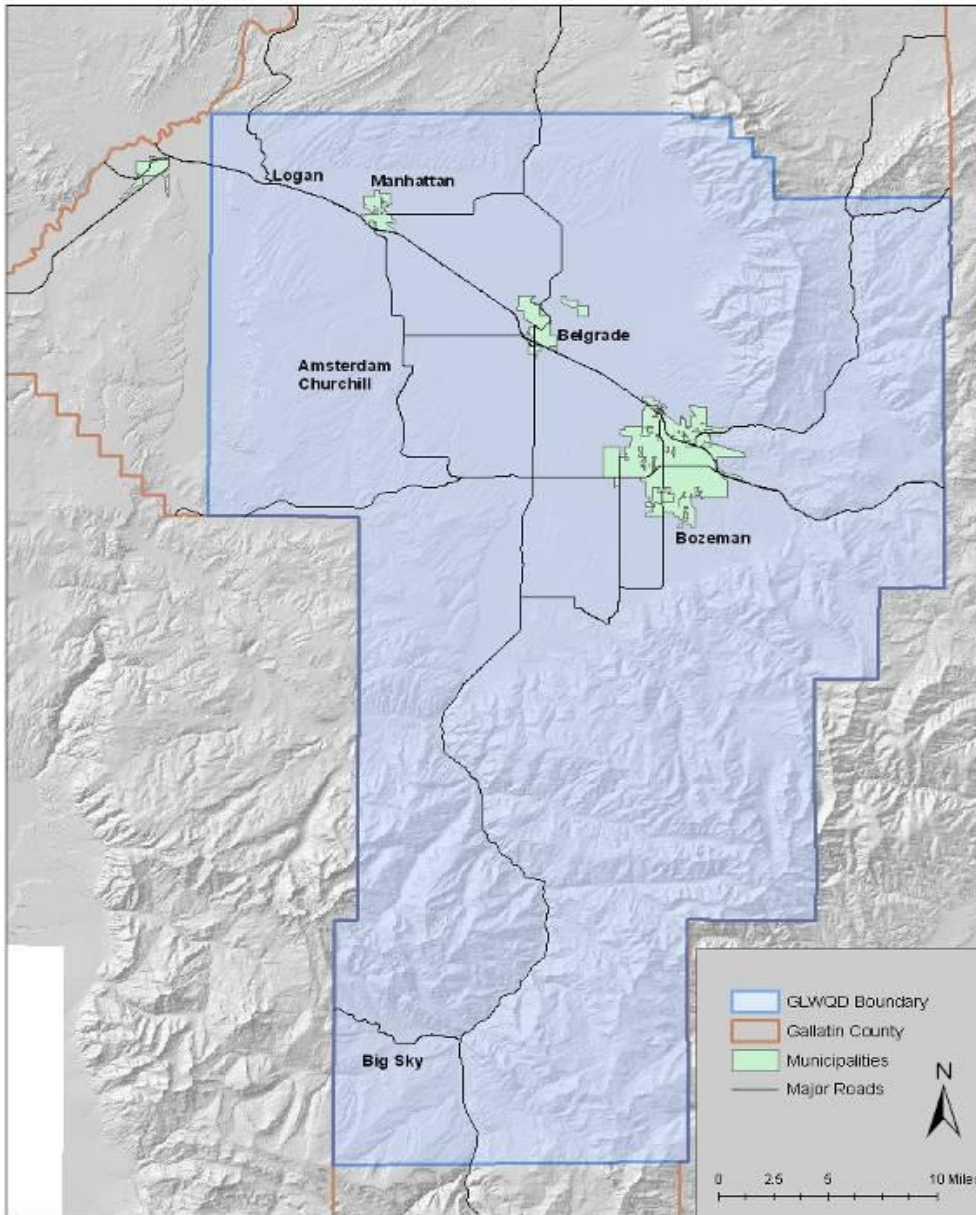


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the Gallatin Local Water Quality District, which covers 1,299 square miles within Gallatin County. The District includes the incorporated areas of Bozeman, Belgrade, and Manhattan, and the unincorporated communities of Amsterdam-Churchill, Gallatin Gateway, Logan,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

PROGRAM APPROACH

District Service

Built into all of the District's programs and activities is the general philosophy that the District is a place where citizens can receive 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

To aid in meeting the Mission of the District, programs and activities are based on a watershed perspective. Using this approach, the flow system is viewed as an interconnected whole rather than focusing on groundwater and surface water features as separate resources. Because of the presence of shallow groundwater 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 groundwater resources has a positive impact on surface water resources and vice-versa.

Non-Regulatory Focus

The District focuses on non-regulatory activities and do not include development of any District regulations. Statutes governing formation and operation of local water quality districts in Montana (Administrative Rules of Montana 17.30.1807) allow districts to pursue enforcement authority from the State to enforce provisions of the Montana Water Quality Act (MCA 75-5-605) if a significant problem warrants the action. This authority is granted on a case-by-case basis. If an emergency or significant water quality issue warranted it, the Board of Directors, with concurrence from the Gallatin County Commission, could authorize this type of regulatory action. It should be noted this statutory authority has never been pursued since the District was formed in 1997.

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.

If data collected by the District indicates that water resources are threatened by activities that appear to be in violation of existing rules or regulations enforced by other agencies, the District will notify the enforcing agency of the concerns and provide any existing data requested by the enforcing agency. However, the District will not specifically collect data for an enforcement agency related to a specific potential violation. As an example, if District staff document a possible unlicensed landfill site while compiling inventory data, the District may forward the site information to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, but will not at DEQ's request go to the site and collect samples or information for enforcement purposes. District staff will aid local citizens with valid complaints regarding regulatory issues by providing them with the contact information for the proper agency responsible for enforcement of regulations designed to protect water resources.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The District's goals are focused on three areas: (1) education and outreach, (2) monitoring and research, and (3) information collection and dissemination.

The Board has identified several water resource-related areas to focus efforts on for the FY2015-2019 period. These areas apply to all three District Goals. These are:

- Private well and septic system care and maintenance
- Groundwater and surface water hydrology
- Nonpoint source pollution (stormwater, construction, urban and rural practices)

During the five-year strategic plan period District efforts will be focused on meeting the objectives identified for each goal. Strategies to meet each objective are listed. Many of these Strategies and objectives are on-going and carried through every strategic plan. The District's Annual Work Plans are developed by identifying Action Items that coincide with the specific Strategies and are based on the priorities identified for that year by the Board. These annual priorities will also guide budget formulation.

Goal 1 – Education and Outreach:

Improve public awareness and understanding of local water quality, water resources and the District.

Conduct education to increase public awareness and understanding of the importance of protecting and improving water resources within the District by conducting educational activities and cooperating with other organizations conducting educational programs.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Raise community awareness of water quality and water resource issues.**
 - Improve and maintain timely content on the District's web site.
 - Improve and maintain timely content in the District's in-house reading library.
 - Produce and maintain educational brochures and fact sheets on topics of interest.
 - Develop and conduct educational presentations on topics of interest.
 - Explore other communication options to increase community awareness (social media).
- 2. Promote education and activities to protect and improve water quality and water resources.**
 - Utilize educational resources available from other organizations where appropriate.
 - Collaborate with MSU-Extension on the Well Educated Program.
 - Collaborate with SWMBIA and MT DEQ on construction stormwater education.
 - Collaborate with municipalities and County on stormwater quality issues.
 - Answer public inquiries and provide assistance.
 - Continue collaborative efforts with the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council.
 - Provide educational seminars, workshops and activities in collaboration with other organizations and agencies where possible.
 - Explore options for expanding youth water quality education opportunities in collaboration with schools and other youth organizations.

- 3. Conduct outreach to improve public awareness of the District.**
 - Produce and distribute an electronic District newsletter.
 - Participate in seminars, conferences, tours, etc.
 - Produce and distribute an annual report summarizing yearly activities.

- 4. Collaborate with stakeholders, agencies, groups and governments.**
 - Participate in regional water resource issues with the Gallatin County Planning Board.
 - Maintain District participation in the Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators.
 - Maintain District participation as active stakeholder in the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council.
 - Provide technical expertise on stakeholder projects.
 - Maintain relationships with other Water Quality Districts.
 - Maintain relationships with MT DEQ, MBMG, MT Watercourse, and MSU Extension Water Quality.
 - Provide assistance to County and City departments and agencies (subdivision review, etc.).

- 5. Measure effectiveness of District education and outreach efforts on water quality.**
 - Utilize ‘outcome indicators’ such as questionnaires or surveys to gage changes in the community’s level of awareness related to water quality.
 - Track number of educational brochures and fact sheets printed and distributed.
 - Document number of attendees at workshops and presentations.

GOAL 2 – Monitoring and Research:

Collect and analyze water data and implement monitoring projects that evaluate, protect and improve long-term water quality.

Conduct monitoring and research activities on both groundwater and surface water that establishes baseline data needs, can be utilized to evaluate long-term trends in water quality and quantity, and to assess water quality issues of concern. Projects and activities may be undertaken by the District and in partnership with other agencies and organizations.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Maintain and improve the District-wide groundwater monitoring well network**
 - Cooperate with MBMG to maintain District wells in the Statewide Monitoring Program.
 - Conduct continuous water-level monitoring in the well network.
 - Conduct water quality sampling in the monitoring well network.
 - Secure long-term access to monitoring wells installed by others where appropriate (including Logan, Amsterdam/Churchill and Big Sky).
 - Review and update the District’s Long-Term Groundwater Monitoring Plan.

- 2. Conduct surface water quality and flow monitoring**
 - Develop and implement a long-term Surface Water Monitoring Plan.
 - Expand the rotation of surface-water monitoring stations in the District network to the extent practical in cooperation with City of Bozeman, MSU and GGWC and others.
 - Coordinate monitoring with the Gallatin Stream Team Program.

3. **Support and conduct water resource research within the District**
 - Develop and collaborate with universities, agencies and groups on water research.
 - Conduct objective-based research to assess water quality concerns (arsenic in Amsterdam/Churchill area, groundwater level trends, wastewater impacts, stormwater impacts, etc.).
4. **Analyze water data**
 - Annually review water quantity and quality data from the District’s groundwater and surface water monitoring networks for baseline comparisons and trend analysis.

GOAL 3 – Information Collection and Dissemination:

Compile, store and disseminate water quality data and information.

Water resource information generated by the District and other agencies and organizations is collected, organized, stored and made available to anyone interested in water resources in the District. This includes information and water resources data sharing among citizens, organizations and governmental agencies to improve understanding and management of water resources in the District.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Compile and store available water quality and water level data and information.**
 - Maintain and update the District’s Groundwater Database.
 - Maintain and update the District’s Potential Contaminant Source Inventory.
 - Evaluate opportunities to store groundwater and surface water data in spatial formats that are accessible and searchable (GIS-based).
 - Use existing County, State or Federal databases to store and access data where applicable (GWIC, MT WQX, STORET).
 - Create and post District groundwater and surface water monitoring network sites on County’s internet mapper site.
 - Maintain all data in appropriate and usable formats.
2. **Track and monitor groundwater contamination sites and remediation activities.**
 - Review status reports for established State and Federal Superfund Sites.
 - Review status of leaking underground storage tanks (LUST), and other contamination sites regularly.
 - Advocate for timely corrective actions and effective remediation, as needed.
3. **Analyze, interpret and disseminate water quality data and information**
 - Develop reports on water quality issues.
 - Develop annual report on status of water quality and quantity in the District.
 - Provide presentations to interested community groups and decision-makers.
 - Answer technical inquiries.
 - Make data and information available electronically.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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