

North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Watershed Advisory Group

Draft Meeting Notes
April 21, 2016
1:00 – 3:00 pm
US Forest Service Bldg., Smelterville, ID

Next meeting: May 26, 2016

Please visit the WAG website:

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/north-fork-cda-river-subbasin-wag>

Contact Kajsa Van de Riet with any questions or suggestions:

(208) 666-4633 or kajsa.vanderiet@deq.idaho.gov

Participants: Amanda Parrish, Kajsa Van de Riet, Sandy Schlepp, Carson Watkins, Andy Dux, Bill Stroud, Dustin Stetson, Bob Clark, Dan Martinsen, Will Young

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.

- Introductions, review agenda, & distribute previous meeting notes
- **Grizzly Fire Salvage Project** - Will Young provided an update on the USFS proposed project. The emergency status is still pending, but the Environmental Assessment is on schedule with hopes for a decision in early summer. The WAG had some discussion about how to handle trees in riparian zones. The USFS said danger trees near roads would be cut and left in the riparian zone. A WAG member saw this as a type of waste. However, Will pointed out it would balance public safety needs with ecological concerns.
- **Idaho Panhandle National Forests Resource Advisory Committee Grants:** The WAG submitted letters of support for two applications:
 - *River Ranger:* The CdA River Ranger District submitted a proposal for funding temporary seasonal river ranger positions.
 - *Dumpsters and Vault Toilets:* Shoshone County submitted a proposal for funds to help provide dumpsters and maintain vault toilets along the river.

Both projects were funded by the RAC. Unfortunately, the Forest Service was unable to hire the river ranger positions this year. Other seasonal staff will be available this year, and they will plan for hiring river rangers with these funds in 2017.

- **Fire and Floodplains Workshop** - Kajsa distributed copies of a brochure about our upcoming public workshop. The workshop will be Saturday June 4th from 10am-1pm with speakers from UI Extension, DEQ, and Shoshone County. It will be held in the Prichard-

Murray Fire Hall and has a \$10 registration fee. The WAG recommended posting announcements to the Silver Valley Classifieds and Silver Valley Rants and Raves on Facebook and advertising in the Nickelsworth.

- **June 25 North Idaho Fly Casters Conservation Festival** - The Fly Casters will be hosting a planting and BBQ in conjunction with the USFS restoration project at Moose Drool in the headwaters of the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River. This will be the same location as last year and more information will be coming out soon.

There will also be a Fly Fishing Expo May 13-14 at the Best Western in Coeur d'Alene. Free admission.

- **Albert's Landing** - Albert's Landing is closed this year and up for sale. There are lots of questions about how it will be managed this year and if floaters will be able to use it, whether people will use it responsibly, where we will host the River Cleanup this year. The Snake Pit or River Fly Shop are alternative possibilities.
- **North Fork CdA River Map** - Bill Stroud of Victor, MT attended the WAG meeting to discuss his ideas about developing a river access map. The primary audience would be floating anglers. He was looking for ideas, resources and contacts for a map that will ultimately be available for sale.
- **Environmental DNA (eDNA) Sampling** - Will Young, Forest Service fish biologist, shared information about a new fisheries sampling tool called environmental DNA or eDNA. This technique can be used to detect the presence/absence of fish species from a water sample. The equipment can be carried in a backpack and the sample is easy to collect. Five liters of water are filtered, the filter is submitted to a laboratory, and the laboratory can detect whether genetic material from certain fish species is present. The test can't be used to assess abundance, but are a good indicator of presence or absence.

Samples for eDNA have been collected and analyzed for the St Joe River Subbasin to evaluate distribution of bull trout. Future sampling is planned to assess possible presence of bull trout in the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Subbasin. No bull trout have been documented in the North Fork CdA Subbasin since the 1980s. A model was used to estimate stream habitats most likely to be inhabited by bull trout, and this information will be used to help guide sampling.

For more information:

- The front page for the Range-wide Bull Trout eDNA Project:

http://wwwtest.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/AWAE/projects/BullTrout_eDNA.html

- Introductory Presentation by Mike Young: <http://greatnorthernlcc.org/event/770>

- **IDFG Fisheries Update** - Carson Watkins, IDFG Fisheries Biologist, and Andy Dux, IDFG Fisheries Manager gave a presentation with an update about wild trout management in the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Subbasin. They described management strategies and regulations, snorkel sampling conducted annually, and population trends. In general, cutthroat trout populations have been increasing over time. They also discussed development of a new river access site near Enaville.