

Deschutes River, Capitol Lake, and Budd Inlet TMDL Advisory Group Meeting

Thursday, March 28, 2013, 9:15 a.m. to 12 noon
LOTT Clean Water Alliance, 500 Adams St. NE, Olympia

Attendees

Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team (DERT)

- Dave Peeler

Ecology, WA State Dept. of

- Kim McKee
- Lydia Wagner

Enterprise Services (DES), WA Dept. of

- Carrie Martin

Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. (EPA)

- Dave Ragsdale

LOTT Clean Water Alliance

- Karla Fowler

Olympia, City of

- Stephen Buxbaum, Mayor
- Laura Keehan

Olympia Yacht Club

- Jim Lengenfelder

Squaxin Island Tribe

- Scott Steltzner

Thurston Conservation District

- Amy Hatch-Winecka

Thurston County Environmental Health

- Sue Davis

Thurston Public Utility District

- Chris Stearns

Transportation, WA State Dept. of

- Emily Miller

Tumwater, City of

- Dan Smith

Weyerhaeuser

- Steve Barnowe-Meyer

General Updates

Meetings: Ecology is cancelling the April and May Advisory Group meetings due to the need to wait for the completion of the model runs and post assessment of the South Puget Sound and Budd Inlet. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 27, with another location change. We'll meet at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Correctional Industries (CI) building at 801 88th Ave., Tumwater.

South Sound GREEN Congress: Lydia shared a couple of short PowerPoint presentations made by local students participating in the South Sound GREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network) Congress. This program engages students in the Nisqually and Deschutes watersheds. They conduct water quality monitoring in October and February and come to the Congress to share their results. The examples shown today include a presentation on Moxlie Creek monitoring by the NOVA school, and a comprehensive set of recommendations on actions needed to improve the watersheds. It was interesting to see their recommendations are directly in line with the work Ecology and others are doing to improve watershed conditions.

More information about this program is available at <http://www.thurstoncd.com/south-sound-green.html>. The presentations are available online at:

- *Moxlie Creek Monitoring:*
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/advisorycomm/32813DeschutesAdvMtgNOVAMoxlieCreek.pdf>
- *Recommendations from the 21st Annual Student GREEN Congress:*
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/advisorycomm/32813DeschutesAdvMtgGREENCongressRec.pdf>

Capitol Lake: Carrie Martin, DES, provided an update on the dredge permitting analysis project. Environmental consultant Floyd Snider was hired to map the permitting process. They have reviewed existing documentation, received input from various permitting agency technical staff, and developed a draft permitting road map. Floyd Snider will do a presentation on the draft report for interested stakeholders on Wednesday, April 17, 9:30 a.m., at 1500 Jefferson. This effort is only on the permitting process itself and has not included design development. For more information contact Carrie at Carrie.Martin@des.wa.gov .

Load and Wasteload Allocations

Kim McKee and Lydia Wagner, Ecology, Water Quality Program

Ecology again used the EPA Office of Water program's "MyWATERS Mapper" tool to see aerial images of the watershed. This is available online at www.epa.gov/waters/enviromapper/. The discussions for this meeting concentrated on Percival Creek/Black Lake Ditch temperature and system wide fine sediments.

Temperature model

- The main stem was examined at one kilometer (km) intervals. Percival Creek/Black Lake Ditch was done in ½ km intervals.
- As assessment of the canopy was considered.
- *What is the condition in the stream channel and immediately upgradient?*

EPA comments

- Dave likes the Load Allocation column including the percent (%) increased needed for effective shade.
- TMDLs usually show both the system potential and % increase needed. Perhaps add another column listing to include a goal. (*Ecology note: This information is already provided in the Technical Report.*)
- Analysis said we need to have the maximum amount of shade possible throughout the watershed. *What specific actions are needed to achieve this target?* For example, list the target tree height for specific trees or combination which will result in achieving the target.

Lead Entities Column

- *How did Ecology decide which organizations to include in this column?* Staff made logical assumptions based on knowledge of the area and looking at boundaries on maps.
- If the Thurston Conservation District (TCD) is included in this column, we should also include other organizations that may help with education, outreach, or implementation. We could address this by adding "others as identified".
- Entities covered under the Phase 2 Stormwater permits are responsible for inspections of storm drains in the permitted area.
- As part of this TMDL effort, it will state all permittees must be in full compliance with their permits. This may come about through complaint response, routine business activity, or maintenance agreements.
- Maintenance agreements are recorded documents which are attached to the property. Regulatory entities can only regulate elements which were in effect when the agreement was established. Conditions and requirements could have changed from the original. An example is a permitted subdivision having specific buffer limits which are less than the currently required limits.

- Consider a different title for this column to avoid confusion with other organizations called Lead Entities such as those working to develop local salmon habitat recovery strategies. This discussion has come full circle since the column was originally titled “Responsible Parties”. *Is there a better name for this column that will meet our needs?* Suggestions are welcome.

Education and Outreach Challenges

- Working with private landowners: Outreach is needed and this is a key area where Lead Entities (LE) can help. Some landowners haven’t made the connection between a decrease in trees or vegetation and an increase in water temperature. They also may not realize the impacts to fish habitat.
- We need to promote and encourage voluntary restoration activities.
- The TCD doesn’t have any regulatory authority to get private landowners to make changes.
- Regulatory agencies are limited to work within their legal responsibility. For example, permit requirements.
- *Are there existing communication methods we can use?* Examples include: available information about the best types of vegetation located near surface waters; or buffer requirements within areas covered under the Critical Areas Ordinances (CAOs).

Other Challenges

- In areas with CAOs, once a permit is issued nothing more generally happens unless there is a related compliant.
- There are many places which have buffer requirements preceding a CAO.
- We need to acknowledge there are some areas where improvements cannot be made and state why.
- Funding to provide shading to help salmon recovery has been underfunded in this watershed.
- It would be helpful to identify where the highest impacts can occur with specific implementation actions. This will help the LE to prioritize staff work for the greatest environmental benefit. Perhaps the LE could provide incentives such as tax relief for planning, adding, or maintaining canopy.
- Neighborhood groups such as homeowner associations can get into sensitive issues such as how property owners have encroached in buffer zones. Sometimes buffer zones are owned by water systems with the intent to keep vegetation in place.
- Culture shift: Our society’s vision of what a good property looks like has changed or is changing. It is more common now to see less open space and more vegetation. We have to remember not everyone appreciates or likes this shift and are resistant to the change.

General Comments

- Change “Actions Needed” column title to “Potential Actions Needed”.
- Add Ecology as the Lead Entity for all actions related to the Industrial Stormwater and Sand and Gravel General Permits.
- Include LA (load allocations) and WLA (wasteload allocations) to the Fine Sediments table glossary.
- Weyerhaeuser property boundaries: Confirm these and update the tables as needed.
- Actions Needed columns: Take another look at the actions and keep only those which are truly actions. For example, if the current riparian condition is satisfactory, then we do not need to include “maintain current riparian condition” as an action.
- Crosswalks: To avoid confusion, use letters instead of numbers for either the Potential Sources or Implementation Action Needed columns.

- Delete “shoreline” from Items 3 & 4 on the Percival Creek and Black Lake Ditch Table crosswalk.
- Review the sources included in the “Potential Sources & Comments” section of the Main stem Deschutes River Temperature table crosswalk. These are more descriptive and not really sources.

Percival Creek/Black Lake Ditch Temperature Table

- Prior activity by Thurston County drained Black Lake into this ditch. Some of the higher water temperature in the system is due to the lake. We need to identify ways to cool the water and how effective they are will depend on what actions we can get in place.
- The City of Olympia is limited to what they can do because of the railroad.
- The railroads have imminent domain and traditionally have not been a good partner when looking at fish recovery work. The Water Quality Improvement Report should identify which of the reaches are near the railroad tracks.
- A long-term goal could be to see the railroad decommissioned and riparian improvements implemented. As the tracks are abandoned they could provide a different function such as being part of the “Rails to Trails” program.
- The last item listed for Percival Creek at the mouth is the delta. The creek comes down the canyon. We don’t know if any of the identified implementation actions will actually have any benefit to this area. For example, planting a few trees at the mouth is meaningless when considering the total amount of water in Percival Cove.
- Trees cannot be planted near power lines.
- The City of Olympia is already working on vegetating areas in this part of the watershed.
- StreamTeam has also done a lot of work in this area.
- *Can we see improvement if we change or increase the sinuosity in some areas?* For example, near Black Lake Ditch.
- *Is there a significant groundwater influence in this area?* If so, this could generate cooler water added into the system. There is related seepage since the berm went in, resulting in more drainage coming in from Black Lake into the ditch.
- Beaver dams: We need to consider the impacts of these dams. When they back up the water, the residents along Black Lake are sometimes impacted by flooding. There is also the potential for problems with the neighboring septic systems.

Fine Sediments Table

- The WSDOT is looking for action items for areas where data shows a problem exists and that implementation actions will result in improvements.
- “Comments” column: Ecology should check the various permits to include the appropriate text which affects the TMDL. There may not be data to support language going beyond the permit. For example, the Construction Stormwater General Permits have turbidity requirements already in place. Text included in the draft table may conflict with the permit.
- Turbidity: This is a broad term incorporating more than just fine sediments.
- Sand and Gravel Operations: *Are they releasing gravel wash water?* These facilities are not always interested in complying with their permit conditions. Turbidity accelerates temperature sensitivity and could cause the water to heat up. Ecology provides the oversight for these permits.
- Add a “Lead Entity” column to this table.

- *How did Ecology arrive at the zero wasteload allocation discharge for existing facilities?* The Technical Report states that to have a healthy system we need to reduce sediments. There wasn't a lot of sediment data from discharges. Mindy Roberts may have used data provided by the Squaxin Island Tribe.
- The 2008 Draft Technical Study indicated the good habitat is less than 12% fine sediments in the gravel. Anything greater than 17% is considered poor habitat for salmonids.
- The whole situation is challenging because we may not know the precise areas where sediment is accumulating or distended and flowing downstream. We have to identify areas where we can achieve sediment reduction.
- A lot of the fine sediments resulted from landslides and riverbank erosion.
- Natural background conditions of sediments are high in this watershed. This is a naturally erosive system that is fairly young in geologic time.
- Other influences which have added sediments include past forest practices (related to roads), large landslides, and stormwater. There have been improvements and the goal is to return the watershed to natural levels.
- The technical study pointed out specific anthropogenic activities which could have an impact on this watershed. These include extensive all terrain vehicles (ATV) use near 1000 Rd. and observed domestic animals near the river or stream banks. Some of the sources are easier to identify and work on.
- We should consider some of the Ecology approved best management practices may only achieve a percentage of the improvement needed.
- Weyerhaeuser property: the Implementation Strategy is through the Road Abandonment and Maintenance Program (RMAP) process. Most of the work required for this area is done and the remaining parts are currently underway. The RMAP plan ends in 2016 with a possible 5-year extension for fish passage components. They have met the strategy as far as disconnecting road water from live water. To try and avoid landslides they are pulling back road shoulders and now build roads with excavators to reduce impact. This can reduce or eliminate loose sediments from discharging into the system.
- Lawrence and Offut Lakes: *What are realistic solutions to address both temperature and sediments for these areas? How are we going to meet the 30% target?* The TCD is trying to identify sediments sources and are looking for funding opportunities to concentrate on specific areas to address this issue.

Open Comment

Chris Stearns: Weyerhaeuser has the biggest challenge in the system related to sediments. We need to look elsewhere in the system for problems and solutions.

Next meeting

Date: Thursday, June 27, 2013
 Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
 Place: Dept. of Natural Resources and Correctional Industries building
 801 88th Ave. SE, Tumwater, WA

Draft agenda: Update on the Budd Inlet model; review sections of the draft Implementation Strategy