

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

**July 11, 2011**

**1:30 pm to 3:30 pm**

**Draft Notes**

**Attendees:**

Cory Baune – J-U-B Engineers	Les MacDonald – City of Moscow
Jennifer Boie – Palouse Conservation District	Cheryl Morgan – Resident/Landowner
Rob Buchert – City of Pullman	Gene Patterson – WSU
Killian Condon – Whitman Co Health	Jana Ratcliff – WSDOT (by phone)
Eric Coats – University of Idaho	Mary Rosen – Palouse Conservation District
Keith Douville - WSU	Drew Schuldt – Palouse Conservation District
Kevin Gardes – City of Pullman	Simon Smith – WorldThree
Matt Hammer – City of Colfax	Elaine Snouwaert – Ecology
Roland Line – Retired USDA/WSU	Randy Stevens – Palouse Conservation District

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The meeting began at 1:30 pm with round table introductions. Elaine reminded attendees that it had been 2 years since this group formally met and suggested that due to the time lag and new additions, the group should review the ground rules. Elaine suggested that Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) be added to the list of interests to be counted toward a quorum. WSDOT has a stormwater permit that requires certain actions because of the TMDL. The group agreed to this change and accepted the ground rules as previously drafted.

Elaine reviewed the history of the Fecal Coliform Bacteria TMDL. The study took place in 2006-2007. The Advisory Group met in 2008-2009. The TMDL was completed in the fall of 2009 and approved by EPA in January 2010. Based on the approval date, the Implementation Plan was supposed to be completed by January 2011 but was delayed due to workload issues. Despite the delayed report, implementation has been occurring in the watershed. Various organizations were invited to provide updates to the group.

Gene discussed stormwater activities at WSU. Starting July 25<sup>th</sup>, WSU will monitor their Benewah Street (WSU1) stormwater outfall. WSU is currently cleaning out catch basins in advance of the monitoring so the sediment in them is not a source of bacteria. They will sample the outfall and if it is above standards go up the line to sample other locations to try to determine the area it is coming from. If it meets standards they will continue to monitor to ensure outfall is in compliance. Their next priority will be based on the findings of Pullman's sampling of the Jack-in-the-Box outfall (MissSD120). If WSU is contributing more bacteria to this system than what the TMDL showed was coming from the College Ave Outfall (WSU2) they would continue sampling and source identification efforts there. If College Ave is higher that will be their next priority. WSU is in compliance with all requirements of their stormwater permit. All storm drains on campus will be labeled by mid-August. The Civil Engineering Program at WSU has applied to Ecology's Husseman Fund to develop an implementation plan for low impact development practices on campus and study the feasibility of implementing these practices and their potential success. This would be used as a demonstration for what can be done in Eastern Washington.

Rob discussed sampling the City of Pullman has initiated. The City is working with Simon of WorldThree to sample the Jack-in-the-Box outfall and search for potential illicit connections to the storm sewer. The study is also helping them learn about the stormwater system, especially this portion of it. Like WSU, Pullman is working on completing their operations and maintenance plan to meet the stormwater permit deadline in August. This plan will include cleaning all catch basins annually and cleaning other parts of the system as needed. The City has launched a Pet Waste Management Program. As part of this program they have applied to Ecology's Husseman Fund to purchase 75 pet waste stations for placement around the City. Soon they will launch an advertising campaign focused on proper pet waste management. The City has partnered with the Palouse CD to label storm drains.

Les reported that the City of Moscow is nearing being covered under a stormwater permit issued by EPA. The process started in 2007. In 2008, EPA determined that Moscow needed coverage under a permit. Moscow applied for the permit in October 2008. In May of this year a preliminary draft permit was being reviewed by Idaho Dept of Environmental Quality and Ecology. The public draft is expected late summer/fall of this year. The permit should be issued next year and Moscow is aiming to have the effective date be October 2012 to align with their fiscal year. The permit would be a 5 year permit. The draft permit closely follows the stormwater plans they submitted to EPA.

Matt reported on the City of Colfax's efforts to address the pigeons under the city bridges. Last fall he installed some pigeon deterrents. He cut styrofoam into blocks and placed them in the cavities where the pigeons roost and nest. Unfortunately all the cavities are not a uniform width so some fit looser than others and were lost during the winter. This summer he will install the rest but will cut them larger and then have to shave them down during installation. There are six bridges to address which will take about 200 blocks. Matt took samples the day before the meeting. Spring Flat Creek where it enters the city limits was 144 cfu/100mL. At the end of it where it enters the South Fork it was 12,000 cfu/100mL. He took a couple samples inbetween these locations and got results between 1700-6200 cfu/100mL. He still feels the pigeons are the main source because the largest continually flowing outfall under the bridges only had a count of 214cfu/100mL. There are several other storm drains found to have high bacteria counts during the summer 2009 investigation that will be investigated this year.

Killian introduced himself as a fairly new employee at the Whitman County Health Department. Two new staff (including Killian) started in January. The Department has been making improvements to their septic system permitting process and educational efforts. They have been updating their databases to better track locations and status of septic systems and permits. The application process has been updated to include more consistent follow-up on the final system installation. They are also working with the Assessor's Office to document on property deeds when there is an unpermitted septic system. They are improving their educational packets given to people with septic systems. They are also digitizing all their records and using GIS to map past and current systems. The Department is working with installers, pumpers, and system designers to ensure home owners understand their systems and proper maintenance and operation of the systems. These relationships help with collecting data, tracking and permitting septic systems. They are also forming a septic system committee.

Randy updated the group on the monitoring the Palouse CD has been doing on the South Fork Palouse River and some of the tributaries. They have 12 permanent sites that they monitor monthly. There have

been a few areas that have been consistently high for bacteria. One is a big slow moving reach near the former Stratton Dairy. A pipe draining a creek along Kirkendahl Road has also been consistently high. Ecology is working with a source in this drainage. The mouth of Staley Creek has also been high. There are several small animal operations in this drainage where they would like to do some projects. Paradise Creek continues to have high counts as it enters Washington from Idaho. In the Risbeck area there have been some high counts that may be related to cattle but they are currently working with that landowner. In the watershed they have planted about 6.5 miles of riparian buffers totaling about 35 acres with trees and shrubs. They are getting ready to send letters to landowners to advertise the availability of funding to try to get additional projects. Mary also told the group about a Husseman grant application they submitted to try to help a landowner replace a failing septic system.

Jana from WSDOT introduced herself to the group and explained WSDOT's interest in this TMDL. WSDOT has a stormwater NPDES permit that applies to Phase I and II stormwater areas. The permit is modified every 18 months to include new TMDLs and the SFPR bacteria TMDL was added during the last modification. Jana worked with Elaine to develop action items to address any bacteria sources from WSDOT roads or facilities. Many of the actions are related to actions required by their permit in Phase I and II areas including mapping outfalls to understand where they may have sources and looking for illicit discharges to their system. Their permit requires them to have all Phase I and II areas inventoried by 2014. One of the action items specific to the South Fork Palouse TMDL is to inspect the underside of the Hwy 195 bridge in Colfax annually. While their bridge isn't currently being used by pigeons they need to make sure pigeons don't start using it once they can no longer use Colfax's city bridges.

After the implementation updates the group reviewed the draft implementation plan. Elaine explained that this is the final paper requirement for the TMDL. The Plan follows a similar format to the TMDL and carries forward much of the same language including the load and wasteload allocations. She expanded on what the group included in the implementation strategy included with the TMDL and also worked with the individual organizations responsible for specific actions to develop the language.

Kevin suggested that it would be helpful to have a figure that shows the location of various sampling locations so when they are referenced in the text the reader can identify where it is. Elaine will include a figure and/or a table.

Jana asked that since WSDOT outfalls were not sampled as part of the study, if a line could be added that says that compliance with the action items presumes compliance with the TMDL. Elaine responded she could add some language along those lines but would also need to include that for monitoring purposing meeting the water quality standards at the outfall should be the target since ultimately the goal of the TMDL is bring the stream into compliance with the water quality standards. That has to be the fall back. We also discussed the shared jurisdiction between Pullman and WSDOT where state Highways become city streets. Elaine will make sure Jana and Rob get each other's contact information.

Kevin suggested that language on page 2 and 7 be clarified to explain when a location gets a wasteload allocation and when it gets a load allocation.

Les asked about the sentence on page 11 that discusses healthy riparian areas discouraging bird and wildlife congregation along streams; it seems this would actually encourage more animals to use this area. Elaine explained this primarily related to ducks and geese using these areas in large flocks. Vegetation forces animals to be more diverse in their distribution. She will clarify this language. [Post meeting Erik asked that a citation or better clarification be added to this paragraph].

In the section on Prioritizing Implementation, Gene suggested that the bullets be changed to numbers since they are listed in priority order.

Cheryl raised the concern regarding the safety of recreation in the river. On June 4<sup>th</sup> three college kids were inner tubing down the river by her house. She told them about the high bacteria levels and asked if they were aware of it. They were not and were concerned about it. Cheryl would like the river posted with signs about the safety concerns of recreating in the water. Elaine explained that without designated swimming beaches and public access areas it's difficult to find a logical location for signs where people accessing the river would see them. Most people access from private property. Elaine would consider issuing another press release to remind people about the problem. Elaine, Killian, and Rob will discuss options. Rob has been gathering information that will help determine what areas are public. Killian mentioned that there have been no reports of illness or rash related to being in the river. Keith also mentioned that he saw 3 youth using the river at Reaney Park.

Les, Gene, & Rob brought the groups attention to the language regarding infiltration on page 13. They suggested that while this might be the preferred method that there should be some language elaborating on the challenges of using infiltration in the Palouse soils. Gene discussed WSU's desire to create a Stormwater Center for Eastern Washington similar to the one for Western Washington on their Puyallup campus. Language about this center should be added to the Implementation Plan. Gene will provide language.

Cheryl confirmed that infiltration is not a viable option and this is evidenced by the detention ponds in the Hatley Creek drainage. They have standing water and do not treat for water quality. Kevin explained that most detention ponds are not meant to treat for water quality but instead are used for flow control. The purpose is to try to match the natural hydrology post development. Les also explained that many detention ponds are designed to have some standing water. Cheryl also suggested that people take a look at a report put together in 2000 on the Hatley Creek drainage.

On page 16 the date regarding when Colfax was going to have the investigation of three stormwater outfalls completed needs to be updated. This date changed due to delays in Ecology issuing their permit. This requirement is included in their WWTP NPDES permit as it may relate to a cross connection with the sewer collection system. Matt will check with Andy Rogers regarding the status of developing a stormwater ordinance.

Rob and Kevin will send Elaine updates to include for the City of Pullman's actions. Rob asked about the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) language in the City's section and if it was a requirement of the SEPA process. Elaine explained that SEPA determinations are supposed to use the best science available at the time of the decision to determine potential environmental impacts of a project. While

TMDLs aren't specifically mentioned in the SEPA checklist they are an important resource for land use decision makers to use. This SEPA language is included for the County and for WSU also.

Elaine will work with Killian to update the language for Whitman County Health to reflect the updates Killian gave at the beginning of the meeting. Health and the Palouse CD are going to discuss the possibility of applying for a septic system funding program from Ecology which may also be added to this section.

Elaine provided the group with a brief overview of the biological assessment conducted the previous year. EPA funded the study and a team from EPA, Ecology, and Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife oversaw the study design and results. Tetra Tech was hired to conduct a literature survey to determine historical aquatic life uses and conduct an in-stream survey to determine what species are currently using the system. The results show that the system most likely supported a fishery warmer than salmonid spawning, rearing, and migration. There was only one indication that trout used the stream in pre-European times. Trout have been stocked and successfully reproduced but there isn't evidence they were in the system naturally. Ecology is working with EPA on a possible use change. We should be able to remove the salmonid spawning, rearing, and migration use but the difficult part will be determining the highest aquatic life use that should be put in its place. All nonpoint actions such as establishing healthy riparian areas will still need to be put in place. The use change will not change what needs to occur for nonpoint; it will only clarify what numeric levels should be attainable and the target in the stream. This is the first effort of this kind for Washington so it will be a learning experience and not an easy one. The use change and TMDL development will likely occur concurrently as the modeling results and what's attainable will be necessary to develop the uses.

Advisory group members will send comments and edits on the Implementation Plan to Elaine. We will work by email and determine if additional meetings on the bacteria TMDL are needed. The majority of future meetings will focus on the temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH TMDL and use change.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm