

Middle Snake River Watershed Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

Twin Falls City Council Chambers
305 3rd Avenue East, Twin Falls, Idaho
Wednesday, February 15, 2012, 6:00 PM

Attendees:

Bill Allred – DEQ Twin Falls Regional Office (TFRO)
Lynn Babington – ARK Fisheries
Afton Babington – ARK Fisheries
Starla Barnes – Fish Breeders of Idaho
Dirk Bogaard – Idaho Trout Company
Sonny Buhidar – DEQ Twin Falls Regional Office (TFRO)
Barry Burnell – DEQ State Office
Mark Daily - Aquaculture
Brian Hoelscher – Idaho Power Company (IPC)
Harold Johnson – Idaho Trout Company
Steve Kammeyce – Idaho Fish and Game
Clyde Lay – Bureau of Reclamation
Rick Lowell – Idaho Fish and Game
Randy MacMillan – Clear Springs Foods
Gary Marquardt – Upper Snake BAG
Michael McIntyre – DEQ State Office
Andy Morton – Clear Springs Foods, Inc.
Chuck Pentzer – Soil and Water Conservation Commissions (SWCC)
Leo Ray – Fish Breeders of Idaho
Mark Shumar – DEQ State Office
Craig Thomas – DEQ Twin Falls Regional Office (TFRO)
Mike Trabert – City of Twin Falls
Leigh Woodruff – EPA-Boise

Welcome

The meeting of the Mid Snake Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) was called to order at approximately 6:02 p.m. by Mike Trabert, WAG Chairman. The attendees introduced themselves and who they represented.

WAG Business

- The minutes for the September 21, 2011 WAG meeting were reviewed. Andy Morton made a motion to approve the minutes and Mark Daily seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- The minutes for the December 7, 2011 WAG meeting were reviewed. On Page 2 under Upper Snake Rock Temperature TMDL about half way down, it should read “This is ground truthed...” A motion was made by Andy Morton to approve the minutes after this change is made. It was seconded by Mark Daily and approved unanimously.
- This was the regularly scheduled meeting to consider appointments for WAG chairman and vice chairman. The motion was presented by Randy MacMillan that Mike Trabert continues as chairman and Larry Pennington as vice chairman. It was seconded by Brian Hoelscher and approved. Larry Pennington was not in attendance at this meeting. Mike Trabert will contact him for his acceptance.
- The 2012 meeting schedule was accepted as stated in the bylaws with additional meeting as needed.

Upper Snake Rock Temperature TMDL

Mark Shumar presented some steps used to make a temperature TMDL using riparian shade. Riparian refers to vegetation on either side of the stream that is strongly influenced by the alluvial aquifer. Streams involved in this TMDL are assessment units in the Calf Creek and Clover Creek areas; also, Mud Creek, Cedar Draw, Cottonwood, and McMillan area and Dry Creek. First, we need to establish existing shade, which is done through aerial photos. Second, we need both a natural and existing channel width. To determine if there is a substantial difference between the two we use a regional hydrologic curve, in this case the Upper Snake Rock curve. Next, we have to have a target shade to match to the existing shade. This comes from a shade calculator that was developed by the Washington Department of Ecology. Shade curves can be found on the DEQ web site. All the information goes into a loading table, which takes the shade levels and converts them to a solar load from one of the weather stations. The larger the lack of shade: the greater priority for implementation. Mark responded to questions and comments from the WAG attendees.

Brian Hoelscher asked for clarification in the TMDL that achievement of PNV does not meet compliance criteria. He would also like to see an analysis regarding the bias in the rounding. Mark said the TMDL loading can be reviewed and presented to the WAG.

The motion was made by Randy MacMillan to move the TMDL forward. Mark Daily seconded the motion. The TMDL will be moved forward to state DEQ level with WAG approval. The WAG will be notified when the requested changes are made and it goes out for public comment.

DEQ Position on Re-opening the TMDL & WAG Involvement

Barry Burnell, Water Quality Division Administrator, recapped the 5-year review process and the WAG’s part of the process. Part of the 5-year review is evaluating the basis for the TMDL and the factors that went into the development of the TMDL, in particular looking at new information and new data. With regard to the TMDL on the Mid Snake there is some question as to the results of looking at the new information with respect to flow and attenuation of pollutants in the waterbody. DEQ has not made a decision whether to re-opening the TMDL or not. Barry

reviewed the approach DEQ takes in determining whether to re-open the TDML. They do value the WAG's input and involvement. Barry responded to questions and comment from the WAG attendees.

The comment was made by several WAG members that the WAG needs to be more involved in the process. They are not part of the development of the document as stated in Idaho code. The WAG would like to have improved communications and be involved in the process from the beginning. Barry replied that it is appropriate for the agency to do a 5-year review and preliminary levels of data analysis, which has been performed by Don Zaroban; and he can come and share this with the WAG. It is important to know that DEQ is not at the point to move forward with a revision of the TMDL. When the decision is made it will be vital to have WAG involvement.

Scope of Tetra-Tech Contract

Leigh Woodruff handed out a summary sheet of EPA support via TetraTech contract. EPA's roll is to provide technical support to DEQ to do an initial investigation. TetraTech reports to EPA. EPA will work in collaboration with TetraTech and DEQ and the WAG. Leigh reviewed the scope of work that is in place for the contractor and the estimated timeframe. Leigh accepted suggestions and comments from the WAG.

Update Aquaculture General Permit

The person for EPA who works on the permit is Dirk Helder; he works in the Boise office. Leigh Woodruff presented information received from Dirk Helder on the status of the permit. The Aquaculture General Permit expires in November. EPA plans to re-issue the permit before it lapses. Right now there are no plans to make revisions to the permit. Dirk has set up public meetings to hear issues or concerns from the aquaculture folks. The first meeting is March 7 from 10:00 to 3:00 at Emerson, Idaho, Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station. There will be another session in northern Idaho sometime in April. The plan is to have a draft permit out for public comment sometime in June. To continue coverage under the general permit, you will need to submit an NOI by the June 3, 2012. It is hoped to have it finalized by the end of November. If the TMDL is revised and the revisions affect the aquaculture industry, the plan is to re-open the permit and incorporate those changes.

Pollutant Trading

Information on pollutant trading was presented by Michael McIntyre. The state guidance on pollutant trading was set up in 2010, and the current trading framework for Mid Snake TMDL was set up in 2001. Pollutant trading is identified in the current permit; however, the next general aquaculture permit may not have trading in it. The need and desire for trade is critical; however, baseline work for the Mid Snake needs to be done first. Another issue is there is no broker available to handle trades. DEQ cannot be a broker. DEQ would like an independent 3rd party to handle trades. Up until there is a change in the permit, trades are still authorized for aquaculture.

Idaho Power

Brian Hoelscher presented an update on modeling in the Snake River from Milner to King Hill that is being done as a master's student thesis. He passed out a summary sheet and answered questions from attendees.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Mike Trabert at approximately 8:52 p.m.



WAG Chairman

8/29/12
Date