

The Middle Snake River Watershed Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

601 Poleline Road, Twin Falls, Idaho

Tuesday, June 22, 2010

Time: 2:00 PM

Attendees:

Mike Trabert – City of Twin Falls
Chad Chorney- – DEQ-TFRO
Brian Hoelscher – Idaho Power
Terry Edwards – NRCS
Bob Bolte – Gooding SCD
Andy Morton – Clear Springs Foods
Sue Switzer – DEQ-TFRO
Jordan Tollefson – ISCC
Rich Bupp – BLM-Twin Falls
Sean Woodhead – DEQ-TFRO
Mark Daily – Aquaculture
Randy MacMillan – Clear Springs Foods

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Trabert- WAG Chairman

Mike Trabert called the meeting to order. Everyone introduced themselves.

II. WAG Business

Mike Trabert- WAG Chairman

The minutes from the January 20th meeting were reviewed and motion was made to approve the minutes with one correction. In Item V. the “M” in PMV should be “N”; it should read “The PNV is done.” The motion was seconded. The change will be made and the minutes will be signed and put into the administrative record.

III. DEQ Updates

Sue Switzer-DEQ

- The PNV of the Temperature TMDL is done. It has not been through public process, so you might be seeing that come up again.
- BURP is on hold for this year. It could be coming back next year in a revised format.
- The budget is about the same: no monitoring budget, same furloughs, and we do not anticipate replacing Mike’s position.
- We have been putting out Quagga traps this year. We have had a hard time keeping them there, but we are watching them.

IV. Anti-Degradation

Sue Switzer-DEQ

On September 9, EPA received an intent to sue from Idaho Conservation League (ICL) in their oversight for Idaho water quality rules to require Idaho to adopt an anti-degradation implementation procedure. DEQ intends to initiate rule making in an effort to force all pending legal action against EPA that would force EPA to take action with respect to Idaho's rule. DEQ intends to negotiate State rule and to develop reporting anti-degradation reviews of state surface water whenever permits are issued or activities conducted that would reduce surface water quality.

There have been several meetings; two more are scheduled. One on July 8 and another on July 21. Both meetings are 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. They can be attended at the Boise State Office, Pocatello Regional Office, or Coeur D'Alene Regional Office. If you have any questions or written comments, you can contact Don Essig at (208) 373-0119 or don.essig@deq.idaho.gov. The Preliminary draft is available at www.deq.idaho.gov/rules/water/58_0102_1001_negotiated.cfm or by contacting Paula Wilson at paula.wilson@deq.idaho.gov.

Mike Trabert has been involved in the meetings and added to the presentation. The meetings for the anti-degradation law are getting to where our participation is needed. Now is the time to speak because the next couple of meetings are getting to the meat of the anti-degradation rules. What comes out of this rule making will not only affect the point source but also the non-point source folks. Barry would like to have the rules ready for legislature this session; therefore, they need to be completed by August.

Please go to the web site and read about anti-degradation and attend the meetings or have some representation there from your group.

V. Upper Snake Rock – 5-Year Review

Sue Switzer-DEQ

The Upper Snake Rock 5-Year review was reviewed by State Office and went online June 8th. It is available on the DEQ website at http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water/data_reports/surface_water/tmdls/snake_rock_upper/snake_rock_upper_five_year_review_0409.pdf.

The process of comparing what went online and what was submitted is still in progress, no huge changes could be seen. However, you are encouraged to go online and take a look at it and let Sue know what you think. The only thing Sue could see that was added from the Water Quality Report was a map showing where the monitoring sites are, how the segments are defined on the river and where the tributaries come in. One of the Tables had some tribs removed from it that were not listed, which Sue agreed with because they were tribs that had been monitored but did not have a TMDL.

There was a good deal of discussion concerning where it goes from here. Sue responded by saying that there is no direction at this time. However, the understanding is that there should be a 10-year review take place. The aquaculture component was done in 2005. We just did the 5-year review. If it is 10 years after the last phase, the 10-year review would be in 2015. No direction has been given.

Mike commented that in discussions with EPA folks it sounded like they were going to look at the 5-year review and look at the water quality of the river then make a determination if the TMDL needs to be opened or not.

VI. Integrated Report

Sue Switzer-DEQ

We have the Draft 2010 Integrated Report. Watch for it to go out for public comment the end of June or some time in July. There will be a 30-day comment period with an option for a 15 day extension that we typically ask for. Based on any comments that are received the final document will be out late September or early October.

The categories in the Integrated Report were presented and defined. Category 1 is waters that are attaining water quality standards and are in wilderness areas and roadless areas. We do not have any in the Upper Snake Rock that are designated Category 1. We do have some in Category 2. They are waters what are attaining some designated uses. They do not require a TMDL. Category 3 is unassessed waters or waters that we do not have the tools to assess. Category 4 is waters impaired or threatened or a TMDL has been completed. Category 4a has approved TMDLs. Category 4c is water impaired by non-pollutants; flow or habitat altered. Category 5 is the one we need to watch. It is impaired water requiring a TMDL.

If you have any data or are aware of any agency that has data that would put these in the incorrect listing, this is an opportunity to submit that as public comment and get them in the category that they need to be in.

There was much discussion to encourage questions and comments on the Integrated Report during public comment period.

It was suggested that the WAG get a technical committee going again to look at the water bodies listed in Category 5 of the Integrated Report and make suggestions to the WAG.

VII. Implementation

Sean Woodhead-DEQ

The current activities in the Twin Falls Region include 9 subbasins in south-central Idaho, all of which are in the TMDL implementation phase. Tools used in water quality improvement and protecting water quality from non-point source pollutants include BURP, 319 grants and 401/404 projects.

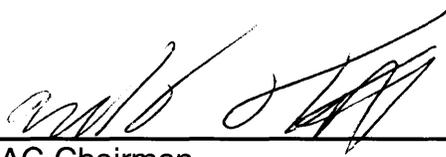
BURP has been put on hold for this year. We hope to see it back next year.

The 319 grant is EPA money administered by DEQ for water quality improvement projects involving non-point source pollutants on private lands. These funds are usually matched 60/40: 60% from the 319 grant and 40% from the individuals requesting the project.

The 404 permit involves any stream channel alteration project below the high water mark. It also covers dredge and fill material. The 401 permit addresses any project that is being done where the possibility of discharge into a navigable water. The project must meet Idaho's water quality standards.

DEQ involves itself in the land use permit processes for water quality improvement on streams impacted by grazing. DEQ has also established a good working relationship with groups using public lands and land management agencies. There are many federal and state agencies involved with water quality improvements and protection.

A pro-active approach to water quality improvement is to implement best management project prior to TMDL. Examples discussed were Shoshone Creek, Trout Creek, and Dry Gulch.



WAG Chairman

8/03/10
Date

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