North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Watershed Advisory Group
DRAFT
Meeting Notes
October 20th, 2011
1:00 – 3:00 pm
US Forest Service Bldg., Smelterville, ID

Next Meeting: **December 15, 2011 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the USFS Building in Smelterville**

Please visit the WAG Website:
http://www.deq.idaho.gov/north-fork-cda-river-subbasin-wag

Contact Kajsa Stromberg with any questions:
(208) 666-4633 or Kajsa.Stromberg@deq.idaho.gov

Participants: Larry Runkle, Bob Bevins, Bob Clark, Ashley McFarland, Jon Cantamessa, Larry Yergler, Ingrid Madsen, Ed Lider, Chris James, Kajsa Stromberg, Kristie McEnroe

Meeting Purpose: To convene the Watershed Advisory Group for the purposes of water quality improvements and protection in the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Subbasin through Total Maximum Daily Load development and implementation.

Agenda items and discussion:

- 2010 Integrated Report: The 2010 Integrated Report was approved by EPA in late August, and DEQ will begin the 2012 Integrated Report soon. The report is the official water quality status of all Idaho surface waters. It incorporates everything we know about pollution, support of beneficial uses, water quality impairments and waters with or needing TMDLs. It is available on the website along with an interactive map that can be more user friendly than the printed version.

- Idora Mill Remediation Site:

  Kajsa presented the WAG with a presentation on the Idora Mill remediation efforts DEQ's Waste and Remediation staff were involved in. The remediation is a combined effort between DEQ, Forest Service and BLM and was partially funding by a 319 grant. There were 11,000-12,000 cubic yards of contaminated material removed from mill site by the contractor Northwind and moved to an existing repository near Prichard. After the tailings were removed, the mill building itself was demolished. Top soil and seed have been bought in to cap the area with clean soil and re-vegetate. After the contaminated soil was removed,

the contractor focused on stream bank improvements. Kajsa planned to visit the site 10/21/2011 with the remediation team to view the site and look at the progress they have made so far. The stream conditions above the mill site were much better than downstream and there are fish present both onsite and upstream. Kajsa has approached both DEQ and BLM in implementing a monitoring plan for metals throughout the subbasin, and would like to invite them to present to the WAG.

- North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Cooperative Recreation Plan:

  The plan is complete, approved by the WAG, and available on the website: http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/720370-nfcda-recreational-plan-0811.pdf

  Kajsa can send a CD copy to anyone in need. Now that the plan has been made public, it's time for implementation. The complementary Forest Service river corridor recreation plan is well underway and should be available within the next couple of months for review. When the plan was made public and featured in an article in the Coeur d'Alene Press, at least 5 interested citizens called DEQ willing to help out. Kajsa suggested getting started on simple educational tools and securing funding. Larry Yergler suggested putting some sort of recurring ad or article in both the Coeur d'Alene Press and the Spokesman Review to reach the recreational river users. The goal of these ads/articles would be to educate the public on the plan, implementation and simple items they can do such as Pack it in, Pack it out. The Nickel's Worth and The Inlander were also suggested for other possible newspaper media avenues. Others suggested putting together a presentation or CD to send to the schools about responsible river recreation. Another idea would be a live radio broadcast from Enaville or Albert's Landing with simple messages that focus on safety and littering (cans, bottles, and garbage). Other than the media notices, another avenue could be to create floating or enclosed riverside can disposal sites. Other rivers like the Apple River in Wisconsin have placed fenced depositories near the shoreline with great success. It might attract landowner participation if they were able to keep all the proceeds made from recycling the cans. Most of the floating traffic is launched between Steamboat Bridge and Albert's Landing so the focus would be in that section of the river. The USFS have also budgeted for a river ranger to patrol the river next season. Another idea was to coordinate with Shoshone County businesses to participate in float tube rental, and shuttle services. A route map with advertising sections could show can collection stations, restrooms, parking areas, and the shuttle service. Perhaps businesses would help sponsor the development, publication and distribution of the map.

  The WAG agreed that the goals for this coming season should be the implementation of at least 2 can collection sites and to set up some sort of River Fund to help raise money for further implementation. There was great feedback from the WAG and we plan to revisit this topic at the next meeting to talk more about fundraising and grant ideas.

- Meeting Water Quality Goals in the North Fork Coeur d'Alene Subbasin Streams:

  Kajsa showed a presentation on Meeting Water Quality Goals in North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Subbasin Streams. Out of 19 streams studied initially, 8 were selected for a pilot study in 2009. These included Big Elk, Cougar, East Fork Steamboat, Picnic, Tepee, Yellowdog, Stewart and Skookum. Modeling was done to reproduce sediment models used in the 2001 sediment TMDL. Several of the streams had results suggesting substantial reductions in sediment due to extensive restoration work by the USFS.

  In 2009, crews from DEQ and USFS visited these 8 streams to conduct field sampling and verify modeling results. Crews collected rapid bioassessment data using the DEQ Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program (BURP) protocols and USFS PIBO (Pacfish/Infish Biological Opinion) protocols. Additionally, there was an evaluation done of the headwater roads, grade control, channel condition, and vegetative cover. All the streams are showing healthy environments for macroinvertebrates, as well as fish which were collected via electrofishing. Cutthroat trout numbers were low in Cougar Gulch where it seems brook trout have invaded. Overall, the streams showed great improvement and results suggested all 8 streams meeting beneficial use support and TMDL goals. There will be additional opportunities to review these data and provide feedback to DEQ and USFS on the results.

- Moose Drool Watershed Restoration Project:

  The WAG received a scoping notice from USFS for the Moose Drool Watershed Restoration Project and it can also be found on the WAG website: http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/713982-scoping-notice-moose-drool-usfs-project.pdf

  The scoping notice included 172 miles of road decommissioning, 155 crossings removed, 92 miles of road storage, 2.2 miles of road reconstruction, 2 miles of road conditioning, 1.2 miles of railway/dike removal, 4.2 miles of stream restoration, 36 acres of timber harvest for instream restoration, 3 aquatic passage barriers improved and 3 aquatic passage barriers removed. There is an environmental assessment being developed and expected to be released soon for a 30 day comment period. Kajsa asked the WAG if they thought they could support the project as a group during the environmental assessment comment period. Kajsa asked how the WAG should proceed lacking members at this meeting to make an official vote. It was the recommendation of the WAG for Kajsa to contact the members who frequent the meetings who weren't able to attend that day. A draft letter could be developed and circulated to make review and approval informed and efficient. It was recommended that if not all the WAG members agreed, the letter would be worded in a way to reflect that. Having

verbiage such as; it was the general consensus of the WAG members to support this project, however there were a few who had reservations.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2011. All presentations and handouts will be posted on the WAG website.