

MID SNAKE WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting Minutes

Department of Environmental Quality
650 Addison Avenue West, Suite 110, Twin Falls, Idaho
Thursday, November 12, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

Attendees

Jay Barlogi – Twin Falls Canal Company
Jason Brown – City of Twin Falls
Rich Bupp – DEQ, Twin Falls Regional Office
Gary Fornshell – University of Idaho
Brian Hoelscher – Idaho Power
Shell Howard – DEQ, Twin Falls Regional Office
Randy MacMillan – Clear Springs Food
Shelley McEuen – College of Southern Idaho
Chris Mebane – USGS
Andy Morton – Clear Springs Food
Larry Pennington – Northside Canal Company
Clarence W. Robinson – University of Idaho, Kimberly Research Center
Sue Switzer – DEQ, Twin Falls Regional Office
Craig Thomas – DEQ, Twin Falls Regional Office
Mike Trabert – Chairman
Jim Younk - Idaho Power

Welcome

The meeting was convened at 2 p.m. Mike Trabert, WAG chairman, lead the meeting. The attendees introduced themselves. It was noted that the meeting is being recorded.

WAG Business

- Minutes for the August meeting will be available at the next meeting.
- The next meeting will be February 10, 2016. Someone from USGS who has worked sediment research will be scheduled to present at the meeting.
- The meeting schedule for 2016 is February 10, May 11, August 10, and November 9.

Rock Creek Discussion

Shelly McEuen, CSI instructor and citizen interested in Rock Creek, discussed her study of Rock Creek for her Ph.D. project which emphasized community and the role citizens can play by taking an interest in local natural resources. Historical uses were discussed. McEuen teaches the

Science, Literature and the Environment Science class which includes students taking a field trip to Rock Creek to create an awareness of the student's landscape. McEuen wrote an article on Rock Creek which was published in Idaho magazine. The piece promoted the qualities of Rock Creek but also noted impacts to the creek. The WAG members offered comments and asked questions that provided different perspectives. The important aspect is raising community awareness.

Brian mentioned that Idaho Power has small community grants available that could possibly provide improvements to Rock Creek Park. The WAG may want to consider submitting an application.

Lake Walcott WQ Evaluation

Sonny Buhidar was unable to attend the meeting; Sue and Rich updates the WAG on the Lake Walcott water quality evaluation. EPA has contracted with Tetra-Tech to conduct a data analysis of the Lake Walcott HUC of the Snake River and tributaries. They are in the data collection phase. The purpose for this first effort is to identify data gaps. Now is the time to provide any data the WAG would like to see considered as part of that analysis. Data could be submitted thru DEQ.

Upper Snake Rock Implementation Discussion

A result of the Tetra-Tech analysis of the Mid-Snake was the WAG's interest in promoting and demonstrating implementation activities that have occurred within the Upper Snake Rock HUC. A list of monitoring and implementation strategies was provided to the WAG for discussion purposes. No action has been taken from previous discussions; therefore, this topic has been brought to the forefront to allow the WAG to have a say in how the TMDL is implemented.

Gary Fornshell commented that based on the gaps in the data, the WAG is interested in additional data. The entities that would do the data collection and analysis have not been defined. He suggested the WAG engage researchers (BSU, U of I or ISU) to see what resources are available, possibly graduate students, to do some of the research.

Randy McMillan expressed an interest in the sediments, referencing USGS research that had been done on the Kootenai River using acoustic devices to map sediment. Could USGS research be utilized? How does the WAG tap into that expertise? It was suggested that USGS scientist speak on this topic at a WAG meeting.

Brian Hoelscher discussed sediment effects on rooted macrophytes and flow shaping. There may be data available through Idaho Power. There are potential monies available from Idaho Power, if the WAG could support discontinuing 10 minute monitoring at Milner if the monies in kind be provided to the WAG where the money could be used for other research. It was suggested that the monies could be used as match money.

Mike Trabert suggested selecting one data gap and seek to fill that gap as a group by pursuing resources such as grants. Set a 5 year goal to look at and target one data gap.

Chris Mebane mentioned that USGS maintain rating curves for flow gages which are visited every 5 or 6 weeks, where adjustments have to be made to account for rising water level due to macrophyte growth. These adjustments are tracked but have not been evaluated.

Larry Pennington said significant money has already been spent to control macrophytes. The current limit of 0.075 mg/L does not control macrophytes. Northside Canal Company has reduced TP in their canal to well below the current limit and macrophytes are still prevalent in their system.

Andy Morton referred to the 2012 Integrated Report, section 2.3.3, monitoring for the effects of nutrients states that DEQ has conducted a study on measures to assess the process. He requested a presentation from DEQ on the study. Switzer will look into this reference.

Non-Point Source Workshop

Mike Trabert called for representatives interested in presenting at the non-point source workshop, which will be held February 2-4. Mike suggested the WAG present a panel discussion detailing Snake River history and water quality improvement projects. January 4th is the deadline to submit white papers. There was general support not many volunteers.

It was suggested that a panel discussion is not a good method of presentation for this workshop. Additionally, the WQ Workshop might not be the right platform to address the issues of the TMDL on the Upper Snake Rock or the Tetra-Tech report.

It was suggested that a presentation with the history of how far the WAG has come told thru photographs with a couple simple messages would be well received. Aquaculture could discuss what aquaculture has done because of the TMDL. It would also be the perfect audience to pose a list of unanswered questions. It would be a good network for other resources. The WAG was encouraged to provide photos to demonstrate water quality improvements.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Mike Trabert at approximately 3:40 p.m.



WAG Chairman



Approval Date