

SOUTHWEST BASIN ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2015

BAG Members Present: Jim Moyer, Dick Rogers, Robbin Finch, Herb Malany; Chris Randolph; Tom Pence

Attendees: Lance Holloway, Julia Achabal, Darcy Sharp, Kati Carberry, Peter Wagner; Michael McIntyre, Stephanie Jenkins, Mary Anne Nelson, Dave Pisarski

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Moyer at 8:45 a.m.
Meeting minutes were read and approved as written.

Fy2015 Final §319 Project Ranking and Field Visit Update

- 29 Applications were ranked for FY2015 competing for ~4.5 million in grant funds.
- The top ranked project was selected from each of the 6 DEQ regions.
- There is potential for the State Revolving Loan Fund to sponsor un-funded §319 Projects.
- EPA will review easements if they are a requisite of the project.

BAG Representative Discussion: Non-Municipal Permittee and Mining Reps

While Tim Mosko has retired from CH2MHill, he is still willing to be an active representative of the mining industry. The BAG members agreed for Tim to remain a member of the group.

Henry Haminishi has retired from Simplot and is also retiring as the BAG's Non-Municipal Permittee representative. DEQ will publically announce the BAG seat vacancy and invite public inquiry. This should help develop a potential candidate list.

Load Reduction Estimate Demo

Darcy Sharp provided an overview of how she creates load reduction estimates for nonpoint source projects. Please see the DEQ website to view presentation materials <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/1118723/clean-water-act-section-319-load-reduction-estimations-012815.pdf>

Idaho Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program Update

Mary Anne Nelson provided a general understanding of the impacts of Idaho taking on the NPDES program and discussed the process DEQ will work through to prepare our application to take over the program from EPA. Please see the DEQ website to view presentation materials <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/1118721/deq-npdes-primacy-presentation-012815.pdf>

TMDL 5 year Review Update

Stephanie Jenkins discussed the status of Brownlee and Wildhorse 5 year reviews. Riparian vegetation has improved since the last TMDL. Improvements are attributed to implementation efforts and improved imagery used in analysis. A draft is anticipated in April, 2015.

319 Program Update

- The Non-point Source Management Plan has been updated and a draft sent to EPA. DEQ is waiting for approval.
- The 2016 grant application cycle begins in April and will run through the end of July. 2015. The SW BAG will receive grant funding proposals at the October quarterly meeting.
- The 2010 federal grant is closing with a balance of <70K on the books. It is expected these leftover funds will be recovered.
- There has been a long time push from EPA for states to fund watershed scale approaches to implementing projects vs a piecemeal approach. The Wolf Lodge Creek Watershed In the CDA region of DEQ is working to develop a formal watershed plan and multi-year implementation effort.
- The National 319 Program Meeting occurred November 2015 in Dallas. A noteworthy point from the meeting is that states can now use 319 funds to purchase property.

Affordability Criteria

In EPA's absence, Robbin Finch filled in to give a quick overview of changes to the Affordability Criteria and Stormwater Guidance. EPA issued two new guidance documents in late November 2014. The Affordability Guidance includes ten (10) additional factors to consider on how to meet the Clean Water Act (CWA) goals in a fiscally prudent way. The Stormwater Guidance significantly modifies the EPA's 2010 guidance, removing water quantity or flow as a surrogate for pollution and reinstating agency support for use of Best Management Practice (BMP) approaches.

Dixie Drain Project Update

Robbin Finch provided an informative presentation. Please see the DEQ website to view presentation materials <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/1118722/innovative-approach-maximize-nutrient-reduction-lbrw-091811.pdf>

Idaho Water Resources Board Dam Discussion

Randy Broesch, IDWR introduced himself and gave a bit of background to his new position with IDWR. He provided a briefing on the Weiser-Galloway Project. Please see the DEQ website to view presentation materials <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/1118717/executive-briefing-paper-110413.pdf>

Waters of the State (WOTUS)

Doug Conde discussed WOTUS and how this new rule is important in Idaho because our own definition of waters of the state is married to the federal definition in the CWA.

- Lots of things in the rule are undefined and susceptible to increased litigation.
- The definition of "significant nexus" is causing a kerfuffle.
- EPA did exclude ditches wholly in uplands and artificial lakes, ponds and stock water ponds.
- Waters are included if they "...either alone or in combination with similarly situated waters in the region, significantly affect the chemical, physical, or biological integrity of traditional navigable waters, interstate waters, or the territorial seas."

The topic of regional priorities for §319 projects was raised. The BAG's focus is to use the funds on brick and mortar projects that impact water quality directly. In addition the BAG also wanted to see more pilot-type projects that bring a unique solution to water quality improvement and load reduction.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.