

SOUTHWEST BASIN ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2015

BAG Members Present: Jim Moyer, Dick Rogers, Allan Erickson, Chris Randolph; Ken Meierotto

Attendees: Lance Holloway, Julia Achabal, Josie Erskine, Mary Wolf, J. Kent Foster, Jack Harrison, Lynn McKee, Joan Cloonan, Vicki Lukehart, Sharona Olsen, Robin Hadelier

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Moyer at 8:38 a.m.

Meeting minutes were read and approved as written.

Welcome Allan Erickson and Changes at DEQ

- Allan Erickson is the new BAG alternate representative for the mining industry. Allan told us a bit about himself and his experience with the mining industry. Welcome Allan.
- Lauri Monnot has taken a position in the State Office as the IPDES Municipal Permit Specialist. Boise Regional Office (BRO) will be filling her position in the coming weeks.
- Aaron Scheff has been appointed the new Regional Administrator. Aaron was previously the Ground Water/Remediation Manager. Aaron attended the meeting for a few minutes to introduce himself.
- John Tippetts is the newly appointed Director of DEQ.

BAG Representative / Non-Municipal Permittee Discussion

DEQ solicited for public interest in joining the SWBAG as the non-municipal permittee representative. There were four responses, with only one justifiable candidate. Discussion was open to increase the candidate pool. All non-municipal permittees were culled from the list of permitted dischargers in the state of Idaho to spark discussion and to see if anyone had personal contacts with any of these dischargers.

Comment: Dick Rogers recommended asking Director Tippetts for recommendations.

Other names that were suggested were Rick Orton and Ken Compton.

Action: Jim Moyer will contact these persons to solicit interest in participating with the BAG.

Benefits of Agricultural Reuse

Jack Harrison, PhD, P.E. of Hyqual presented opportunities for water quality improvements through indirect reuse. Details of his presentation can be found on DEQ's SWBAG web page <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/60176960/indirect-reuse-presentation-0715.pdf>

No Till Farming and Soil Health

Josie Erskine, Ada SWCD presented data from use of their no till drill.

- 22 producers have rented the drill (many of them more than once)
- 2000 acres have been planted using the drill
- One producer has been influenced to buy his own drill

- The drill has been used to plant cash crops, cover crops and forage crops
- The success with this drill has inspired other districts to purchase drills

The district has initiated the Treasure Valley Soil Health Connection Project which will follow three producers use of cover crops, no till farming and livestock integration to achieve production goals.

The project goal will be to create visually appealing multimedia videos that can be used to help promote and educate about these techniques to other farmers, soil health educators, law makers and the general public. Resource and information sharing with a key focus area in connecting producers with real hands on application of these techniques. Another goal of this project is to create a regional cover crop seed data base. The data base will be accessible to producers and help them answer many of the questions they have about cover crops.

Mary Wolf, NRCS presented “Soil Health: Key Concepts and Why it Matters for Water Quality”. Her presentation can be found on DEQ’s SWBAG web page

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/60176958/soil-health-key-concepts-why-it-matters-presentation-071515.pdf>

Project Primer: Crane Creek Headgate and Weiser / Snake River Projects

Vicki Lukehart and Sharona Olson of the Weiser River SCD and Vern Lolley, Chairman of the Weiser Irrigation District came for a round table discussion with the BAG. Topics included the district’s success using automated headgates to improve water quality and delivery. The Crane Creek Headgate Project is on the horizon and the district came to describe the new effort and receive feedback in preparation for their next 319 proposal. Additionally, the district is building a partnership with the City of Weiser to protect the City’s drinking water while improving water quality and streambank stability in the Weiser and Snake Rivers. This will also be submitted for 319 funding in October.

Idaho Power Snake River Stewardship Program

Chris Randolph gave a presentation describing a program that will address water quality and habitat issues in the Snake River by restoring both in-river processes and function, and pollutant inputs. His presentation can be found on DEQ’s SWBAG web page

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/60176959/snake-river-restoration-restoring-processes-native-habitats-presentation-071515.pdf>

Meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.