

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

**DRAFT**

**Meeting Notes**

**December 15, 2011**

**1:00 – 3:00 pm**

**US Forest Service Bldg., Smelterville, ID**

Next Meeting:

**January 19, 2011**

**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](mailto:Kajsa.Stromberg@deq.idaho.gov)

**Participants:** Mike Mihelich, Bob Bevins, Bob Clark, Doug England, Mary Terra-Berns, Tammy Maiolie, Roy Faler, Bob Burke, Larry Yergler, Claire Pitner, Edward Lider, Bill Rust, Sherry Klaus, Chris James, Nina Eckberg, Jase Brooks, Jessica Daniel, Fred Brackebusch, 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.

Meeting started at 1:05pm; introductions all around. An agenda review and approval of previous meeting minutes were discussed.

**Updates from IDEQ and WAG members** – (handout/IDEQ press release) Kajsa referred to the press release from Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality of November 2, 2011, requesting scientific data to assist the agency in evaluating water quality in all Idaho water bodies. IDEQ will have an integrated report coming out in 2012 with listings of water bodies prioritized. Data is being accepted until Jan. 3, 2012.

**Yellowdog Creek Success Story** – (handouts/PPT slides, EPA Success story sheet) Kajsa narrated the slide program on Sediment TMDL 5-year Review for the Yellowdog Creek project. This project looked at watershed restoration by the US Forest Service in the Yellowdog Creek watershed with modeling to estimate sediment load reductions and then field monitoring to evaluate success. It now appears Yellowdog Creek sediment loads are significantly reduced and within the stream's assimilative capacity. Fish, macroinvertebrates, and physical habitat data indicate that cold water aquatic life is no longer impaired by sediment. After the program, Kajsa mentioned that the project is the first in Idaho to have a "WQ-10" Success Story published. These feature waterbodies partially or fully restored with one or more pollutants successfully addressed and no longer causing impairments.

Chris (USFS) mentioned that the success story needs to be made more public, showing improvements with 319 grants and other nonpoint source pollution programs. Mike (KEA) asked

if 319 funds were used and Kajsa said no 319 funds were used for this stream, but the story is labeled Section 319 because it falls under the nonpoint source pollution criteria overall. Mike requested clarification about 319.

Kajsa asked the group about a delisting proposal. Discussion followed about the delisting process, where 319 funds have been used, whether BURP and/or PIBO monitoring data are always needed and if one can be used without the other. DEQ would like to propose Yellowdog Creek be delisted in the 2012 Integrated Report and sought the WAG's opinion. No objections were raised during the meeting.

**North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Habitat Improvement Projects** – (handouts/PPT slides, 2011 summary report) Kajsa narrated slide program, highlighting the crucial partnerships developed throughout the projects. The project took longer than expected due to a slow start from weather-related issues (rain, rain and more rain!) and turn-over among interagency partners. Once the Benewah Soil and Water Conservation District and agencies represented on the WAG gave support, the project took off.

Some areas along the river targeted for improvement were private properties, used for leisure (camping, RVs). The challenges: educating private landowners about creating native plant buffers along the river (not mowing to the water's edge); that working with neighbors (instead of individuals) was advantageous. Rock barbs were installed to slow the water and create pools for fish (Success! Underwater photo of fish using the pool behind a barb). In some areas, steps were installed in barbs to reduce bank erosion from foot traffic along the river shore.

Highlights:

- Eberhard property/flood plain roughness important for reducing flood event damage.
- Lapan property/Beaver Creek trench plantings were damaged or destroyed during last winter's high water.
- Runkle property/bed load movement is extreme on Beaver Creek.
- Educational workshop and tree planting June 2011 featured Idaho Dept. of Lands, Benewah Soil and Water Conservation District and Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council assisted Kajsa with program. About 20 landowners attended.

Overall, participation from the private sector was great!

Questions:

- Lessons learned?
- What impediments? Weather, money, contractors and the lack of qualified design engineers.

Discussion about barb construction; there was an offering of information about where to find more designs. Bill Rust identified a resource from the Silver Valley Superfund investigations. Suggestion: place interpretative signs along the area of the project to educate and inform river users.

**Moose Drool Restoration Project** – (handout/draft letter) Kajsa provided a slide showing a map of the project area. Chris (USFS) said the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project is in the US Forest Service office and the public comment period (at least 30 days) is expected early next year (Jan 2012). So far, information from the scoping notice is available and describes plans for road decommissioning, stream crossings treatments, culvert removals, and instream work. Another aspect of the project is to remove old railroad beds that act as a dike to stream flow.

Kajsa introduced a draft letter suggesting that the WAG send a letter in support of the project once the group has had a chance to review the EA. The project could be endorsed as important for water quality improvements and TMDL implementation if the WAG was in agreement once the comment period has commenced (this does not preclude individuals from commenting).

Questions:

- Include temperature monitoring?
- Recommend sediment monitoring before and after the project?
- Link to EA on IPNF site? Yes, will get that once it's available.

Consensus was to proceed with letter and wait for review of EA. We will revisit this idea at the January 2012 meeting.

**North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Recreation Management Plan Implementation** – Kajsa introduced Nina Eckberg, Executive Director of Panhandle Lakes RC&D (PLRCD) Council Inc. As a nonprofit with 501c3 status, Nina described the goals of the Council (land/water conservation and management, rural development as it pertains to natural resources) and how they could partner with WAG to implement objectives in the river recreation management plan.

Kajsa said she had approached the PLRCD Council with a potential project proposal of developing a fund for the river, to administer revenues generated from activities related to the management plan goals (recycling, education, and etc.). She asked if the WAG would be interested in establishing a fund with PLRCD, which they would administer for a percentage fee. PLRCD staff may also be helpful with project planning and implementation.

Discussion and questions:

- What would the money be used for? Specific items within the plan.
- How will the monies be specified? In an agreement between PLRCD Council and WAG members, specific items will be funded by specific revenue streams.

Members seemed positive about the idea and would like more specifics about account development.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.

ALL HANDOUTS AND PRESENTATIONS WILL BE POSTED TO THE WAG WEBSITE:

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