

Panhandle Basin Advisory Group
 Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Coeur d'Alene, Idaho DEQ
 October 10, 2007
 Final Meeting Notes

Members and Alternates Present	Guests Present
Reid Ahlf-Timber	June Bergquist-CdA DEQ
Scott Fields-CdA Tribe/BAG Chair	Serena Carlson-Idaho Forest Industries
Jack Filipowski-Agriculture	Tyson Clyne-CdA DEQ
Robert Rider-Livestock	Donna Harvey-CdA DEQ
W.C. Rust-Mining	Robert Steed-CdA DEQ
Liz Sedler-Environmental	Ed Tulloch-CdA DEQ
Ruth Watkins-Rep at Large	
Bernie Wilmarth-Non Municipal Permittee	

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Fields at 9:10 AM at Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 2750 Kathleen Avenue in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. As a quorum was present Bernie Wilmarth made a motion to accept the May 2007 meeting notes. Liz Sedler seconded the motion and the motion passed. Ruth Watkins made a motion to accept the July 2007 meeting notes. Liz Sedler seconded the motion; the motion passed.

Ed Tulloch asked to insert an item into the agenda. DEQ Water Quality Section has hired Kristin Keith as a Surface Water Quality Analyst. Ed said that the assignments of work will be determined later. Kristin Keith has had experience with fisheries in Montana and with agriculture programs in Idaho.

Nutrient Pathogen Evaluations: June gave a power point presentation created by Gary Stevens, DEQ Hydrogeologist, that demonstrated what NP Evaluations are and how they applied to surface waters. The Nutrient Pathogen (NP) Evaluation is a process that developers must work through to be sure that effluent from their developments does not impact ground water or surface water. If a water body has a TMDL or is nutrient impaired, no further nutrient increase is allowed from these waste water systems. If there is no TMDL, then best available data or even EPA Gold Book criteria can be used to determine background concentrations of phosphorus which is used to insure the protection of beneficial uses of the water body.

June explained that DEQ does have review and approval authority over large wastewater treatment systems, called large soil absorption systems. Such as a large drain field serves several homes which produce greater than 2,500 gallons of wastewater per day. DEQ does not approve smaller systems; they are under the jurisdiction of Panhandle Health District. If a city or county has a questionable development that is under the size that DEQ usually approves, the city or county can request that DEQ review and approve a

Nutrient Pathogen Evaluation of the site. With these Nutrient Evaluations, we can determine if the nitrate standards are being met at the property's border for the protection of ground water, and if a nearby surface water will be impacted due to phosphorus increases.

One of the problems facing Northern Idaho cities and counties is that marginal properties are now being developed. Around Hayden Lake and other area lakes, homes are being built on rock mountainsides. NP modeling includes taking into consideration all factors such as groundwater flow, soil makeup, geology and surrounding facilities, such as water wells. June showed a slide that illustrated that sometimes effluent can flow sideways and down a road and into a stream or lake or onto the neighbor's property depending on the geology of the site.

The mixing zone is also a concern. The proposed rule dictates that a sewer system can use 10% of a lake's surface as a mixing zone. Scott Fields asked if that is one system or a combination of systems. Potentially 10 systems could use an entire lake for a mixing zone. June referred Scott to the draft NP Guidance for details on mixing zones. At this time, the Coeur d'Alene Office has not yet granted a mixing zone for a large soil absorption system.

Bill Rust asked if there are any waste water pre-treatment systems in place in this area. June said that yes, there are. However, if a lifetime maintenance agreement with the manufacturer is not in place and the manufacturer should cease to exist as a business, then these systems often fall in to disrepair. Bill said that if there were rules requiring samples of effluent to be conducted on a regular basis, perhaps this would take care of failing systems.

Existing waste water treatment systems are reluctant to service a wider area due to the expenses they already face in meeting water quality requirements. This forces the developers to install either land application systems or subsurface disposal systems. This may be one reason we are seeing an increase in these types of proposals.

Bob commented that cities in northern Idaho will be spending 100 million dollars to upgrade their waste water plants in the coming years. Washington State is pressuring communities to sewer the remaining un-sewered areas of the Spokane Valley because septic systems fail after a few years. These failures contribute pollutants to the aquifer and the river. However, expanding existing waste water treatment plants will be expensive.

Upper Hangman TMDL: Tyson said EPA approved this TMDL in August for sediment, bacteria and temperature. On October 23, the WAG will meet and take the next steps towards implementation. The Upper Hangman WAG will discuss 319 projects also.

Lower Hangman TMDL: The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is working on the Lower Hangman TMDL. Some additional data was received. The Spokane River process will also influence this TMDL and Scott expects a draft to be out by December.

Lower Clark Fork TMDL: Jenna Borovansky finished the public comment requirement for this TMDL before she left DEQ. The TMDL was sent to DEQ State Office in August of 2007. Tyson has seen a letter from an EPA official that indicated that the TMDL will be approved soon.

Fish Creek TMDL: Fish Creek is a tributary to Upper Twin Lake in Kootenai County. The WAG meetings have sometimes been well attended and sometimes only two or three people will attend. However, progress has been made. The nutrients sampling done this summer indicated that the results were on a par with 1997 sample results. Fish Creek wasn't listed for bacteria but it was found to have a bacteria problem. Tyson and the WAG developed a bacteria TMDL. Bill Rust asked what could be done with a bacteria TMDL. Tyson replied that since there was only one home in the vicinity, the only source left was the cows that were allowed in or near the creek. The Kootenai agriculture employees worked out a plan to mitigate the cow problem, but the land owner had only implemented certain features and not all of the parts of the plan. Tyson said that an easy fix to the problem would be to create a watering feature for the cows away from the creek. This shouldn't be a problem, as the water table was very high in this area.

Pend Oreille Tributaries: Comments have been received by DEQ on the Pend Oreille Tributaries draft TMDL. These comments will be incorporated and the work will be wrapped up by the end of the month. The BAG will be sent draft TMDL for the Pend Oreille Tributaries and it will be posted on DEQ's website. Bob will send out an Email asking for BAG approval to send the TMDL on to State Office.

Pend Oreille River Temperature TMDL: DEQ Director, Toni Hardesty, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Washington State and the Kalispel Tribe to develop a joint TMDL for the mainstem Pend Oreille River. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has written two letters to DEQ regarding the modeling work performed by Portland State University (PSU), and DEQ's interpretation of modeling results as they apply to Idaho Water Quality Standards. The working draft of the TMDL suggests that Albeni Falls should have a temperature allocation. The ACOE commented that on one modeling scenario, a gate had been left open. PSU has re-run another model with the gate closed. This didn't change the conclusions of the TMDL. ACOE also stated in their letters that the entire scenario is much more complicated than the model run. Robert agreed that it was a possibility, but that the TMDL will proceed with the best available information and data at this point. Overall, the Albeni Falls Dam lowers water temperatures and helps some upstream fish survival except for a few minor exceedances. DEQ doesn't want ACOE to change their method of operation because operations have been optimized for maximum benefit to Pend Oreille Lake beneficial uses. DEQ hired the contractor who is the world's authority on this type of modeling and must go with best available data, which they feel they have in the product PSU provided.

The TMDL gives allocations to the cities of Sandpoint, Dover and Ponderay with a 7% growth anticipation. The cities feel that the growth is underestimated in the TMDL. DEQ will address all of the comments received from individuals, cities and agencies.

North Fork Coeur d'Alene River WAG: The North Fork Coeur d'Alene River WAG was officially accepted by Director Toni Hardesty. A draft TMDL on temperature and metals has been produced, but has not been presented to the WAG. The biggest issue on metals TMDLs is that DEQ and EPA disagree on the hardness issue. So if a TMDL is presented with state standards, EPA won't approve it and if a TMDL is presented with EPA standards, DEQ will not accept it. DEQ staff would like to see this issue resolved before proceeding with these TMDLs as they do not want to waste the WAG's time.

Kajsa Stromberg and Ed Tulloch met with the Shoshone Commissioners and gave them handouts and summaries that outlined the public participation that will be a large part of the North Fork WAG.

Two 319 projects are in the works for the N. Fork: Geoff Harvey will do one on Beaver Creek metals removal and the USFS will do one for temperature and sediment in Tepee Creek.

Integrated Report: The Integrated Report is not out. The volume of work and the number of streams is huge and a quality control process must take place to make sure the list makes sense. Robert Steed hopes to be able to present the report to the BAG at the December 2007 meeting.

Spokane River FERC Relicensing: FERC finalized their work affecting the Post Falls Dam only. DEQ must write a water quality certification and so DEQ has the last word on projects that can result from this process. Idaho Department of Fish and Game didn't receive any benefit from this process, so DEQ is trying to write some fish recovery projects into their certification. If there is a settlement, then perhaps all the parties involved can come together, as was the original goal for this relicensing. DEQ will have a draft certification available in the next few months.

Clark Fork: Gas supersaturation requirements are not being met at the Clark Fork facility. Avista has created a model of the dam in a warehouse and has run some scenarios. Tunnels were put in place to funnel water away from the dam overflow, but this only resulted in a small improvement which proved not to be enough. Avista has other ideas, some of them very innovative. DEQ will keep the BAG informed on Avista's effort to lower their TDG (total dissolved gas).

Coeur d'Alene Lake Management Plan: Progress has been made and from Tuesday through Thursday of this week, DEQ and Tribal officials are meeting with county commissioners, congressionals, lake and river interest groups, Washington DOE (Department of Ecology), the Lands Council, chambers of commerce, and others to discuss the plan. DEQ and Tribal technical staff attended a training presented by the University of Western Australia. This process is much more advanced and technical than

anything that is being used currently in Northern Idaho. It is, however, a complex system that takes a great deal of time. Robert Steed estimated that a full time person would have to be hired to run the program for Coeur d'Alene Lake.

An audit of participants in the original 1997 lake plan was conducted over the summer. The action items in tables were assessed and progress toward these items was reported.

In the next few weeks, the Lake Management Plan will receive a great deal of attention as Governor Otter wants to be able to present a finished product to members of the Idaho legislature, to gain their interest and support for a new Coeur d'Alene Lake Management Plan (LMP).

All Water Quality Staff Meeting in Riggins: Coeur d'Alene technical staff attended this meeting last week. Some Northern Idaho's concerns were voiced to State Office.

319 Training: State Office made the 319 process more user-friendly this year. 319 training was available in Coeur d'Alene. 90 letters were sent out; 15 people attended the training. Tyson is always available to answer 319 questions and concerns for the Coeur d'Alene office.

Ruth Watkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bernie Wilmarth seconded the motion; the motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at Idaho Department of Fish and Game in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.