

**South Fork Palouse River TMDL
Water Quality Advisory Group Meeting**

February 10, 2009

1:30 to 3:30 pm

Notes

Attendees:

Rob Buchert – City of Pullman
Mary Lou Cadle – landowner (SFPR)
Jim Carroll – Ecology
Erik Coats – University of Idaho
Matt Gregg – University of Idaho
Mike Leonas - WSU
Roland Line – Pullman resident

Les MacDonald – City of Moscow
Cheryl Morgan – Landowner (SFPR & Hatley Ck)
Gene Patterson - WSU
Marty O'Malley – WSU
Elaine Snouwaert – Ecology
Michael Yount – Pullman resident

The meeting began at 1:30 am with round table introductions. The group reviewed the December meeting. The following changes were requested to the December meeting notes:

- Neill Library was spelled incorrectly (should have 2 L's)
- Cheryl asked that her concerns regarding the safety of children playing in the streams and water right holders using river water on lawns and crops be added to the meeting notes. She had raised these concerns at the end of the December meeting. Cheryl passed out a handout which included a 1999 newspaper clip about 7-year old boy who became sick (neurological and intestinal symptoms) from a playing in a creek that was known to have fecal coliform bacteria above the standard.

The December meeting notes will be updated to reflect these changes and they were approved as updated.

As a follow up to Cheryl's concern, Elaine explained that a health advisory would need to be issued by either the local or state health departments. Both Elaine and Cheryl have been in contact with Michael Baker at Whitman County Regional Health. He's checking to see if a general health alert could be issued.

The meeting was opened for announcements. Rob announced that the City of Pullman passed an ordinance which establishes a stormwater utility fee to help pay for their stormwater management program. A question was asked if an education plan was part of the stormwater program and Rob explained that it is an element required by the stormwater permit. WSU mentioned that there has been some discussion about co-developing an education plan since their coverage areas overlap.

Cheryl announced that in 1998 the city of Pullman received a recommendation from the acting City Attorney that the city should assess property owners for the cost of stormwater control, management and repair of facilities. Cheryl passed out a copy of the memo. This fee was never enacted.

Elaine announced that there is a new study published that is a follow-up to the PCB and Dieldrin TMDL for the Palouse River. This study sampled the wastewater treatment plants and two abandoned landfills in Pullman. One landfill is behind SYG Nursery and the other (the old incinerator site) is along the banks of the South Fork Palouse River. One sediment sample from the landfill behind the nursery had high PCB levels. The site is being referred to Ecology's Toxic Cleanup Program to see if any further investigation is needed. With limited data and only one sample above cleanup levels this site would likely be found to be a low priority compared to other

sites. A handout was provided with a link to where to find the report online. If anyone would like a paper copy they can contact Elaine.

Roland asked about the different studies Ecology is doing on the South Fork Palouse and asked if there would be a study of other chemicals. Elaine explained that the PCB and dieldrin study also looked at several other pesticides that are no longer in use and those were found at low enough levels to not be a problem. Our next TMDLs will be for temperature and dissolved oxygen and pH. The latter will likely have reductions for nutrients. Data indicating that a pollutant is impairing water quality triggers the TMDL process. If Ecology received data showing other chemicals were a problem this process would eventually be scheduled to address those but at this time Ecology is not collecting information on other chemicals.

Cheryl and Mary Lou shared with the group how much the river has declined. There used to be turtles, fish and frogs and they do not see them anymore. When the dogs go in the river they come out smelling like sewage.

The group discussed the technical language sent out in December. Elaine explained that substantial comments should be submitted in writing so she and Jim can track and address them. Quite a few comments have already been received. Michael and Cheryl wanted to know if comments already submitted would be part of the response to comments. Elaine explained that the response to comments appendix in the document would be for comments received during the formal public comment period. Comments from the advisory group are part of a process to improve the report and Elaine and Jim hoped that they would be able to address advisory group comments prior to completion of the draft public report. However, Elaine stressed that if an advisory committee member felt that their comment still hadn't been addressed in the public review version that they should either resubmit it during the public comment period or let Elaine know that they wanted a specific comment addressed in the response to comments.

Roland would like a concluding map added to the report that would show the worst areas that could be used to prioritize activities.

Cheryl discussed a photo from the historical society that indicates that the lake behind Chief Joseph Apartments is not the historic Lake Depuddle. Lake Depuddle was in a different location. However, some people refer to this waterbody by the apartments as Lake Depuddle. The group decided that to avoid confusion the report should just describe the location of the lake and not refer to it by any name.

Marty asked about the status of the high load entering the South Fork in Colfax. Elaine explained that Colfax had conducted some monitoring to try to determine sources. However, when the heavy snows and high flows came source detection couldn't be continued. She plans to get back with the city of Colfax about locating the source this spring as conditions become more favorable. This is a priority source to address.

Eric asked about what happens if the source is natural such as with wildlife. Elaine and Jim explained that if wildlife are using the entire loading capacity it would mean that there would be no additional capacity for human caused sources. Neither Jim nor Elaine are aware of any cases where wildlife use up the entire capacity. Sometimes wildlife can be managed in ways to reduce their contribution. For example if vegetation has been removed or people are feeding them, animals and birds may congregate near waterbodies.

Eric noted that it seems like the urban areas are more problematic than the rural areas. Jim clarified that during the wet season there is quite a bit of loading from the rural areas, including across the border in Idaho. During the dry season more loading comes from the urban areas. Both urban and rural implementation activities will need to occur.

Eric asked who would be responsible for contamination outside of the city jurisdictions. Elaine said that as part of implementation we'd need to look at the sources in the rural areas to determine which agencies and entities could help address those sources.

Eric asked about bacteria in the sediment being stirred up by high flows. Jim explained that bacteria can live and grow in the sediment and be re-suspended during high flow events. Elaine explained that we wouldn't address bacteria in the sediments by trying to remove them but rather by preventing the sources of both bacteria and sediment to the stream. Eventually what is there now will flush out of the system if sources are reduced or eliminated.

Eric asked if additional sampling could be part of the implementation strategy. Both Elaine and Jim explained that additional sampling would likely be necessary to locate potential sources and to assess the effectiveness of the implementation activities. Recommendations for monitoring should be included in the implementation strategy.

Eric asked how the TMDLs address overlapping pollutant issues. An example would be increased disinfection at WWTPs to lower FC bacteria would require increased chlorine and de-chlorination which have their own water quality concerns. Fortunately, reductions of the bacteria WWTP permit limits are not required so increased chlorination will not be necessary. In other cases, this may need to be taken into consideration.

The group brainstormed sources and priorities to include in the implementation strategy. The following list of sources was developed:

- Cross connections
 - Sanitary sewer to storm sewer
 - Illegal connections (to storm sewer, ditches and streams)
- Failed septic systems
- Include a recommendation to Idaho DEQ for reductions at the border
- Pet waste
- Livestock
- Wildlife
- WSU and U of I dairies
- Stormwater catch basin maintenance
- Animal boarding operations
- Wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs)
- Waterbody near Chief Joseph Apartments
- Inflow and infiltration to WWTP collection systems

The following list of priority areas was developed:

- Areas with high loading and look up those streams or systems for "hot spots"
- Unknown source in Colfax
- Areas more likely to have recreation

Elaine showed a list of groups to be included under “who needs to participate” that included:

- Dept of Ecology
- City of Pullman Stormwater Management
- Washington State Stormwater Management
- Pullman, Albion and Colfax’s WWTPs
- Whitman County
- City of Colfax
- Idaho and Moscow, ID
- Citizens and landowners

It was recommended that Whitman County Health Department be separated out from Whitman County. It was also recommended that Idaho DEQ be separated from Moscow, ID. The group added the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for cross border and Idaho permit issues.

The group agreed that Elaine should take these lists and recommendations and draft the implementation strategy. She will draft the strategy and hopefully have it ready for review prior to the March meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.