

Upper Snake Basin Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2016

Department of Environmental Quality
444 Hospital Way #300
Pocatello, Idaho

Attendees

Chris Banks – Conservation Basics
Jay Barlogi – Twin Falls Canal Company
Sonny Buhidar – DEQ, Regional Water Quality Manager
Justin Hays – BAG, Recreation
George Hitz - ISWCC
Shell Howard – DEQ, Twin Falls Regional Office
Allan Johnson – ISWCC
Gary Marquardt – BAG, Non-Municipal Permittee
Ralph Myers – BAG, Hydropower
Brian Olmstead – BAG, Irrigated Ag
Andy Olson – DEQ, Idaho Falls Regional Office
Dave Pisarski – DEQ, State Office
Buck Ryan – Snake River Water Keepers
Troy Saffle – DEQ, Idaho Falls Regional Office
Hanah Sanger - USFS
Richard Savage – BAG, Livestock
Steve Smith – DEQ, Pocatello Regional Office
Laurie Stone – BAG, Forestry
Lynn Van Every – DEQ, Pocatello Regional Office
Amy Verbeten – Friends of the Teton River
Greg Weitzel – Parks and Recreation, Idaho Falls
Matt Woodard – BAG, Environmental, Chairman

The meeting was brought to order at approximately 9 a.m. by BAG Chairman, Matt Woodward. The attendees introduced themselves and who they represented at the meeting. Roger Blew, BAG Representative at Large, joined the meeting via conference call.

Bag business

- The minutes for the June 8, 2016 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Gary Marquardt to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Lori Stone and the minutes were approved.
- Matt Woodard recused himself from voting on the projects due to a personal interest in one of the projects. Brian Olmstead also recused himself from the vote. DEQ will work on a better way of weighing the projects for the next year.
- Greg Shenton sent a board member proxy via email to Lynn Van Every. The BAG accepted Richard Savage as proxy for Greg Shenton.

- The BAG discussed the 3 individuals who submitted applications to fill the mining position on the BAG. The applicants are Burl Ackerman, Jon Peckenpaugh, and Michael Tylka. Each BAG member submitted a written vote. The votes were tallied and the candidate selected for the mining position is Burl Ackerman. A letter to the DEQ director will be prepared and sent to Matt for signature.
- The next meeting for the Upper Snake BAG will be February 8, 2017 in Idaho Falls.

DEQ Water Quality Managers' Updates

Troy Saffle presented the update for the Idaho Falls office. The highest profile thing for this year is harmful algae blooms (HABs). Misinformation has been the greatest challenge. They are continuing to work on TMDLs and 5-year reviews. There was a large fire on Henry Creek in the Willow Creek Watershed. The TMDL will now need to be significantly re-written.

The Pocatello Regional Office skated by the HABs this year. Lynn Van Every said they only had 3 calls for HABs but did no sampling for it. He reviewed the water year in the Upper Snake and the American Falls Reservoir. The monitoring data sets for the American Falls Reservoir should be available for the next meeting. The Portneuf River 5-year TMDL review is in process. Data was collected on the Portneuf River and tributaries. That information should be available by summer.

Sonny Buhidar provided a handout on the updates for the TFRO. He reviewed the TMDLs and 5-year reviews that are in process. He also reviewed the BURP activities for the year. There were several areas that have been sampled for HABs by the TFRO including Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir, Roseworth Reservoir, Mormon Reservoir and Magic Reservoir. Health advisories were posted for Mormon and Magic Reservoirs.

Upper Portneuf River Project

Chris Banks presented this project on behalf of the Caribou Soil and Water Conservation District. This is an exclusion and off-site watering project. The goal is to reduce sediment about 317 tons per year, phosphorous about 16,000 lbs. per year, and nitrogen 4,600 lbs. per year with the exclusion of about 700 head of cattle. The estimated cost of this project is \$419,822 with an estimated 319 grant of \$242,951 and an estimate match of \$176,871. There are three participating landowners. The project will exclude 1.5 miles of the eastern shore of the Chesterfield Reservoir, exclude the Lower Hipner Springs Creek, exclude approximately 22.5 miles of the Portneuf River, install 3 solar pumping plants, improve riparian habitat along 4 total miles, and improve grazing management through cross-fencing.

Middle Portneuf River & Dempsey Creek Diversion Project

This project was presented by Chris Banks and George Hitz of the Protneuf Soil and Water Conservation District. The project will work on stabilizing approximately 1.5 miles of the Portneuf River. It will exclude and restrict livestock access with riparian fencing and install off-stream watering facilities for livestock. Also part of this project is a fish screen diversion on Dempsey Creek. This will allow Yellow Cutthroat to be able to travel up into the stream for spawning without getting stuck in the irrigation canal as they do now. Estimated load reduction of about 30 ton per year of TSS. BMPs to be installed are riparian fencing, access

control for livestock, willow planting, cross fencing, off-stream watering systems, stream channel restoration, structure for water control and diversion fish screen. The project is estimated at \$244,623 of 319 grant with \$177,380 matching funds for a total cost of \$422,003.

18 Mile Creek Project

This project is sponsored by the Caribou Soil and Water Conservation District; it was presented by Chris Banks and Allen Johnson. The total project cost is estimated to be \$251,000 with matching funds of \$111,000 and 319 funds of about \$139,000. The largest portion of the money is going towards implementation of the BMPs. The project will incorporate the beaver ponds into the irrigation system to provide the water to the landowner and also maintain the habitat for the beaver. There are 4 site involved; the goal is to pull livestock off the stream by installing solar pumping plants, pipeline and troughs, heavy use protection, irrigation diversion (pond and pond levelers), and to be able to use the beaver ponds as irrigation reservoirs for each site. Anticipated results are to reduce livestock impact on the riparian area of 18 Mile Creek, maintain the beaver and other wildlife habitat, improve irrigation water supply efficiency, and improve grazing management with the livestock watering systems.

Idaho Falls Streambank stabilization Project

Chris banks presented this project on behave of the City of Idaho Falls and the East Side Soil and Water Conservation District. The project covers about 1800 feet of the Snake River as it flows right through the middle of Idaho Falls. This portion of the river is impacted by hundreds of thousands of people each year. As a result the bank is sluffing off and falling into the river. The eastern bank will be stabilized with toe rock and willows, a rail fence will be installed to reduce the impact of people on the river. Another critical portion of the project is public outreach. It is hoped to involve the public including high school students in the willow planting. It is also planned to install up to two digital kiosks on the east side of the river to promote positive public awareness and education. The anticipated sediment reduction is 7 tons per year. We are asking \$170,000 from 319 with matching funds of \$114,000 from the City of Idaho Falls and in-kind from the patrons and students.

Pocatello Municipal Watershed Protection Fence

Hanah Sanger with the City of Pocatello presented this project. The goal is to protect the municipal watershed from grazing resulting in contamination to existing municipal water sources. The watershed serves water to about 60,000 people, and 80% of the city's recharge is in this area. The proposal is to put in 3 miles of new fence and take out about 2.5 miles of existing fence. The 319 request is about \$90,000 with a match of about \$71,000. There is an additional contribution from the Forest Service that cannot count as match of about \$95,000. The total cost is about \$255,000. The 319 funds would go primarily to hire a contractor to install the fence.

Teton County Soil Health initiative

This project is sponsored by the Friends of the Teton River partnered with the Teton Soil Conservation District and was presented by Amy Verbeten. The project location is irrigated agricultural lands in Teton County. Project goals are to reduce soil erosion, to improve

water quality in the 303 listed streams, and to promote increased adoption of agricultural best management practices. They have purchased a no-till drill and the Teton Soil Conservation District is developing a formal rental program that will be implemented over the next several years. Going forward they aim to get wide spread adoption of cover crop and conservation tillage technology in Teton County. They will host an educational series for agricultural producers. They will produce an educational guide and website for producers. They will apply cover crops and conservation tillage and conventional tillage on paired plots and then compare the outcomes in terms of water quality benefits. The 319 request is a little over \$74,000. In the application it was intended that the purchase of the equipment would be part of the match; however, that purchase has already been made and will not be included in the match. They should still be able to make the match of \$66,500.

Stargazer Wetland Project

Jay Barlogi presented this project on behalf of the Snake River Soil and Water conservation District. It is located on the Stargazer Ranch north of Rock Creek in Twin Falls. The project will include 4 cleaning cells and a large finishing pond. The total area for the easement is just less than 6 acres. It will have an estimated reduction of 64% TSS, 60% phosphorus, and 89% E coli. Total cost of the project is \$132, 000. The estimated matching funds are \$54,750, and the 319 amount is \$77,422. The application lists a 3-year construction time; however, the ponds will probably be constructed in 3 or 4 months. The seeding and fencing will take a year and half. Three years was put on the application because it is not known from year to year what the weather and scheduling will be like to get in and work on it.

“Undercuts” Native Fish Habitat Restoration

A letter of support from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes was presented to the BAG members prior to the presentation by Buck Ryan with the Snake River Waterkeeper. This is a fencing and re-fencing project on Spring Creek on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation to exclude grazing. One significant change from what is on the application is that the tribe feels that pouring the concrete boat ramps down there is not the best idea. That was put in the application because it was thought that there would be more push back from the tribe to preserve grazing uses; however they are more concerned about the stream. The fencing will be on one mile on the southeastern side where most of the grazing and human traffic to the Spring Creek occurs. Phase 1 would be a site assessment including monitoring at 100 sites. Phase 2 would be removal of the old fence and construction of the new fence. Phase 3 would be re-planting riparian areas with native vegetation. The 319 amount would be \$29,700 with matching funds of \$33,958. Most of the matching funds would be from the tribe.

BAG Ranking

The Bag members individually ranked the projects. Troy tabulated the votes. Ranking is as follows:

Teton County Soil Health Initiative	17
Middle Portneuf River & Dempsey Creek	26
Undercuts Native Fish Habitat Restoration	27
Idaho Falls Streambank Stabilization Project	32
Upper Portneuf River Project	33
18 Mile Creek Project	35

Stargazer Wetland Project	37
Pocatello Municipal Watershed Protection Fence	46

Troy will prepare a spreadsheet of the results and email it to the BAG members.

A motion was made by Brian Olmstead to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Ralph Myers. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2 p.m.



Chairman

February 10, 2017
Date of Approval

