

# MID-SNAKE WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUP

## Meeting Minutes

Department of Environmental Quality  
650 Addison Avenue West, Suite 110, Twin Falls, Idaho  
Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 6:00 p.m.

### Attendees

Jason Brown – City of Twin Falls  
Gary Fornshell - University of Idaho  
Brain Hoelscher – Idaho Power  
Linda Lemmon – Idaho Aquiculture Association  
Brenda Mitchell – USFS Sawtooth  
Andy Morton – Clear Springs Food  
Clarence Robison – University of Idaho  
Sue Switzer – DEQ, Twin Falls Regional Office  
Craig Thomas – DEQ, Twin Falls Regional Office  
Mike Trabert – McClure Engineering  
Jim Younk – Idaho Power

### Welcome

The meeting of the Mid Snake Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) was called to order a little after 6:00 p.m. by Mike Trabert, WAG Chairman. The attendees introduced themselves.

### WAG Business

- The minutes of the meetings on September 24, 2013, November 13, 2013, and February 12, 2014 were reviewed. Brian Hoelscher brought up that the questions regarding the target being identified as an annual average is mentioned in all three minutes, but the answer has never been brought back to the WAG. Sue read from an email received from Sonny Buhidar, “The basis for the TMDL’s (all of them) is annual averaging. As stated in page 36 of the PowerPoint presentation. (He goes on to talk about the presentation we presented to this group.) This presentation was presented to the Mid-Snake WAG on January 20, 2010; the Lake Walcott WAG on January 28, 2010; the Wood River WAG on March 23, 2010; and EPA on December 29, 2009. The authors of this presentation were Sonny, Sue, and Mike Etcherverry.”

Andy Morton pointed out a grammar change in the November 13, 2013 minutes, page 2, under the heading “Idaho Power-Snake River Data & Trends”, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. It should read “...we would increase the water clarity...”

There was discussion on the statement in the February 12, 2014 minutes concerning DEQ asking EPA and Tetra Tech to clarify their comment on tributary analysis. Sue stated that it

has been settled in house; DEQ is not going to comment on EPA comments. But if anyone in the WAG would like to discuss that with EPA, they are more than welcome to do so. Brian said that his intent was to consider pollutant loads from other watersheds or HUC loads rather than tributary load. The minutes of the February meeting will not be changed to reflect the intent, but the discussion topic would be recorded in the current meeting.

Motion was made by Andy Morton to approve all three sets of minutes inclusive of the recommended changes. Jason Brown seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous for approval.

- A copy of the edited Mid Snake Bylaws that were presented by Brian Hoelscher's at the last meeting was made available to the attendees for discussion. Mike Trabert suggested that in Article III, last sentence if affected is taken out before industries, then it should also be taken out on the back side of the and after interests. Andy stated that after the text has been switched around, the top paragraph on Page 4, last sentence, should read "...subject to Article VIII..." Brian Hoelscher moved to approve the bylaws with edits and changes as discussed; Andy Morton seconded the motion. The motion was passed. Updated bylaws will be emailed to the WAG and posted on the DEQ web site.
- DEQ's BAG and WAG Appointment process was handed out and described by Sue Switzer. The Mid Snake WAG has four vacancies; confined animal feeding operations, food processors, soil conservation districts, and Middle Snake Regional Water Resource Commission. Randy MacMillan will be the interim representative for food processor until the appointment can be formalized.

The WAG expressed concerns about the different appointment processes that had been used. The members of this WAG have always been dominated by a caucus of the interest the member was to represent. What assurance does the WAG have that the appointed member has a vested interest in the industry they represent.

Sue has drafted a notice that will go out in the newspaper seeking interested candidates to fill these positions. The notice was given to the attendees for review and comment. Andy suggested that in the first paragraph "and" be inserted before Middle Snake Regional Water Resource Commission, and take out "and interests" in that same sentence. In the bottom paragraph "interests" should be removed after Middle Snake Regional Water Resource Commission.

Sue encouraged industries with vacancies to encourage interested candidates to apply and assured the WAG a list of candidates would be provided to them for selection. Twin Falls Regional Office will run the WAG position news release with the changes suggested by the WAG this week. Those candidates chosen will be submitted to the BAG along with a list of existing voting members to assure all members have been properly appointed.

### **WY 2013 Snake River Water Quality Monitoring**

Jim Younk gave a PowerPoint presentation about Idaho Power's changes in compliance monitoring this part year. He discussed changes to monitoring practices from 10 minute

monitoring for temperature and DO to broader based water quality monitoring looking at trend nutrient levels as approved by FERC. Idaho Power felt that this change would not only complete their compliance monitoring but also benefit a greater number of people. The new monitoring began at the end of March 2013. He presented the analysis of WY 2013 monitoring at 3 points in the Mid-Snake (King Hill bridge, Buhl bridge, and at the lower of the 2 power plants at Milner Reservoir).

Mike Trabert encouraged Idaho Power to consider monitoring down-stream of Centennial Park to pick-up spring flows. The merits of the Kimberly gauge station versus the proposed Twin Falls monitoring site were discussed amongst the group.

### **DEQ Updates**

- The 2012 Integrated Report is final but not approved. DEQ is waiting for an approval letter from EPA.
- Sue presented the status of the Reevaluation of Mid-Snake/Upper Snake Rock. Leigh Woodruff sent an email saying, "Thanks to Randy MacMillan, Clear Springs Foods, and Brian Hoelscher, Idaho Power, their data was very useful." Tetra Tech has completed a draft statistical analysis of new information provided during the public comment period to better identify trends and longitudinal patterns in phosphorus levels within the Mid-Snake Reach. The agencies are now reviewing the technical work. Once it is finalized it will be incorporated in a revision to the Data Assessment report. Tetra Tech also reviewed the Ecological Risk Assessment for the Middle Snake River, Idaho (USEPA, 2002); a reference not incorporated in the draft Data Assessment report. Pertinent information from that document will be brought into the Data Report, for example information on nutrient cycling. EPA does not have a firm estimate on when the Data Report will be finalized. They hope by the end of the summer.

Sue confirmed with EPA the resolution developed by the WAG had been included in the public comment portion of the Draft Reevaluation. These comments would be responded to, possibly in a separate document.

DEQ was contacted by ICL, expressing interest in receiving the hand-outs and notes on the topic following the meeting.

Andy Morton suggested forming a TAC to support implementation projects instead of re-opening the TMDL. He referenced Table 17 of the Draft Reevaluation as indicative to the intended conclusion. He feels the WAG needs to keep the discussion going.

Brian Hoelscher Idaho Power has participated in similar efforts on the Lower Boise WAG and found Idaho Power did not have the resources to support intensive implementation efforts. Discussion for the developing a TAC and a topic of discussion was placed on the agenda for August.

**Tributary Analysis**

Mike Trabert suggested a visual tributary analysis demonstrating loading to the Snake River from other watersheds as well as tributaries within the Upper Snake Rock. This would allow the WAG to identify potential problems and focus implementation on those tributaries with the largest pollutant loads.

Sue stated that DEQ has some data on the tributaries on the Mid-Snake. Where we are more limited are the watersheds that are contributing.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.

  
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WAG Chairman

  
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Approval Date