

## North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Watershed Advisory Group

### Meeting Notes

December 9, 2009

1:00 – 4:00 pm

US Forest Service Bldg., Smelterville, ID

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, January 28, 2010 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at the US Forest Service Building in Smelterville, ID.

**Please visit the WAG Website:**

[http://www.deq.idaho.gov/about/regions/north\\_fork\\_cda\\_river\\_wag/index.cfm](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/about/regions/north_fork_cda_river_wag/index.cfm)

**Contact Kajsa Stromberg with any questions:**

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**Participants:** Bob Clark, Mike Mihelich, Roy Faler, Larry Runkle, Sandy Schlepp, Don Martin, KK Prussian, Mary Terra-Berns, Ed Lider, Bill Rust, Kajsa Stromberg

**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.

- **Historical photographs:** Kajsa shared a selection of historical photographs obtained from the Museum of North Idaho in Coeur d'Alene. The photos illustrate the landscape, types of development, and land use associated with water quality in the North Fork CDA Subbasin. The photos will be posted in a slideshow on the NFCDA WAG website.
- **Conservation District/OSC Project:** Craig Nelson is the new project leader for the Kootenai-Shoshone Soil and Water Conservation District. The District and DEQ have signed a contract extension through December 2010 and are completing restoration project plans and contracts for construction in 2010. The District has purchased a water-jet stinger for planting and plans training opportunities in the coming year. Four out of six engineering designs are complete.
- **319 Project updates and ideas about new applications:** Kajsa mentioned the upcoming funding availability through the DEQ 319 Program for Nonpoint Pollution Reduction. She encouraged the group to submit project ideas for funding in 2010. Ongoing projects were reviewed – Beaver Creek Mine Tailings Removal by DEQ, and Short-Riley Creeks Restoration by USFS and North Idaho Fly Casters. A draft environmental analysis document will be available for public comment soon for the

Beaver Creek Mine Tailings Removal project. Construction on this cooperative project is scheduled for 2010. The Short-Riley Creeks project has made great progress during 2009 and road treatments have been completed. In-stream work will be completed in 2010.

- **Erosion problem and home threatened, WHIP:** Kajsa shared some information about erosion along the NFCDA mainstem and homes in the floodplain. The WAG discussed the challenge of managing resources when development conflicts with the natural course of a river. We discussed excessive erosion and sedimentation and ideas to deal with these issues. Dredging is often mentioned by WAG members as a potential solution. Several NRCS programs are available to assist landowners and benefit the environment. Unfortunately the WHIP program cannot be used on any public land and NRCS has determined that this restriction applies to the state-owned land below the ordinary high water mark of navigable rivers. Bank stabilization or riparian enhancement work on the NFCDA may be difficult or impossible to fund through this program. Other assistance for landowners will be pursued.

- **2010 Integrated Report:** Kajsa notified the WAG that DEQ is currently preparing the 2010 Integrated Report of water quality status. There was a request for data and information earlier in the year. DEQ is currently conducting assessments. There will be opportunity for public input and comment.

- **Log debris management:** The WAG discussed the issue of wood management in the NFCDA subbasin stream system, including plans by the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security and Shoshone County to remove wood from a section of river near Cinnabar Creek. We discussed the challenges of managing public safety and infrastructure and the benefits of wood in river systems. Kajsa expressed appreciation for the efforts of John Thomas, Shoshone County, to incorporate information and feedback from DEQ and others into plans. Some WAG members expressed concern that there is a perceived double standard about what government entities are allowed to do compared to what private individuals are allowed to do, and how permitting programs are applied. Bob Clark indicated that there was great concern among the North Idaho Fly Casters club over this issue and its effects on the fishery. Several WAG members suggested that management decisions about wood should include a public notification and opportunity for comment.

There were several ideas about management of public safety and questions about who is responsible for this element of management. Some suggested closures, warnings, and educational efforts emphasizing personal responsibility. Someone mentioned a system of ratings - easy, moderate, and difficult – so that recreators could be warned about what to expect in certain stretches of river. Overall, the group agreed that the WAG's focus should be on water quality and that this is an important issue related to water quality. In particular, the WAG felt that it was important to consider the watershed perspective about bedload and the function of trees to stabilize bedload. The WAG suggested that we should develop a letter or position statement for the group describing

the benefits of in-stream wood for water quality and requesting the consideration of these benefits when determining how to manage large wood in the NFCDA system.

- **Beaver Creek Watershed Analysis:** DEQ, USFS, and the Conservation District are pursuing funding to perform an interagency watershed analysis on the Beaver Creek watershed. The WAG has consistently expressed concerns about water quality and related issues in the Beaver Creek watershed. This watershed analysis should provide the practical information and strategic framework to fully assess watershed conditions and implement cost-effective improvement activities. The information will also be useful for the sediment TMDL 5-yr-review, and development of TMDLs for temperature and metals in the watershed. A proposal has been prepared for the USFS Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) to fund seasonal staff, field supplies, and analysis costs during summer 2010. The proposal will be presented to the WAG at the January meeting for WAG approval prior to the February submittal for the RAC.