South Fork Palouse River TMDL
Water Quality Advisory Group Meeting
October 8, 2008
9:00 am to 11:00 pm
Draft Notes

Attendees:

Rob Buchert – City of Pullman
Jim Carroll – Ecology
Kevin Gardes – City of Pullman
Matt Greg – Univ. of Idaho
Matt Hammer – City of Colfax
Drew Hawley – Palouse CD
Mike Leonas – WSU
Roland Line
Les MacDonald – City of Moscow
Cheryl Morgan
Marty O'Malley – WSU
Gene Patterson - WSU
Mary Rosen – Palouse CD
Janet Schmidt – WSU Extension
Elaine Snouwaert – Ecology

The meeting began at 9:05 am with round table introductions. The group reviewed and approved the September meetings as written.

The meeting was opened for announcements. Several members commented about the quality of the Palouse Basin Summit held the previous day. The presentations were great and they highlighted the cooperative efforts to address water quantity issues. Several politicians were also present and addressed local issues.

Elaine announced that Ecology's Water Quality Program is going through its annual process of looking for new study projects to recommend to the Environmental Assessment Program. Elaine asked the group if they had any recommendations for studies that could benefit our TMDL effort. Cheryl suggested that she would like to know if the detention ponds above Hatley Creek are providing adequate stormwater control. The group discussed that a storm related study like this would be difficult for Ecology because of the difficulty of predicting storms and the need to deploy field staff from Spokane. It was suggested that a local storm chaser team might be a better option. Ecology could provide training to the team.

Elaine announced that Ecology's Centennial and 319 Grant Funding Cycle is currently open. Grant applications are due by October 31st in the Lacey office. Kevin asked if a DNA bacterial source tracking study would be eligible for these grants. Elaine explained that because this type of research is still considered experimental that there are certain requirements that have to be met to qualify for funding eligibility. Typically Ecology recommends, intensifying traditional monitoring to isolate where the bacteria may be coming from and implementing actions to control bacterial sources prior to any microbial tracking methods. Elaine encouraged Kevin to call her and they could look at the eligibility requirements and discuss possibilities.

Jim presented some introductory information on addressing stormwater in TMDLs. Stormwater can be difficult to analyze because of high variability of stormwater characteristics, difficulty in catching a storm, and isolating the effects of stormwater. Ecology has been working on TMDLs since early 1990's

but early on stormwater was only included as part of the nonpoint source run-off. However, in 2002 EPA sent a letter to the states indicating that TMDLs would need to start including wasteload allocations (WLAs) for all stormwater sources covered under a NPDES permit. These WLAs can be given as a categorical WLA to multiple outfalls rather than assigned them to individual outfalls. The numeric limit can be expressed in the form of BMPs needed to reduce the pollutants of concern. In the bacteria TMDL WLAs will need to be included for the city of Pullman and WSU.

Jim reviewed the Pullman Stormwater Pilot Study conducted as part of the pesticides and PCB TMDL for the Palouse River. This study was conducted 2005-2006. Jim asked the study lead to include some bacteria sampling in anticipation of the upcoming bacteria TMDL. Three stormwater outfalls were sampled during 3 storm events. During each sampling event, each outfall was sampled in the morning and in the afternoon. A storm was defined as a minimum of 0.1 inches of rainfall in a 24-hour period preceded by no more than a trace in the previous 24 hours. The three stormwater outfalls sampled were the Stadium Way outfall, the College Street outfall, and the Benewah Street outfall, which correspond to the TMDL monitoring sites MissSD120, SFPRWSU2, and SFPRWSU1, respectively. The geometric means of these three sites ranged from 569 to 1378 cfu/100mL.

As part of the TMDL sampling Ecology also caught a storm on May 2, 2007 that fit the same definition of a storm. The data from that sampling event combined with the data from the pilot study show that the bacteria needs to be reduced between 93-96% for the three stormwater sites that were sampled in all 4 storms (8 samples total). Jim showed comparisons of these 3 sites during the dry season, the wet season and the storm events.

The group then had an opportunity to discuss and ask questions about any of the data presented. We discussed how bacterial load allocations will be made. The point sources will be given a wasteload allocation to meet the concentration at the end of the effluent pipe. The load allocations will be expressed as the percent reduction necessary to reach the water quality standards. The goal of the TMDL will be meeting the water quality standards, not a specific load or a certain percent reduction. The percent reductions give us estimates of how big of a problem there is that needs to be corrected at various locations. It helps us prioritize implementation actions. Each site will not need to meet the percent reduction assigned if reductions upstream bring it into compliance with the standards. Much of the implementation will rely on the best management practices.

Elaine quickly reviewed what needs to be included in the TMDL report. Typically an implementation strategy is included in the report which is then followed up with the development of an implementation plan which expands on the strategy. There is the possibility of skipping the strategy and go immediately into developing the plan. The group would consider these options and they would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting. No decision was made.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.