

**MINUTES FOR:
BEAR RIVER BASIN ADVISORY GROUP
November 12, 2009
DEQ, Pocatello Regional Office
444 Hospital Way # 300**

Attending:

Dallan Nalder	BAG Member – Agriculture Representative - BAG Chair
Eulalie Langford	BAG Member – Environmental Representative
Mitch Poulsen	BAG Member – Representative at Large
Ryan Cook	BAG Member – Non-municipal NPDES Representative
David Cottle	BAG Member – Water-based Recreation Representative
Mitch Hart	BAG Member – Mining Representative
Mark Stenberg	PacifiCorp
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
Justin Krajewski	Idaho Soil Conservation Commission
Steve Smith	Idaho Soil Conservation Commission
Wayne Priestly	Mayor, Franklin City
Louis Wasniewski	US Forest Service
Jim Mende	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Annette deKnijf	US Forest and Wildlife Service/Bear Lake NWR
Tadd Giesbrecht	JUB Engineers
Lynn VanEvery	DEQ - Pocatello
Melissa Thompson	DEQ - Pocatello
Marcy Pearhill	DEQ - Pocatello

Basin Advisory Chair Dallan Nalder called the meeting to order, attendee introductions were made.

BAG Business

- **Approval of Last Meeting Minutes motioned and seconded.**
- **BAG Vacancies/New Members**
 - Mark Stenberg was recommended to become a BAG member representing Hydro-Power. Mr. Stenberg works for PacifiCorp which has many hydro projects on the Bear River and its tributaries. He and PacifiCorp are already involved in habitat enhancement and irrigation diversion to restore fish friendly areas, as well as land trusts to protect land around the Bear River. Eulalie Langford nominated Mr. Stenberg for membership, Mitch Paulson seconded and Mr. Stenberg was approved unanimously.
 - The vacancy for a Local Government representative has yet to be filled. Wayne Priestly, Mayor of Franklin City, was invited to the meeting to observe and comment.

- **Update on 319 Grant Process**

Dallan Nalder attended the Super BAG meeting in Boise, Idaho August 19 & 20, 2009. Mr. Nalder said there were 51 applications for 319 Grant monies and the amount of funds applied for far exceeded the amount available. Two projects were approved for the Bear River Basin:

- Upper Bear River Streambank Stabilization Project, Mitch Poulsen
- Daniels non-point Sediment Reduction, Steven Smith

JoAnne Taylor asked why projects are ranked locally if they are not funded based on that ranking in Boise? Ms. Langford responded that recommendations were important to prioritize local projects and Lynn VanEvery added that the BAG chair is able to prioritize local projects but the ranking may change when compared to the other projects presented from throughout the state. The recommendations are then based in comparison to other applications and local rankings take a back seat. Mr. VanEvery said he would talk to the State Office in Boise to better understand how the Super BAG meeting proceeded and how the ranking process worked. Ms. Langford said that Ms. Taylor would be able re-present her project for the next funding cycle and hopefully funds would be available for the grant.

Ryan Cook asked how the local BAGS were notified when leftover funds are available from older projects. Mr. VanEvery said that funds had a 5-year life span and during that time a project may have completed the job for less money or the project may not have been fully implemented. Those grants funds not spent return to the state and are reallocated and local BAGs may not know for a few years if money is available. The Bear River BAG has been successful at tapping into turnback funds and approximately \$150,000 has been spent in the Bear River Basin to wrap-up local projects.

- **Schedule for 2011 grant cycle**

The Super BAG meeting will be in December 2010. The pre-application process will begin in February or March 2010 with applications due in August 2010 and ranking in October 2010. Funding will become available in spring of 2011. In an attempt to eliminate the lag from application to funding the process has been expedited. Solicitation letters should be sent around the first of next year.

Justin Krajewski asked about the use of rock for stream restoration projects. He expressed concern that some projects were cancelled because of their use of rock, because the EPA would prefer a softer approach. Mitch Poulsen said that rock is useful to prevent bank erosion and native grasses will often grow in 5 to 10 years to soften the rock. Riverbank restoration is often in remote areas where looks are not a major concern and projects often have to make due with what's available.

PacifiCorp Water Quality Projects *Mark Stenberg, PacifiCorp*

Mark Stenberg summarized projects done with help from PacifiCorp (slides are available of the Bear River BAG website). He began with the removal of Cove Dam in 2006. He presented a number of before and after slides of the restoration work. He addressed concerns about the use of rock in

restoration efforts and said that this project, with use of historic photos, was able to use rock in those areas that were historically boulder strewn as well as softer treatments. Much of the reclaimed landscape was seeded with a mix of local grasses, all in an effort to replace river margins and protect them from erosion. The before and after slides showed a substantial growth of junipers and the question was asked whether they were encroaching on the area. Mr. Stenberg said that the 1915 pictures showing a lack of junipers may have been man made as many areas were clear cut to make surveying easier and also cut down for the local building industry.

Next, Mr. Stenberg presented slides for a stretch of Whiskey Creek. The landowner wanted to provide habitat for fish and extensive work was done to restore the creek. Originally it was wide, shallow and full of muck. The project focused on narrowing the channel and containing its banks. The fill used for containment came from the creek and its removal also created a deeper channel. The velocity of the water is around 3,000 to 4,000 ft/sec. In addition to rock, shrubs and native grasses were planted along the banks. PacifiCorp provided a match of about 20% to 25%, approximately \$40,000, with NRCS and the landowner providing the rest. Flows are stable within the creek, and fish are returning. This project did not use any 319 funds.

TMDL Addendum *Melissa Thompson, DEQ & Lynn VanEvery, DEQ*

Melissa Thompson summarized the data for stream monitoring on tributaries to the Bear River. The Department of Environmental Quality is in the process fulfilling their commitment of finalizing monitoring data and creating TMDLs for tributaries to the Bear River. Please see slides on the Bear River BAG website for details concerning each tributary. Monitoring includes erosion inventories and sub-surface sediment. Monitoring is conducted on those reaches of the tributaries which are accessible, mostly on public lands as access to private lands is difficult, and stream health is extrapolated based on those points. Aerial photos are also used to determine stream health. No new streams will be added in the near future, but monitoring will be continued on those tributaries now listed.

Where are the reductions coming from? Land management agencies have reduced sediment and have instituted water quality measures. The Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation Districts have also helped prioritize areas for implementation. Improvements in sediment and erosion are hard to measure because there are no long-term data sets due to lack of resources for continuous monitoring.

Lynn VanEvery presented an analysis of the current mainstem Bear R. water quality. Data collected as part of the cooperative effort amongst the Idaho, Wyoming and Utah DEQs and supported by the Water Quality Committee of the Bear River Commission, collected since 2006 appear to indicate that TMDL targets for total phosphorus are generally being met at most mainstem river sites (median values). Current discharges from the municipalities in the basin (Montpelier, Georgetown, Soda Springs and Grace) tend to generally represent less than about 2 percent of the total load in the river and are not contributing to exceedances of total phosphorus targets near their respective discharges. DEQ is proposing to revise the wasteload allocations for those four facilities setting allocations at existing or current loads for phosphorus. It is anticipated that in order for these communities to grow they will have to plan upgrades to existing facilities and in fact these communities are generally in planning processes currently. Franklin City, which discharges to the Cub River, will have its phosphorus wasteload allocation revised to existing discharge loads as water quality in the Cub R. below Franklin is generally meeting or under TMDL targets. The city of Preston discharges into Worm Creek which is a tributary to the Cub River which flows into Utah. The Cub River must meet

Utah's current TMDLs. The revised wasteload allocation for Preston calls for a 38% reduction in phosphorus, which will require improved wastewater treatment. However, the water quality coming into Preston is poor and contributes to the higher levels of phosphorus. It is anticipated that non-point source improvements in the Worm Creek drainage will improve phosphorus levels over time along with concurrent improvements and reductions in Preston's treatment and discharge.

The Department of Environmental Quality anticipates a 30-day public comment period to allow the public sufficient review time for the revision in wasteload allocations and tributary TMDL analysis. The TMDL's will then be submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 in Seattle for their approval.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will be ending soon in many areas in the Bear River Basin and this may have a marked effect on water quality. Lynn said that the CRP program has improved water quality and should continue being supported.

Bear River Grant *Lyla Dettmer, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District*

Lyla Dettmer and JoAnn Taylor presented slides on a project that they have been working for 2 years. Please see Power Point slides on Bear River BAG website for more details. They outlined projects to pipe and line irrigation channels to reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation and seepage. This project allows 1200 acre feet of water to be put into Idaho's Water Bank where it can be bought at a set price. The project is paid for by a grant from the Bureau of Reclamation, which funded only 13 of 141 projects. The cost is approximately \$7.8 million with a 50/50 cost share. The project also helps keep pollutants out of groundwater and reduces the amount of sediment going into the Bear River.

Ms. Taylor also asked if anyone was interested in supporting a cloud seeding program.

Georgetown Mine Remediation Project *Mitch Hart, Agrium*

Mitch Hart presented before and after slides on the cleanup of the Georgetown Creek Industrial Closure. The old plant was built in the 50's and operated through the 60's. NuWest, under the umbrella of Agrium, bought the Georgetown Mine and inherited its remediation. Please see pictures on the Bear River BAG website for a closer look at the remediation efforts.

Ms. Langford asked why the mine site in Montpelier Canyon was not having the same selenium problems that other areas are experiencing. Mr. Hart explained that in his opinion the haphazard manner in which these old sites were mined, although aesthetically challenged, did not concentrate the selenium in the same manner as the more modern mining practices established in the 70's, 80's and 90's, which have unfortunately allowed more selenium to leech into the landscape.

Fish Haven Project *David Cottle, Bear Lake Watch*

David Cottle presented slides on the Fish Haven Project. Please see Mr. Cottle's Power Point presentation on the Bear River BAG website for more details. The goal of the project was to more efficiently irrigate the land and still leave enough water in the creeks for fish spawning. Also, the Bear River Groundwater Management Plan which began Aug 12, 2001 was devised to take the fully allocated water in the Bear River system and return the allocated water back to the Bear River/Bear Lake system as it is dried up for development. Mr. Cottle stressed the collaborative effort

of everyone involved and how they strive to reach a win-win solution to each problem. Ms. Langford congratulated Mr. Cottle for the excellent work done in Fish Haven.

Invasive Species Update *Lynn VanEvery, DEQ & David Cottle, Bear Lake Watch*

Idaho still remains free of Quagga and Zebra mussels. The DEQ surveyed 13 lakes and reservoirs with created substrate and they are free of mussels. Currently, only Idaho, Washington and Oregon are mussel free, but Utah and Nevada are infected. DEQ will continue its monitoring efforts next year as well.

Bear Lake Watch, in partnership with the Bear Lake Regional Commission have been implementing prevention measures in Bear Lake in 3 different locations. Mr. Cottle would like to see protection increase in Utah, and believes they need more people and more open hours at inspection stations. The development of a rapid response plan is also underway should a waterbody become infected. Invasive species stickers will be included with a motorized boat registration, but out-of-state and non-motorized boats will still need to purchase a sticker.

Mitch Poulsen said that the process of preventing mussels from entering the state is ongoing and this years experience will inform the practices of next year and better implementation will be possible. Mr. VanEvery said it would be helpful if the experience were written down, such as costs and how prevention measures were implemented. Mr. Cottle said that the numbers were not being compiled until next month and then they would be able to compare data with Utah and figure out how Idaho did and how to make it better. Ms. Langford expressed concern for the invasive specie and problem and asked what percentage of the United States is infected. Mr. Cottle said that a Ukranian ship introduced the mussels in 1985 and they have spread rapidly across the US. The Great Lakes have been hit hardest with 95% drop in chinook salmon. There is no known cure for mussels.

Additional Agenda Items/Plan for Next Meeting/Adjourn

Annette deKnijf announced a project that the US Fish & Wildlife is floating for the migratory bird refuge. In an effort to preserve animals and their habitat, and in reaction to changes that climate change may affect, the US Fish & Wildlife service would like begin a project to protect more of the watershed. Easements not land acquisition, and managed trusts, purchased with money from land & conservation funds, would be used to increase the size of protected land around Bear Lake. Please talk to Ms. deKnijf if you have questions or would like to help.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2010.