

The Middle Snake River Watershed Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

319 S. 417 E. Jerome, ID 83338

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

Time: 7:00 PM

Attendees:

Mike Trabert – City of Twin Falls
Katie Shewmaker – DEQ-TFRO
Brian Hoelscher – Idaho Power
Andy Morton – Clear Springs Foods
Mark Daily – Aquaculture
Clyde Lay – Bureau of Reclamation
Jeff Williams – Rancher
Steve Davis - BLM
Chad Chorney- – DEQ-TFRO
Sue Switzer – DEQ-TFRO

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Trabert- WAG Chairman

Mike Trabert called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Everyone introduced themselves.

II. Wag Business

Mike Trabert- WAG Chairman

- Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the last meeting on June 16, 2009 as posted on the internet. Motion passed unanimously.
- We have talked about having daytime meetings, but do not want to cut anyone out. It was suggested that with enough lead time, we can have an occasional day time meeting and perhaps alternate with one in the day and then the next one at night. If we could participate electronically by email, that would be a great alternative.
- There is a big push to bring to the state primacy in NPDES permits. It will come up in the next legislative session.

III. DEQ Updates

Sue Switzer-DEQ

1. The role of a Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) was reviewed and everyone was asked to please fill out the Watershed Advisory Satisfaction Survey and return it to Sue Switzer. These will help us evaluate our WAGs and how we can improve our services to them.
2. DEQ has a Web site that is up and running. Go into the Surface Water section and Twin Falls Regional Office.

3. Traps have been put out for the endangered species. We are trying to put them in places where there is recreation boat going in and out of the water. If you think we have missed any in our region, we would take suggestions.
4. Budget cuts are in force. 2010 Budget will be less; operation and personnel dollars will be less. We are taking furlough days. We do not have a watershed secretary any more. Positions will not be filled. There was no BURP program last summer or this summer.
5. The 2010 Integrated Report will be coming out this year.

IV. Snake River Water Quality Analysis – Preliminary Report

Sue Switzer-DEQ

(PowerPoint Presentation) In response to the EPA's request for more data with regards to the 5-year Review, a Preliminary Water Quality Analysis of the Mid-Snake River as developed. The preliminary report was presented and discussed. The presentation included historical background, water quality monitoring data, results of water quality loading, and implementation projects and trading potential. Questions and comments were encouraged.

The question was asked when the low flow conditions were established. Response, they were established in the TMDL in 1995.

Do you know, between the years of 2000 and 2009 were sampling methods changed or did the lab change analytical methods? Response, not to my knowledge; but that would be something that I would have to check into to get a good answer for you. It is the State Lab that ran all the samples and as far as I know the methods did not change.

It was suggested that the scales for the graphs stay the same; thereby, the exceedances can be seen a little better and qualitative comparisons can be made.

Sue commented that one of the things that came out of this was that maybe that is not our low flow condition any more. Maybe we need to take another look at what low flow and average flow is. Brian stated that flow is a critical player in what your attainable goal is going to be. You need to consider flow in what you set as socially acceptable or regulatory attainable goals and certainly when you are looking at loads.

The question was brought up for clarification on the exceedances summary chart as to whether the exceedances are based on the percentage of the samples taken not on the percentage of time. Sue's responded that yes it is based on the number of samples taken. To clarify that, a key could be placed at the bottom of the chart showing the number of samples considered as well as the number of exceedances. The comment was made that a really clean way to present this is by

using hydrographs, which takes the flow out of the equation. It takes the spikes out and relativizes your sampling against flows.

There was some confusion between the "Concentration Exceedances" graph and the "Load Exceedances" graph and the switch from using low flow to average flow. Comments were made by several people to help clarify the two graphs. This brought up more concerns of how critical flow is and the importance of consistency in calculations and comparisons of concentration and loads.

It was suggested that dates be up into the graphs or in a footnote, so that you would have an idea of when the exceedance occurred and if it was related to an event that took place during that time.

It was suggested that the "Summary of Segment Load Limits" chart is somewhat misleading with a total lb/day limit. There was also a concern with the "Summary Segment Load Exceedances." The results are different than what was discussed in previous slides. It was questioned if some data points are missing. This is something that will be looked into and we will have some answers the next time we get together.

V. Temperature TMDL

Sue Switzer-DEQ

The PNV is done. We need to look at having something completed within the next two years. It will be important to have total involvement in preparation of this TMDL.

VI. New USGS Gauging Station

Mike Trabert- WAG Chairman

On the Twin falls bridge in the canyon between the golf courses there is a new USGS Gauging station up and running. They were able to go back and find original monuments, re-profile the river and correlate the data back. If you are looking for additional flow data, there is a new piece there. It is just like all the others. USGS runs it; you can download data.

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 17, 2010 AT 2:00 P.M.



WAG Chairman

7/13/10

Date

The Meeting was recorded, and the recording is included as part of the administrative record.