

Panhandle Basin Advisory Group
 Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Coeur d'Alene, Idaho DEQ
 November 4, 2009
 Approved Meeting Notes

Members and Alternates Present	Guests Present
John Condon-Representative at Large	Bob Burke-Idaho Department of Lands
Scott Fields Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Bob Clark-North Idaho Flycasters
Jack Filipowski-Agriculture	Donna Harvey-DEQ
Kevin Greenleaf-Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (for Patty Perry)	Tom Herron-DEQ
Robert Rider-Livestock	Kristin Keith-DEQ
Vince Rinaldi-Water Based Recreation	Tracy Meyers-DEQ
W.C. Rust - Mining	Robert Steed-DEQ
	Kajsa Stromberg-DEQ

The Panhandle Basin Advisory Group (BAG) meeting was called to order at 9:05 am at Idaho Department of Fish and Game in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho by Chair Vince Rinaldi. Introductions were made around the room.

Jack Filipowski made a motion to accept the June 18, 2009 meeting notes. Robert Rider seconded the motion; the motion passed.

319 Super BAG meeting at DEQ State Office in Boise, August 2009

Chair Vince Rinaldi attended the “Super BAG” meeting at DEQ State Office in August. At this meeting, the chairs of the BAGs around the state, or their representatives, meet and prioritize the 319 grant applications.

Dave Pisarski, DEQ’s 319 coordinator in State Office, tried a different approach than in years past. Vince said that 47 projects were considered starting at 11 am on Wednesday and meeting again Thursday from 8 am until 10 am as people had to leave to catch flights back to their home towns.

With so many projects to consider, Vince said the participants were really rushed and overloaded with information. Another problem that Vince outlined was that the individual BAGs’ recommendations were not considered. This resulted in one region, at least, becoming very disgruntled and stating that they did not intend to participate in future Super BAG meetings.

Vince said that there were several “buzz words” that he noticed that helped individual projects to be chosen for funding. One was participation by many entities, especially the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Also, if the project was tied to a TMDL, then the project received extra consideration. Vince said that individual letters from willing participants and/or supporters were better than one letter signed by several supporters. Projects connected

to TMDLs that were not approved by EPA at the time of the Super BAG meeting, did not fare well. Mica Creek did well because it had a “Phase II” attached to the description.

Scott said that in past years, each project was announced as “this was #1 in the prioritization” and “this was #2 in the prioritization.” This was not done at the 2009 Super BAG meeting, resulting in some projects which had been # 6 or 7 on the regional BAG’s list, getting funded while the #1s and 2s did not get funded.

Vince said also that the time of day that a project was presented possibly played a role in its fate. For instance, when everyone was fresh in the mornings, the first projects probably received everyone’s attention. Because there were so many projects crammed into a short time, the projects that were presented later in the day were, perhaps, not given as much weight because everyone was tired and not paying as much attention as in they did earlier in the day.

Scott said each BAG could easily make a Power Point presentation of the top projects to present to the Super BAG.

After some discussion, W.C. (Bill) Rust made a motion that the BAG request that Dave Pisarski return to the old way of conducting 319 prioritization at the Super BAG meeting in State Office by (1) considering only the top 2 or 3 projects selected by the BAG members (2) presenting all the #1s from all the regions first, and then the 2s and so on and (3) keep the number of projects presented at the Super BAG meeting to around 30 projects. Scott Fields seconded the motion; the motion passed.

Coeur d’Alene Lake Management Plan

Glen Rothrock is working with the Coeur d’Alene Tribe on a nutrient inventory around the lake. DEQ has been dealing with some budget issues and decreased funding levels in all areas of DEQ. The limnologist Scientist IV position has been frozen. However, Tom and Glen are working on several possibilities: a part-time 1385 hours a year limnologist or a full time summer-only limnologist. DEQ may not be able to hire that position even part time, however.

Tracy Meyers, Administrative Assistant for the Coeur d’Alene Lake Implementation Project was introduced to the BAG members. She is working 3 days a week with Glen Rothrock and Glen Pettit. The two Glens are bringing Tracy up to speed on the scientific part of the project, plus she is also learning the educational-outreach part of the plan as well.

Clean Lakes: Bill Rust brought up the Clean Lakes legislation which predated the TMDL legislation. Bill said that these water quality reports gave local people more leeway on identifying the pollutants and working to improve the watershed. The work associated with these plans could begin immediately after the plan for each lake was published. Implementation is often delayed for years in the TMDL process. Also, Bill said that one of the problems with TMDLs is that the language sometimes prohibits entities from forming sewer districts and constructing sewage treatment plants.

Kajsa said that I wasn’t really the TMDL itself, but the listing of the waterbody as impaired for a pollutant, that causes additional regulations to be applied. The entities around a listed

waterbody must secure a NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit to discharge into the waterbody. These problems can be avoided in a TMDL if the sewer districts enter into the process early and ask for a waste load allocation for future growth ahead of time. DEQ is trying to assist some small districts in the northern counties to find a way to comply with current rules. TMDLs, however, have positive effects in that they often bring in new technologies. Also TMDLs can be a way of securing funding for projects.

Tom said he thought the Clean Lakes funding and projects have both been discontinued.

The Hayden Stormwater Project 319 Grant money was pulled due to the county not being able to provide their part of the funding. The funding for this now-canceled project might be available for other Northern Idaho water quality projects. Jack said that we could consider 319 projects from this region that didn't get funding in this year's Super BAG process, and then the BAG wouldn't have to go into another round of prioritization. Tom said he would look into it and get back to the BAG. Vince thought the 20 Mile Project was a good project that did not receive 319 funding this year, and that it would be a possibility for funding if monies were available.

Spokane River TMDL

Robert Steed said that the Spokane River TMDL, being written by Washington Department of Ecology (DOE), is in its 4th public comment period. Many of the comments by some agencies and private industry point up the shortcomings of this TMDL. The first TMDL, written several years ago, had strict criteria, but these criteria were within the realm of what could be achieved by the Idaho Dischargers. The criteria in the current TMDL exceed the level of technology that exists to meet them. Thus, the comments will be complex and numerous and could possibly result in another comment period later. DEQ and other agencies and entities are spending a great many man hours on these public comments for this TMDL.

Pend Oreille River

This past summer, DEQ staff participated in monitoring the Pend Oreille River. Future meetings with dischargers are planned in the near future.

Hauser Study

An E coli study was done on Riley and Hauser Creeks. The DNA analysis is not as straightforward as current TV shows would have us believe. Human-caused nutrient problems have surfaced, but the study is not finalized.

St. Joe and St. Maries Rivers

There has been active work on background data for sediment in these two rivers.

Kootenai Watershed

DEQ installed thermographs for the Kootenai Watershed, which was listed for temperature. DEQ needs to establish at what temperatures local fish can survive in this watershed.

Lower Coeur d'Alene River Bank Inventory

Kristin Keith presented a Power Point presentation of a study that encompassed Rosgen technology to measure erodability of riverbanks on the Coeur d'Alene River. The first step was to classify the various types of riverbanks, such as sandy, vegetated, etc. The Bank Erosion Hazard Index was used to classify the banks. Craig Nelson worked on the project as well and provided technical support. The purpose of the project was to prioritize banks and types of banks for erosion projects. To verify the results, DEQ staff placed pins in the banks to characterize erosion on particular types of banks as a control for the project. The result indicated that Rosgen's erosion rate estimates may not be accurate in some cases. Monitoring over a long period is needed to really characterize each part of the river.

Coeur d'Alene Lake Tributaries: The purpose of this study was to understand current suspended sediment and nutrient load of some tributaries to Coeur d'Alene Lake. The data collection encompassed three rain-on-snow events, three spring runoff events, and one low flow sample. Flow, nutrients (Total Phosphorus, ortho-Phosphorus and Total Nitrogen) and total suspended solids were measured in several tributaries around the lake. Fernan Creek was found to be a big contributor of phosphorus, as well as Bellgrove Creek. Some of the data will need to be corrected, as not all the creeks experience high and low flow at the same time. Also, not all creeks were sampled because some areas were just too dangerous to sample during high flow. BURP sampling is needed on several of these creeks as well.

Upper Tepee Creek: The North Idaho Flycasters, along with the USFS, received a 319 grant for work in Upper Tepee Creek. Culverts were removed, fish passages improved, and roads were decommissioned. One problem that occurred was that the 319 grant money did not arrive at the promised time, resulting in some shifting of funds by the North Idaho Flycasters. The result was that they have \$18,000 to spend in further improvements. Bob Clark of the Flycasters suggested a more timely pay-out of 319 funds would be appreciated by grant recipients. The paperwork required for a 319 grant is difficult and time consuming.

Idora Mine Tailings Removal: A \$250,000 grant was secured for this project with monies promised from State Office Mining section. However, due to funding shortages, the State Office cannot provide their share of funding. The USFS's Jeff Johnson and DEQ's Geoff Harvey are seeking new funding sources.

Due to state funding shortages, Tom Herron said that direction from State Office is to cut costs associated with BAG and WAG meetings. Therefore, a winter meeting is probably not going to be scheduled. The BAG agreed that DEQ should try to schedule a meeting in April to address the 319 applications. DEQ will keep the BAG informed by Email

Bill Rust made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rob Rider seconded the motion; the motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am on November 4, 2009 by Chair Vince Rinaldi.