

Mid Snake Watershed Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

Department of Environmental Quality
1363 Fillmore Street, Twin Falls, Idaho
Wednesday, May 8, 2013, 6:00 p.m.

Attendees

Bill Allred – Department of Environmental Quality, Twin Falls Regional Office
Jay Barlogi – Twin Falls Canal Company
Jason Brown – City of Twin Falls
Sonny Buhidar – Department of Environmental Quality, Twin Falls Regional Office
Richard Bupp – Department of Environmental Quality, Twin Falls Regional Office
Scott Bybee – City of Jerome
Mark Daily - Aquaculture
Gary Fornshell – University of Idaho
Brian Hoelscher – Idaho Power Company
Polly Hulsey – City of Jerome
David Moore – Jerome Cheese Company
Andy Morton – Clear Springs Foods
Dade Pettinger – City of Jerome
Bill Riebesell – Jerome Cheese Company
Gilbert Sanchez – City of Jerome Company
John Shine – City of Jerome
Cindy Snyder – Soil and Water Conservation District
Sue Switzer – Department of Environmental Quality, Twin Falls Regional Office
Craig Thomas – Department of Environmental Quality, Twin Falls Regional Office
Mike Trabert – McClure Engineering
Troy Vitek – City of Twin Falls
Jeff Williams - Rancher
Jim Younk – Idaho Power Company

Welcome

The meeting of the Mid Snake Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) was called to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. by Mike Trabert, WAG chairman. The attendees introduced themselves and who they represented.

WAG Business

- A motion was made by Andy Morton to approve the minutes for the January 16, 2013, WAG meeting; it was seconded by Mark Daily. The minutes were approved as written.

- Idaho Aquaculture Association Meeting is June 8 at College of Southern Idaho Evergreen Building.

Jerome City/Jerome Cheese Permit Renewal

A copy of the Draft TMDL on the Upper Snake Rock that involves Jerome Cheese and Jerome City was distributed to the attendees by Sonny Buhidar. Sonny presented background of the TMDL and answered questions from attendees. Sonny was directed by DEQ State Office to draft a TMDL of revisions based on a request that was sent to our office by Jerome Cheese Company based on their NPDES permit for wasteload allocation in order for them to discharge. Jerome Cheese Company has two discharge locations: one goes to Lateral 12 and ends up going to the N Canal and eventually goes to the river, the other goes to the City of Jerome. This TMDL is based on what is going to Lateral 12. In 2008, there was an agreement with Jerome City to provide 10 lbs. per day of phosphorous to Jerome Cheese Company. A portion of those 10 lbs. could be used by Jerome Cheese Company for the Lateral 12 discharge. The provision set up in this TMDL is 3.8 lbs. of phosphorous would go to the Jerome Cheese Company and 6.2 lbs. would be retired for the wasteload allocation. This is draft and is still being worked on by EPA and attorneys on all sides.

It is important to note, the discharge that goes to Lateral 12 is under the supervision of the North Side Canal Company and so is the N Canal. DEQ's perspective on this in terms of the anti-degradation review that we did is that this Lateral has a beneficial use as agriculture water supply; that is our position as water of the state. EPA took the position that these are waters of the US, which means that the Lateral should be covered for cold water aquatic life and primary contact recreation. The water quality standards that the North Side Canal Company has are more stringent than the standards we have in the river, and they are concerned about meeting their water quality standards. They are also concerned that the wastewater may have an impact on their shareholders who utilize the water to water their crops.

The Jerome Cheese Company's permit is on extension with EPA. EPA is waiting for DEQ to establish a wasteload allocation before issuing the permit. The TMDL is draft and the time schedule is unknown. If the WAG needs 60 days for review, a letter from the WAG should be sent to EPA and DEQ requesting a review period. If anyone has questions, Sonny will be available to answer them.

Mud Creek/Cedar Draw Temperature & Flow Data Collection

Sue Switzer updated the WAG on the Upper Snake Rock Temperature PNV, which was submitted last year to DEQ State Office but was not submitted to EPA. Based on previous TMDLs submitted by other regional offices, EPA will not accept a PNV temperature TMDL if any of the creeks within that system listed for temperature having point sources on them and we have not considered or developed wasteload allocation if they are applicable. We have two creeks that are in that TMDL, Cedar Draw and Mud Creek that are listed because of the irrigation system that is in Twin Falls County. We cannot develop a wasteload allocation or defense without the data from each point source. In an effort to gather data we had a meeting with the stakeholders on March 8, 2013, asking for access to collect the data. We are meeting with each one individually and looking at each facility on a case-by-case basis.

Rich Bupp gave an overview of what has been done since the March 8 meeting. DEQ had to come up with a strategy for collecting the data. Rich presented a handout of information on the watersheds and scenarios of the facilities. Since we have met with the operators, we have developed facility schematics so we know the correct places to measure flows through the facilities and to install thermographs, continuous temperature monitors, to answer two questions: (1) What is the heat load for that facility? (2) Where is the right place in the receiving water body to see what the load is in the receiving water body? We are about done figuring out the locations, Rich has written a Quality Assurance Project Plan Draft, and in two weeks we will meet with the facility operators again. The question that has come up with the facility owner is, "how will this affect my permit?" What we are trying to do is related to the TMDL; it is not an NPDES issue. It has nothing to do with the NPDES aquaculture permit.

Discussion and questions were entertained by Sue, Rich, and Sonny. Brian Hoelscher brought up the point that the flow based heat load units and PNV TMDL units will not talk. He stated that this will be a huge problem for Idaho Power.

2012 Draft Integrated Report

The Integrated Report is not out yet. Sue handed out a section of the Integrated Report, the Delist Section. Sue defined this section and its headings. This is a new section of the Integrated Report this year. It is only Draft; it has not gone out for public comment or to EPA. We wanted to get this out to the WAG so you can start looking at it. When it comes out for public comment, Sue will send out an email to the WAG.

Mid Snake Data Analysis – Update of EPA contracted report

Sonny presented an update on the Tetra Tech water quality report. EPA and Tetra Tech are finalizing the draft document before providing it to the WAG for review and comment. According to EPA, the end of May is most likely a reasonable estimate for the time when it will be shared with the WAG. EPA has no problem with the WAG taking their time to review the document, and they feel that the WAG's review and support is valuable. At this point EPA does not have a new contract with Tetra Tech, so they cannot commit to a specific time for a presentation. However, their intent is to provide a presentation when the contract is reestablished.

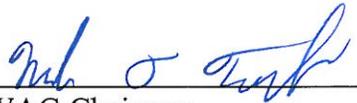
This report is only Step 1; no further action has been discussed.

DEQ Updates

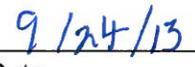
- The information for a webinar sponsored by EPA having to do with the impacts of sediment dynamics on water quality was handed out by Sonny Buhidar. This webinar is available to the WAG members on a first come first serve basis.
- DEQ will be moving to a new office sometime in July. If we not meet until August, I will try to get a map out to the WAG prior to the next meeting.

Adjourn

Mike Trabert adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:25 p.m.



WAG Chairman



Date