



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**REGION 10**

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Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF  
WATER AND  
WATERSHEDS

**DEC 14 2011**

Mr. Barry Burnell, Administrator  
Water Quality Division  
Department of Environmental Quality  
1410 North Hilton  
Boise, Idaho 83706-1255

Re: Approval of the Big Lost River Subbasin TMDLs (HUC: 17040218)

Dear Mr. Burnell:

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) submitted the Big Lost River Watershed Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on November 4, 2011. Following our review, the EPA is pleased to approve 29 TMDLs for the waters and pollutants listed in the tables below. Six of these waters were included in Idaho's 2010 303(d) list (List) of impaired waters, as identified in Table 1.

**Table 1: EPA-Approved TMDLs on Impaired Waters**

<b>Name of Creek/Water Segment</b>	<b>Assessment Unit #</b>	<b>Pollutant</b>
Big Lost River (Jones Creek to Mackay Reservoir)	ID17040218SK013_05	Sediment
Big Lost River (Thousand Springs Creek to Jones Creek)	ID17040218SK015_05	Sediment
Thousand Spring Creek Tributaries (also known as Elkhorn Creek), source to mouth	ID17040218SK016_02	Temperature
Sage Creek, source to mouth	ID17040218SK022_02	Bacteria (e-coli)
Big Lost River, Burnt Creek to Thousand Springs Creek	ID17040218SK024_05	Sediment
Twin Bridge Creek, source to mouth (also known as Bridge Creek)	ID17040218SK026_03	Temperature

IDEQ also completed 13 TMDLs for waterbodies which were not meeting water quality standards for temperature but had not previously been included on Idaho's List. These TMDLs and waterbodies are

identified in Table 2 below. The EPA understands that these waters would have been included on the List had the State been aware of the impairment at the time the List was completed.

**Table 2: EPA-Approved TMDLs on Unlisted Waters**

Name of Creek/Water Segment	Assessment Unit #	TMDL Pollutant
Antelope Creek	ID17040218SK057_02 ID17040218SK057_03 ID17040218SK052_04 ID17040218SK047_05 ID17040218SK046_05	Temperature
Big Lost River	ID17040218SK011_05 ID17040218SK010_05 ID17040218SK007_05 ID17040218SK006_06 ID17040218SK013_05 ID17040218SK015_05	Temperature
Leadbelt Creek	ID17040218SK058_02	Temperature
Twin Bridge Creek, source to mouth (also known as Bridge Creek)	ID17040218SK026_02	Temperature

IDEQ also revised existing approved (2004) temperature TMDLs by the use of a different methodology for the following 10 waterbodies (located in Category 4a of the 2010 Integrated Report) to address the temperature impairments.

**Table 3: EPA-Approved Revised Temperature TMDLs Using Different Methodology**

Name of Creek/Water Segment	Assessment Unit #	Pollutant
Antelope Creek	ID17040218SK047_04 ID17040218SK049_04 ID17040218SK049_05	Temperature
Big Lost River	ID17040218SK025_05 ID17040218SK024_05	Temperature
East Fork Big Lost River	ID17040218SK033_02 ID17040218SK033_03 ID17040218SK033_04 ID17040218SK039_02 ID17040218SK039_03	Temperature

Our review indicates that these allocations have been established at a level that, when fully implemented, will lead to the attainment of the water quality standards addressed by these TMDLs. Therefore, the IDEQ does not need to include these waters on the next 303(d) list of impaired waters for the pollutant(s) covered by these TMDLs.

The Mackay wastewater treatment plant is identified as a point source in the Big Lost River watershed, and may be a source of heat loading to the downstream 303(d) listed segments addressed by temperature TMDLs noted in the table above. Due to the very limited nature of the data to assess temperature

impacts from this facility, it is recommended that effluent monitoring requirements for temperature for the facility be increased to include daily or continuous monitoring.

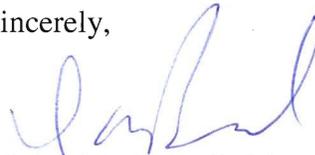
On November 22, 2011, IDEQ submitted an additional appendix titled "IDFG MacKay Fish Hatchery Wasteload Allocation." This appendix provided documentation and justification to support IDEQ's request for EPA approval to revise the existing WLA (under the TMDL approved by EPA in 2004) for this facility that discharges to Warm Springs Creek. This request will be addressed in separate correspondence and is not part of this review.

This approval only includes those waters for which a TMDL was completed and does not constitute approval for the proposed de-listing of waters within Hydrologic Unit Code 17040218 from the Idaho §303(d) list. Any proposed de-listing of waters will be considered at the time of submission of the next §303(d) list of impaired waters.

This submittal also includes implementation strategies for the TMDLs. IDEQ developed and submitted these strategies pursuant to the TMDL Settlement Agreement of July 2002. The EPA has no duty to approve or disapprove implementation strategies under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA); therefore, the Agency is not taking action on these strategies. Implementation is the critical next step to realize improvements in water quality, and we encourage IDEQ to continue their work with responsible parties on implementation of the Big Lost River Subbasin Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan for Agriculture (May 2011).

We would like to recognize the cooperation of Troy Saffle and Darcy Sharp in bringing these TMDLs to completion. By the EPA's approval, these TMDLs are now incorporated into the State's Water Quality Management Plan under §303(e) of the CWA. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to call me at (206) 553-4198, or you may call Jayne Carlin, of my staff at (206) 553-8512.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Bussell, Director  
Office of Water and Watersheds

cc: Mr. Doug Conde, Attorney General, Idaho (via email)  
Mr. Mike McIntyre, Surface Water Program Manager, IDEQ (via email)  
Ms. Marti Bridges, TMDL Program Manager, IDEQ (via email)  
Mr. Troy Saffle, Water Quality Manager, Idaho Falls Regional Office, IDEQ (via email)  
Ms. Darcy Sharp, Idaho Falls Regional Office, IDEQ (via email)  
Mr. Laird Lucas, Advocates for the West (via email)  
Ms. Kristen Boyles, Earthjustice (via email)