

Middle Snake River Watershed Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Twin Falls Regional Office
1363 Fillmore Street, Twin Falls, Idaho
Wednesday, December 7, 2011, 6:00 p.m.

Attendees

Andy Morton – Clear Springs Foods, Inc.
Brian Olmstead – Twin Falls Canal Company (TFCC)
Gary Fornshell – University of Idaho
Jordan Tollefson – DEQ-Twin Falls Regional Office (TFRO)
Katie Shewmaker – DEQ-Twin Falls Regional Office (TFRO)
Larry Pennington – North Side Canal Company (NSCC)
Mark Daily – Aquaculture Industry Representative
Sue Switzer – DEQ-Twin Falls Regional Office (TFRO)

Welcome

Mike Trabert was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, Larry Pennington, WAG Vice-Chairman, was asked to conduct the meeting. The meeting was called to order by Larry Pennington at 6:15 p.m. The attendees introduced themselves and whom they represented.

WAG Business

- The amended minutes for the July 20, 2011, Middle Snake WAG meeting were reviewed. Andy Morton moved that the minutes be approved as amended. Mark Daily seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.
- The minutes for the September 21, 2011 meeting were reviewed. Andy questioned the last sentence under pollutant trading on page 2 where it says that EPA opens up a TMDL. He thought that IDEQ would have the jurisdiction to open the TMDL. EPA can recommend, but IDEQ has control over a state document. Sue will have the minutes reviewed and look into the proper wording and report at the next meeting. Then the minutes will be reviewed again at that time.
- The next meeting will be scheduled for the third Wednesday in February, 2-15-2012. There may be a meeting announced for January, if the Upper Snake Rock Temperature TMDL is completed.

Upper Snake Rock Temperature TMDL

Sue Switzer reported that the USR Temperature TMDL was presented to the WAG numerous times in 2007 and was approved by the WAG at that time. The document needed to be presented for public comment and then sent off to EPA for approval. However, for some reason this did not occur. The document now needs to be brought up to date utilizing new shade curves and an updated template version and Integrated Report. This year temperature loggers were placed in representative reaches, both upstream and downstream. Of the 18 that were deployed, 16 were recovered and the data was downloaded. Mark Shumar from DEQ technical services has been working on the document and sent several maps for the meeting. They included existing shade, target shade percentages, and lack of shade percentages for Mud Creek, Cottonwood Creek and Dry Creek. The shade percentage is based off vegetation or plant type cover and stream width. This is ground truthed in some areas with a solar pathfinder as well as the use of temperature logger data. Some creeks were found to be dry and photo documentation was taken. If anyone has comments or questions on this document, send them to Sue and she will pass them along to Mark Shumar. When the document is finished Mark will present the document in its entirety to the WAG.

Mid Snake Updates

- DEQ State office has sent out a call for data for the 2012 Integrated Report. If anyone has data they would like to turn in the protocol is listed on the DEQ website.
- DEQ- Twin Falls Regional Office is working to wrap-up Temperature TMDLs and next year work will begin on the Camas Watershed.
- The Super BAG met in Boise today and Jordan Tollefson returned in time to report at the WAG meeting. Discussions included the use of SRF funding to fund non-point source projects. This funding is typically used for municipalities; however the interest rates can be lowered so that the remaining money may be available to fund nonpoint source projects. 319 projects that did not get funded this year at the Super BAG may qualify for funding depending on the loan amount.

The Super BAG members reviewed each of the top three projects from each regional BAG, with the chance to review the lower ranked projects as well, if there was an interest. There were 28 projects statewide and the Super BAG voted to fund the top two projects from each BAG; for a total of eleven projects. For our region this included the Twin Falls Coulee Project (voted #3) and the Pebble Creek Project (which tied for #5). Last year the funding for 319 projects was \$1.56 million. This year the 319 program could see a cut of up to 30%, though nothing has been determined yet.

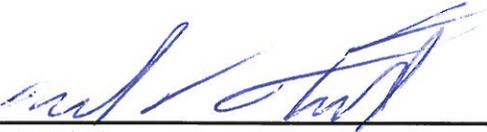
EPA conducted an audit of the 319 program nationwide this year, hoping to improve the overall process. The overall theme of recommendations included: accelerating improvements through timely implementation; increase the accountability, i.e. progress reviews and improved measures; continue focus on watersheds and increase leveraging of funds. Also included: the suggestion to establish metrics to better assess state program

performance; develop a process to re-distribute funds recovered due to non-performance; update state NPS management program plans; promote and implement statewide approaches; improve tracking and reporting; enhance reporting on successes to show incremental progress; improve partnerships and collaborative efforts; and the continuation to work with federal agencies to direct activities and funding towards watershed-based plans.

- Sue reported that DEQ may have a 2012 BURP season. Sean Woodhead was in Boise today for a BURP meeting though a final decision has not been made.
- The Aquaculture position in the Twin Falls Regional Office is still open and applications are being accepted through Friday, December 9, 2011.
- Suggestions for agenda items for future meetings: Dirk Helder, EPA, to discuss EPA and Aquaculture; Several of the aquaculture facilities would like to invite Barry Burnell and Bill Allred to explain the opening up of the TMDL and the state's position on pollutant trading. This would also include an explanation of a plan to coordinate how the WAG is supposed to be involved in the process of reopening the TMDL, redoing the LA and WLA, and if the process would include a TAC, etc.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Larry Pennington at approximately 7:05 p.m.



WAG Chairman



Date Approved