

**MINUTES FOR:
BEAR RIVER BASIN ADVISORY GROUP
July 9, 2009
DEQ, Pocatello Regional Office
444 Hospital Way # 300**

Attending:

Dallan Nalder	BAG Member – Agriculture Representative - BAG Chairman
Eulalie Langford	BAG Member – Environmental Representative
Mitch Poulsen	BAG Member – Representative at Large
Ryan Cook	BAG Member – NPDES Representative
David Cottle	BAG Member – Recreation Representative
Mitch Hart	BAG Member – Mining Representative
Steve Smith	Idaho State Conservation Commission
Lyla Dettmer	Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
JoAnn Taylor	Bear Lake Soil and Water Conservation District
Scott Blake	Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
Pauline Bassett	Caribou Soil and Water Conservation District
Linda Daniels	Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District
George Spinner	Cascade Earth Sciences
Tadd Giesbrecht	JUB Engineers
Dave Pisarski	DEQ - Boise
Lynn VanEvery	DEQ - Pocatello
Melissa Thompson	DEQ - Pocatello
Marcy Pearhill	DEQ - Pocatello

Basin Advisory Chairman Dallan Nalder called the meeting to order, attendee introductions were made. The July 9th 2009 Agenda was reviewed and 1 item was added:

- Invasive species monitoring update (Zebra & Quagga mussels)

BAG Business -

- **Approval of Last Meeting Minutes motioned and seconded.**
- **BAG Vacancies/New Members**
 - Dallan Nalder welcomed the new BAG members; Mitch Hart representing mining interests, David Cottle representing Water Recreation and Ryan Cook representing non-municipal NPDES holders.
 - Discussion continued on the progress of finding a Hydropower and a Local Government Representative. Lynn Van Every distributed a letter to the BAG members stating Soda Springs desire to have a representative of Forsgren

Associates, Inc. represent the city on the BAG. The group discussed the feasibility of having a business, without local ties to the community, sit on the BAG. It was agreed that an elected official would better represent the interests of the various cities and towns in the Bear River Basin. It was agreed that Lynn Van Every would contact the mayor of Soda Springs to find an elected official, be it council member, county commissioner, etc. to sit on the Bear River BAG. Mitch Hart suggested Vaughn Rasmussen as a possible candidate.

- The position of Hydropower representative was advertised but no one responded. Lynn has agreed to talk to local hydropower generators to find a representative, specifically Mark Stenberg of PacifiCorp and others suggested by Brad Higginson.

- **Update on 319 Grant Process**

- Dave Pisarski from the DEQ in Boise gave a quick summary of the new schedule and ranking meetings for 2009 and 2010. In an attempt to narrow the time frame for projects. The 319 process will begin to shorten the window between processing and funding. This eliminates the longer schedule of 18 months that often left projects in limbo for too long. Other efficiencies have been added including submission of applications on the web making it easier to request funds and soon electronic signatures will be implemented to improve reimbursement times.
- Dave also summarized the organization of Basin Advisory Groups and their role in the 319 grant process. There are 6 groups in Idaho, divided by region. Each BAG is tasked with ranking and representing the various projects presented at regional BAG meetings. A representative from each BAG will attend the Super BAG meeting in Boise, August 19 & 20, 2009, to discuss the efficacy of each project and in turn fund those projects that are decided to be of the greatest merit. Bear River's representative will advocate for projects presented and ranked at today's meeting.

This year will be very competitive. The amount money asked for, \$14 million, which far exceeds the amount available, \$2.4 million. Over 50 projects have applied for funding. Does the same money go to each BAG? Dave said that there is no formula for the distribution of funds, its all based on what the Super BAG representatives decide are the projects with the most merit, with input from the DEQ, but the BAGs have final say.

- New funding sources are possible as stimulus money is made available. Opportunity exists to pool different pots of money from many different sources including; EPA, NRCS, AWEF, Farm Bill etc. Some of this money is slated for water quantity rather than quality, but some overlap may exist.

Is money available from completed projects that have come in under estimate?
Yes. As efficiency increases and old projects are closed, monies are available for new projects. A timeline of approximately 5 years has been established to either spend the money, or give the remainder of the balance back in order to reintroduce the funds back into the grant cycle. For the years 2000 thru 2003, approximately \$540,000 has been recovered and in 2004, \$180,000.

- **Super BAG meeting in Boise will be August 19th & 20th, 2009.** Dallon asked for volunteers to attend if he was unable to go, Eulalie Langford said that she would be available.

Bear River TMDL Municipal WLA Update

Lynn VanEvery presented slides (slides are available on the Bear River BAG website) of Total Phosphorus and dissolved ortho-phos for water bodies in the Bear River Basin. Levels were represented with both mean (avg) and median values. The mean values being higher as they represent an average of 5 levels, where as the median represents the middle number of the 5 levels. High runoff during a few months of the year skews the mean values higher. Water bodies are monitored 5 times a year during 2 periods of spring runoff, February thru April and April thru June, summer base flow and winter base flow. Levels fluctuate based on seasonal factors.

The Department of Environmental Quality has written TMDLs for the entire Bear River Basin with strict limits placed on phosphorus. Many communities are unable to meet the strict limit of 75 mg/liter consistently during the year. DEQ is interested in working with these communities to balance the needs of fiscal responsibility with water quality in the Bear River Basin. The revision envisioned for this years TMDLs will reflect current numbers, but as cities grow, their limits will need to remain within current TMDLs.

As water travels 150 miles from the border of Wyoming to the Idaho border with Utah, the amount of phosphorus added by Idaho is only 20 lbs. Idaho is not in danger of exceeding Utah's TMDLs. The phosphorus added during the journey through Idaho is often captured in reservoirs which act as nutrient sinks. Reservoirs are monitored throughout the Basin.

319 Project Applications

Please see Power Point presentations on the Bear River BAG website for details, costs and pictures from each application.

- Daniels Non-Point Sediment Reductions, Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District
- Trout Creek AFO Project, Caribou Soil and Water Conservation District
- Middle Bear River Watershed-Mound Valley, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
- Bloomington and Paris Creeks Irrigation Structures, Bear lake Soil and Water Conservation District

- Upper Bear River Streambank Stabilization Project, Bear Lake Regional Commission

BAG discussion and 319 Prioritization Ranking

Discussion began with questions about how projects were to be ranked. The mandate is that projects improve water quality, meet TMDLs and sustain beneficial uses.

Ryan Cook asked why the state should help private land owners improve their infrastructure. Dave Pisarski said that historically agricultural practices have been negligent or indifferent to water quality. New regulations put into place to protect water quality can be an expensive upgrade for many landowners. The partnership of government and private matching funds was put into place to share the burden of upgrades and improve the chances that many of the water quality improvements would be completed. Landowners are more likely to improve the water quality on their land if they know they will not bear the entire cost and will receive some benefit from the stated improvements.

Dallan called for a vote to rank the projects. Dave stressed that projects were ranked locally because the local community often knows the price of various aspects involved in the projects, be it seed, heavy machinery, travel, labor, etc. and to take into account the costs associated with each project.

The group wondered if some of the projects could be paired down and re-submitted, thereby making them more likely to receive some funding, if not all that was requested. Dave said that they could re-submit an addendum to better represent the most pressing needs in their region. He also explained that all the projects would be presented at the Super BAG meeting with brief comments on their strengths and weaknesses as seen by DEQ. Most projects ranked number one by the regional BAGs would most likely receive funding, it is those further down the list that may take more wrangling. An unintended consequence of automatically funding those ranked #1 may be less money for more important projects.

The vote was called and the projects were ranked as follows:

1. Upper Bear River Streambank Stabilization Project, Bear Lake Regional Commission
2. Bloomington and Paris Creeks Irrigation Structures, Bear Lake Soil and Water Conservation District
3. Trout Creek AFO Project, Caribou Soil and Water Conservation District
4. Middle Bear River Watershed-Mound Valley, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
5. Daniels Non-Point Sediment Reductions, Oneida Soil and Water Conservation District

The Bear River BAG liked components of the each project, but felt they may need to be paired down to reflect the current fiscal limitations. Lynn will inform presenters that addendums to their projects will be accepted thru August 1, 2009. Will the ranking be modified to reflect these changes? No, the ranking will remain the same.

Invasive species monitoring update (Zebra & Quagga mussels)

No mussels have been seen in any waterbodies currently being monitored. Inspection stations have been set up at the border between Utah and Idaho at Bear Lake. The inspections are voluntary, but David Cottle felt they have had an okay response from boaters, although some have passed the stations. Some holes still exist. Utah has only 1 inspector at the marina and many boats are launched from uncontrolled areas around the lake. David feels the best response to keep mussels out Idaho water ways is education and outreach.

Plan for Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next 319 cycle for 2011 funding will be open in February, with the Super BAG meeting in December 2010, to fund by the spring of 2011. This year's projects will receive their funding in April/May 2010.

Melissa Thompson reminded everyone that the information presented at this meeting will be available on the Bear River BAG website, including the new schedule for the 319 process.

The next meeting will be November 12, 2009 at 10 am. Information on revised TMDLs and WLA will be presented.

Lynn suggested a tour of completed projects in the Bear River Basin in September or October, but no date was set.