

Hello Clark Fork and Kootenai River Basins Council members and stakeholders.

Winter is upon us – let's be hopeful for a good water year to come! This last update for 2017 finds the Council in good shape for moving forward with our Work Plan and 2nd Annual Meeting in 2018.

Our Natural Systems Health and Water Availability Work Group developed and submitted a letter to the Water Policy Interim Committee at its October meeting that addresses DNRCs reduced funding for stream gauging and the mothballing of several important gauges (<http://mtwatersheds.org/app/news-item/stream-gauges-fall-by-the-wayside-in-state-budget-cuts/>). The Work Group and Executive Committee will continue to promote the importance of gauging for all of our basic data needs and programmatic purposes.

Highlights of the Executive Committee's December 1st meeting include:

- Outreach efforts to watershed organizations in our basins;
- Planning for the Council's 2nd Annual Meeting (Save the Date - April 16-17, 2018!) – we've formed a planning subcommittee and it is developing a comprehensive set of activities and topics that should command everyone's attention;
- Reports from the Natural Systems Health, Data, and Communications Work Groups;
- ✓ You can find complete notes from the meeting on our webpage <http://mtwatersheds.org/app/clark-fork-basin-council/> .

Kierra Rump will be our new Big Sky Watershed Corps member in 2018, splitting her assignment between the MWCC and the Council. Kierra is coming to us from Richmond Kentucky with a recently completed Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management (with a Certificate in GIS), from Eastern Kentucky University. She has prior AmeriCorps/Montana Conservation Corps experience in Montana at the National Bison Range and Gallatin National Forests, and great experience in non-profit related outreach and programming as a student leader in the Phi Sigma Biological Honors Society, the ECU Student Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and The Wildlife Society. Welcome Kierra – we're really happy you're joining us!

And, as always, please review the items on our website, and let Kierra (kierra@mtwatersheds.org) know of any exciting events or news from your watershed so that we can share this information more broadly.

Happiest of holidays to you all, and best wishes for 2018!

Dave Shively