

North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Watershed Advisory Group

Draft Meeting Notes January 24, 2013 1:00 – 3:00 pm US Forest Service Bldg., Smelterville, ID

Next meeting: Thursday, February 21 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the US Forest Service Building in Smelterville, ID.

Please visit the WAG website:

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

Contact Kajsa Stromberg with any questions:

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Participants: Kajsa Stromberg, Claire Pitner, Larry Runkle, Roy Faler, Bob Clark, Bob Bevins, Ingrid Madsen, Tarita Harju, Caj Matheson, Nina Eckberg, Leslee Stanley, Jeremy Brandt, Jenny Gray, Lauren Goschke, KK Prussian, Randy Childress, Claudia Childress

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

Changes: Kajsa noted that Bob Burke (IDL) and Don Martin (EPA) have retired. Leigh Woodruff of Boise will be the new EPA contact. Jeremy Brandt attended the WAG meeting to represent IDL. Kajsa also noted that Chris James will be moving to Arizona for a promotion with the Forest Service in February. Jon Cantamessa and Vince Rinaldi have left the Shoshone County Commission. Leslee Stanley and Jim Best have joined Larry Yergler on the Commission, and Leslee attended the WAG meeting.

2012 Recreation Accomplishments: Jenny Gray, IDEQ intern, gave a short presentation about river recreation and conservation accomplishments in 2012. These included:

- River ranger program
- Signs and brochures
- Boating access sites
- River cleanup
- Recycling bins
- Recycling bags

2013 Recreation Plans: The WAG then discussed plans for 2013:

- **Vault toilet construction.** Claire Pitner, USFS, said that there are funds available from the RAC to construct a vault toilet in the river corridor. We discussed possible locations including the Bumblebee Bridge area.
- **River Cleanup 2013.** The WAG will plan a river cleanup in August 2013 and will try to coordinate even more with local community members and community groups.
- **River Ranger Program.** The WAG supported securing ongoing funding for the River Ranger Program.

- **Respect the River Fund.** The WAG supported adoption of an MOU to establish a “Respect the River Fund” to be administered by Panhandle Lakes RC&D to fund projects along the NFCDA River Corridors.
- **Education and Outreach Funding.** The WAG supported pursuing funds from Avista and IDFG for education and outreach along the river corridor.

Moose Drool Watershed Restoration Project: KK Prussian (USFS) gave a quick presentation about 2012 accomplishments in the Moose Drool Watershed Restoration Project. She said that the EA was completed in 2012 and she appreciated the support received from the WAG. In 2012, the first phase of the project was completed with 6 miles of road decommissioned and 26 crossings treated. Sediment load reduction estimates will be provided. There was a tour in September 2012 with several WAG members in attendance. In 2013, the USFS is planning for additional work on roads and possible in-stream habitat improvement. They are looking for additional funds and grants and will be implementing the project in a phased approach. Contracts will be out soon for 2013 work.

Other Updates –

2012 Integrated Report – Pending public comment. In the North Fork CdA Subbasin, there will be four proposed “delistings” as previously discussed with the WAG.

Temperature TMDL – The draft temperature TMDL has been edited and reorganized and will be a top priority for completion in 2013. The WAG will get to review the new version and it will be out for public comment with the hope of a final version submitted to EPA this summer.

Beaver Creek WAG Project Planning: Kajsa presented draft recommendations from the Beaver Creek Watershed Assessment and asked for WAG input.

1. **Share the information** - WAG members should learn as much as possible about watershed ecology, BMPs, and restoration techniques and share this information with neighbors, colleagues, and anyone else with an interest.
2. **Work together** - Cooperative and coordinated efforts will be most effective to improve the Beaver Creek Watershed.
3. **Protect special areas** - Protect functional portions of the watershed and unique natural areas.
4. **Don't make things worse** - Avoid activities that would increase sediment, temperature, or metals loads to streams.
5. **Shut off the source** - Implement watershed improvements with a strategic approach as much as possible to reduce pollutant loads in tributaries.
6. **Remove limiting factors** – Removing or replacing features that limit watershed function, such as undersized crossing structures, can be a powerful approach to restoration with high cost-benefit ratios.
7. **Take a top-down watershed approach** - Implement watershed improvements with a strategic approach as much as possible to address watershed conditions from the headwaters downstream to the North Fork Coeur d’Alene River confluence.

Larry Runkle said he appreciated the effort of the assessment but feels the effort is not on the right track and is not practical. He wanted to see more attention paid and priority given to areas in the mainstem. Kajsa suggested an additional recommendation be added saying something like, "Address priority areas where infrastructure, natural resources, and landowner values are imminently threatened."

Kajsa said that the final report for the watershed assessment should be available by the end of February.

Bill Rust said he'd like to see a map of the stream channel with priority areas identified.

WAG members suggested a programmatic approach to permitting and biological assessment work.

Bill suggested using typical conceptual designs.

Randy Childress noted the extensive areas where the stream channel dries up and the problems that causes for fish. He suggested we treat these areas.

Several WAG members suggested we invite representatives from Fish and Wildlife Service to talk with us about bull trout and ESA issues associated with permitting projects in the Beaver Creek watershed.

Several WAG members also suggested inviting Mike Stevenson from BLM to provide ideas based on his work in Pine Creek that would be applicable to Beaver Creek.

USFS Beaver Creek Project: Lauren Goschke (USFS) gave a quick presentation about the USFS Beaver Creek Project. The USFS recently announced that they will complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) rather than an Environmental Assessment (EA) because of the interest and conditions in the watershed. They have already completed a 30-day scoping period and analyzed the feedback they received. There were several common themes in the comments with many addressing the management or closure of roads, several interested in controlled burns, and several interested in cumulative effects.

There will be another opportunity for public review and comment on proposed plans with the draft EIS sometime this spring. There will be several alternative proposals to review. Then the final decision is planned for this summer. The USFS is striving to coordinate well with both the WAG and the Shoshone County Collaborative to meet the purpose and need of the project and fulfill public involvement responsibilities. Lauren said there should be several opportunities for involvement in the project and that she is available if there are questions or concerns.

The group ran out of time for all of the Beaver Creek discussion so we agreed to come back to these topics at the February meeting (2/21/2013).