



Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Draft §401 Water Quality Certification

May 8, 2013

404 Permit Application Number: NWW-2013-124-I02

Applicant/Authorized Agent: Tenille Roberts, Century Link

Project Location: McCammon to Lava Hot Springs – Price Rd, Highway 30, Lava Hot Springs to Montpelier – Highway 30, Downey to Dayton – Highways 91, 36, 34 and Old Oxford Highway, Hobbs Rd

Receiving Water Body: Portneuf and Bear rivers and associated tributaries and wetlands

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 401(a)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), as amended; 33 U.S.C. Section 1341(a)(1); and Idaho Code §§ 39-101 et seq. and 39-3601 et seq., the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has authority to review activities receiving Section 404 dredge and fill permits and issue water quality certification decisions.

Based upon its review of the joint application for permit, received on March 25, 2013, DEQ certifies that if the permittee complies with the terms and conditions imposed by the permit along with the conditions set forth in this water quality certification, then there is reasonable assurance the activity will comply with the applicable requirements of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act, the Idaho Water Quality Standards (WQS) (IDAPA 58.01.02), and other appropriate water quality requirements of state law.

This certification does not constitute authorization of the permitted activities by any other state or federal agency or private person or entity. This certification does not excuse the permit holder from the obligation to obtain any other necessary approvals, authorizations, or permits.

Project Description

The project involves the installation of fiber optic cables along state highway rights of way. The cable will be trenched in the right of way, attached to bridges or bored under stream channels.

Antidegradation Review

The WQS contain an antidegradation policy providing three levels of protection to water bodies in Idaho (IDAPA 58.01.02.051).

- Tier 1 Protection. The first level of protection applies to all water bodies subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction and ensures that existing uses of a water body and the level of water quality necessary to protect those existing uses will be maintained and protected (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01; 58.01.02.052.01). Additionally, a Tier 1 review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.07).
- Tier 2 Protection. The second level of protection applies to those water bodies considered high quality and ensures that no lowering of water quality will be allowed unless deemed necessary to accommodate important economic or social development (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02; 58.01.02.052.08).
- Tier 3 Protection. The third level of protection applies to water bodies that have been designated outstanding resource waters and requires that activities not cause a lowering of water quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03; 58.01.02.052.09).

DEQ is employing a water body by water body approach to implementing Idaho's antidegradation policy. This approach means that any water body fully supporting its beneficial uses will be considered high quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.a). Any water body not fully supporting its beneficial uses will be provided Tier 1 protection for that use, unless specific circumstances warranting Tier 2 protection are met (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.c). The most recent federally approved Integrated Report and supporting data are used to determine support status and the tier of protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05).

Pollutants of Concern

The primary pollutant of concern for this project is sediment. As part of the Section 401 water quality certification, DEQ is requiring the applicant comply with various conditions to protect water quality and to meet Idaho WQS, including water quality criteria applicable to sediment.

Receiving Water Body Level of Protection

This project is located within subbasins of the Portneuf and Bear rivers (Hydrologic Unit Codes 17040208, 16010201, 16010202) and crosses numerous streams comprising a number of assessment units. Table 1 (below) identifies designated beneficial uses for the Assessment Units (AUs) affected by this project and their beneficial use support status. Table 1 also lists specific TMDLs applicable to these assessment units and the level of protection (Tier 1 or 2) for each assessment unit.

Table 1. Assessment Units associated with the Century Link fiber optic cable installation.

Stream Name	Assessment Unit	Beneficial Use (status - S or NS)	TMDL? Yes/No	Tier	Project Area
Portneuf River	ID17040208SK016_05	CWAL(NS), DWS(NA), PCR(NA), SS(NS), SCR(NS)	Yes-2016 for Fecal Coliform, TN, O&G,TP,SS	1	McCammon to Lava, Lava to Soda Springs
Portneuf River 2nd order tributaries	ID17040208SK016_02	CWAL(NS), DWS(NA), PCR(NA), SS(NS), SCR(NA)	Yes-2016 for SS	1	McCammon to Lava, Lava to Soda Springs
lower Soda Creek - Soda Springs to Alexander Reservoir	ID16010201BR023_02b	CWAL(NA), SS(NA), SCR(NA)	Yes-30351 for TP and TSS	1	Lava to Soda Springs
Ledger Creek	ID16010201BR002_02	CWAL(NS), PCR(NA), SS(NS)	No	1	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Sulphur Canyon - Headwaters (middle and S.Sulphur) to mouth	ID16010201BR002_02a	CWAL(NS), SCR(NA), SS(NA)	Yes-30351 for TP and TSS	1	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Bennington Canyon and unnamed tributaries	ID16010201BR002_02	CWAL(NS), PCR(NA), SS(NS)	No	1	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Ninemile Creek	ID16010201BR002_02	CWAL(NS), PCR(NA), SS(NS)	No	1	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Georgetown Creek	ID16010201BR022_03a	CWAL(NS), SS(NS), SCR(NS)	Yes-30351 for TP and TSS	1	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Dunn's Creek	ID16010201BR002_02d	CWAL(NS), SS(NA), SCR(NA)	No	1	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Unclassified Waters in CU 16010201	ID16010201BR000_02	CWAL(NA), PCR(NA), SCR(NA)	No	2	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Montpelier Creek	ID16010201BR020_03	CWAL(NS), SCR(NS)	No	1	Soda Springs to Montpelier
Bear River - Alexander Reservoir Dam to Densmore Creek	ID16010202BR009_06	CWAL(NS), PCR(NA), SS(NS)	Yes-30351 for TP and TSS	1	Grace
Swan Lake Creek Complex	ID16010202BR018_02	CWAL(NA) presumed	No	2	Downey to Preston
Chicken Creek	ID16010202BR018_02a	CWAL(S), SCR(S)	No	2	Downey to Preston
Gooseberry Creek	ID16010202BR018_02a	CWAL(S), SCR(NA)	No	2	Downey to Preston
Oxford Creek	ID16010202BR017_02a	CWAL(S), SCR(NA)	No	2	Downey to Preston
Oxford Slough	ID16010202BR017_02	CWAL(NA) presumed	No	2	Downey to Preston
Michael Creek	ID16010202BR017_02	CWAL(NA) presumed	No	2	Downey to Preston
2nd Order Tributaries to Bear River - Oneida Narrows Reservoir Dam to Idaho/Utah border	ID16010202BR006_02	CWAL(NS), PCR(NA), SS(NA)	Yes-30351 for TP and TSS	1	Downey to Preston
Fivemile Creek	ID16010202BR019_02a	CWAL(NS), SS(NS), SCR(NS)	Yes-30351 for TP and TSS	1	Downey to Preston
Bear River - Oneida Narrows Reservoir Dam to Idaho/Utah border	ID16010202BR006_06	CWAL(NS), PCR(NA), SS(NS)	Yes-30351 for TP and TSS	1	Downey to Preston

CWAL = Cold Water Aquatic Life
SS = Salmonid Spawning
SCR = Secondary Contact Recreation
DWS = Domestic Water Supply
PCR = Primary Contact Recreation

S = beneficial use supported
NS = beneficial use not supported
NA = not assessed

TP = total phosphorus
TSS = total suspended solids
TN = total nitrogen
O&G = oil and grease
SS = sedimentation and siltation

Beneficial use support varies among the waterbodies within the project area (see Table 1 based on IDEQ's 2010 Integrated Report), and in some cases beneficial use support has not yet been assessed; the applicant has agreed to Tier 2 protection being applied to protect existing uses in all unassessed AUs within the project area. As such, DEQ will provide Tier 1 or Tier 2 protection for cold water aquatic life, salmonid spawning and domestic water supply beneficial uses as appropriate for each AU (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01; 58.01.02.051.02).

Protection and Maintenance of Existing Uses (Tier 1 Protection)

As noted above, a Tier 1 review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses, applies to all waters subject to the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, and requires demonstration that existing uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect existing uses shall be maintained and protected. The numeric and narrative criteria in the WQS are set at levels that ensure protection of designated beneficial uses.

Water bodies not supporting existing or designated beneficial uses must be identified as water quality limited, and a total maximum daily load (TMDL) must be prepared for those pollutants causing impairment.

During the construction phase, the applicant will implement, install, maintain, monitor, and adaptively manage best management practices (BMPs) directed toward reducing erosion and minimizing turbidity levels in receiving water bodies downstream of the project. In addition, permanent erosion and sediment controls will be implemented, which will minimize or prevent future sediment contributions from the project area. As long as the project is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the project plans, Section 404 permit, and conditions of this certification, then there is reasonable assurance the project will comply with the state's numeric and narrative criteria. These criteria are set at levels that protect and maintain designated and existing beneficial uses. In addition, the project will be consistent with applicable TMDLs listed in Table 1. By applying appropriate BMPs, this project will minimize sediment inputs into streams and comply with applicable TMDLs.

There is no available information indicating the presence of any existing beneficial uses aside from those that are already designated and discussed above; therefore, the permit ensures that the level of water quality necessary to protect both designated and existing uses is maintained and protected in compliance with the Tier 1 provisions of Idaho's WQS (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01 and 58.01.02.052.07).

High-Quality Waters (Tier 2 Protection)

For purposes of this 401 Water Quality Certification, un-assessed waters will be considered high quality for contact recreation, cold water aquatic life and salmonid spawning. Water bodies which are fully supporting their recreational uses also receive tier 2 protections (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02). As such, the water quality relevant to contact recreation, cold water aquatic life and salmonid spawning beneficial uses must be maintained and protected, unless a lowering of water quality is deemed necessary to accommodate important social or economic development.

To determine whether degradation will occur, DEQ must evaluate how the permit issuance will affect water quality for each pollutant that is relevant to contact recreation, cold water aquatic

life and salmonid spawning uses of these waters (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06); these pollutants include sediment and *E. coli*. This project is not expected to contribute *E. coli* to these waters and sediment is not relevant to recreational uses, so DEQ has concluded that there will be no degradation to the contact recreation beneficial uses. Sediment is relevant to the aquatic life uses in these water bodies; therefore, there must be no lowering of water quality as a result of the discharge of sediment. This project must be conducted in a manner which prevents or minimizes sediment from entering the water bodies in the project area through the use of appropriate BMPs.

Permanent (for purposes of this 401 Certification, permanent means lasting through the life of this project to the point in time when vegetation has been fully re-established in disturbed areas) erosion and sediment controls must also be implemented, which will minimize future sediment contributions from the project area. Special Condition “A” of the Corps 404 permit requires that disturbed areas be re-planted with native species immediately following project completion; this requirement is supported and upheld by DEQ. Although this project may result in temporary, short-term sediment increases, DEQ does not expect long-term or permanent increases in sediment. Short-term, temporary increases in sediment do not constitute degradation. Therefore, DEQ concludes that this project complies with the Tier 2 provisions of Idaho’s WQS (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02 and IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06).

Conditions Necessary to Ensure Compliance with Water Quality Standards or Other Appropriate Water Quality Requirements of State Law

General Conditions

1. This certification is conditioned upon the requirement that any modification (e.g., change in stream crossing methods, BMPs, etc.) of the permitted activity shall first be provided to DEQ for review to determine compliance with Idaho WQS and to provide additional certification pursuant to Section 401. Such modifications may not be implemented until DEQ has determined whether additional certification is necessary.
2. DEQ reserves the right to modify, amend, or revoke this certification if DEQ determines that, due to changes in relevant circumstances—including without limitation, changes in project activities, the characteristics of the receiving water bodies, or state WQS—there is no longer reasonable assurance of compliance with WQS or other appropriate requirements of state law.
3. If ownership of the project changes, the certification holder shall notify DEQ, in writing, upon transferring this ownership or responsibility for compliance with these conditions to another person or party. The new owner/operator shall request, in writing, the transfer of this water quality certification to his/her name.
4. A copy of this certification must be kept on the job site and readily available for review by any contractor working on the project and any federal, state, or local government personnel.
5. Project areas shall be clearly identified in the field prior to initiating land-disturbing activities to ensure avoidance of impacts to waters of the US beyond project footprints.

6. The applicant shall provide access to the project site upon request by DEQ personnel for site inspections, monitoring, and/or to ensure that conditions of this certification are being met.
7. The applicant is responsible for all work done by contractors and must ensure the contractors are informed of and follow all the conditions described in this certification and the Section 404 permit.
8. If this project disturbs more than 1 acre and there is potential for discharge of stormwater to waters of the US, coverage under the EPA Stormwater Construction General Permit *must* be obtained. More information can be found at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/WATER.NSF/NPDES+Permits/Region+10+CGP+resources>.

Erosion and Sediment Control

1. BMPs for sediment and erosion control suitable to prevent additional sediment delivery to waterbodies shall be selected and installed before starting construction at the site. One resource that may be used in evaluating appropriate BMPs is DEQ's *Catalog of Stormwater Best Management Practices for Idaho Cities and Counties*, available online at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/494058-entire.pdf>. Other resources may also be used for selecting appropriate BMPs.
2. One of the first construction activities shall be placing permanent and/or temporary erosion and sediment control measures around the perimeter of the project or initial work areas to protect the project water resources.
3. Permanent (through the life of the project until complete vegetative restoration has occurred) erosion and sediment control measures shall be installed in a manner that will provide long-term sediment and erosion control to prevent excess sediment from entering waters of the state.
4. Permanent erosion and sediment control measures shall be installed at the earliest practicable time consistent with good construction practices and shall be maintained as necessary throughout project operation.
5. Top elevations of bank stabilization shall be such that adequate freeboard is provided to protect from erosion at 100-year design flood elevation.
6. Structural fill or bank protection shall consist of materials that are placed and maintained to withstand predictable high flows in the waters of the state.
7. A BMP inspection and maintenance plan must be developed and implemented. At a minimum, BMPs must be inspected and maintained daily during project implementation.
8. BMP effectiveness shall be monitored during project implementation. BMPs shall be replaced or augmented if they are not effective.
9. All construction debris shall be properly disposed of so it cannot enter waters of the state or cause water quality degradation.
10. Disturbed areas suitable for vegetation shall be seeded or revegetated to prevent subsequent soil erosion.
11. Maximum fill slopes shall be such that material is structurally stable once placed and does not slough into the stream channel during construction, during periods prior to revegetation, or after vegetation is established.

12. To the extent reasonable and cost-effective, the activity submitted for certification shall be designed to minimize subsequent maintenance.
13. Sediment from disturbed areas or able to be tracked by vehicles onto pavement must not be allowed to leave the site in amounts that would reasonably be expected to enter waters of the state. Placement of clean aggregate at all construction entrances or exits and other BMPs such as truck or wheel washes, if needed, must be used when earth-moving equipment will be leaving the site and traveling on paved surfaces.

Pollutants/Toxics

1. The use of chemicals such as soil stabilizers, dust palliatives, sterilants, growth inhibitors, fertilizers, and deicing salts during construction and operation should be limited to the best estimate of optimum application rates. All reasonable measures shall be taken to avoid excess application and introduction of chemicals into waters of the state.

Vegetation Protection and Restoration

1. Disturbance of existing wetlands and native vegetation shall be kept to a minimum.
2. To the maximum extent practical, staging areas and access points should be placed in open, upland areas.
3. If authorized work results in unavoidable vegetative disturbance, riparian and wetland vegetation shall be successfully reestablished to function for water quality benefit at pre-project levels or improved at the completion of authorized work.

Management of Hazardous or Deleterious Materials

1. Petroleum products and hazardous, toxic, and/or deleterious materials shall not be stored, disposed of, or accumulated adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of waters of the state. Adequate measures and controls must be in place to ensure that those materials will not enter waters of the state as a result of high water, precipitation runoff, wind, storage facility failure, accidents in operation, or unauthorized third-party activities.
2. Daily inspections of all fluid systems on equipment to be used in or near waters of the state shall be done to ensure no leaks or potential leaks exist prior to equipment use. A log book of these inspections shall be kept on site and provided to DEQ upon request.
3. Equipment and machinery must be removed from the vicinity of the waters of the state prior to refueling, repair, and/or maintenance.
4. Emergency spill procedures shall be in place and may include a spill response kit (e.g., oil absorbent booms or other equipment).
5. Any spill less than 25 gallons must be cleaned up within 24 hours of the release but does not require reporting to DEQ. If the spill is less than 25 gallons but is not cleaned up within 24 hours, then it becomes a reportable quantity.
6. Any spill greater than or equal to 25 gallons must be cleaned up as soon as possible and reported within 24 hours to DEQ by calling 1-800-632-8000 (Idaho State Communications Center).

7. Any release that causes a sheen (of any size) in waters of the state must be reported immediately to the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802 and the Idaho State Communication Center (1-800-632-8000).

Required Notification

The permittee must notify Greg Mladenka, of DEQ's Pocatello Regional Office, when authorized work begins by calling 208-236-6160.

Right to Appeal Final Certification

The final Section 401 Water Quality Certification may be appealed by submitting a petition to initiate a contested case, pursuant to Idaho Code § 39-107(5) and the "Rules of Administrative Procedure before the Board of Environmental Quality" (IDAPA 58.01.23), within 35 days of the date of the final certification.

Questions or comments regarding the actions taken in this certification should be directed to Greg Mladenka, IDEQ, Pocatello Regional Office, 208-236-6160.

DRAFT

Bruce Olenick
Regional Administrator
Pocatello Regional Office