MEETING SUMMARY

Spokane River TMDL Collaboration

Steering Workgroup Meeting

October 27, 2005

Attendees

Dale Arnold
Jim Bellatty
Tim Connor (as observer)
Dick Denenny
Sid Fredrickson
Wayne Frost
Jack Lynch
Todd Meilke
Dave Peeler
Bruce Rawls

Bill Ross
Ryan Orth
Mike Sharar
John Spencer

The Steering Workgroup held a meeting on October 27 to discuss the following agenda:

1. Discuss Monitoring Workgroup Meeting

2. Discuss Scenario Development

3. Discuss Collaboration Next Steps after Full Group Consideration of Scenarios

1. Discussion of Monitoring Workgroup Meeting

Bill Ross and Mike Sharar reported on the proceedings of the October 18 Monitoring Workgroup meeting. All members were all available to participate in the meeting that lasted approximately two and a half hours. The Monitoring Workgroup began their discussions by focusing on state-wide monitoring program models and data-gathering efforts in the region and discussed the potential for additional stations and monitoring parameters. The Workgroup also discussed and agreed that special studies may be necessary at various points in time to assess the sensitivity of the TMDL model. Following a potential TMDL Implementation Plan, effectiveness monitoring could provide feedback on the progress of specific non-point source controls.

The Monitoring Workgroup discussed the overall management and cost of a Monitoring Program. The Workgroup agreed that a Monitoring Program should provide a consistent approach to data-gathering and reporting, include other quality assurance and quality control measures, and recruit a skilled individual to manage these processes. The Workgroup described a potential governance

structure for a long-term Monitoring Program consisting of an advisory group that meets on a regular basis with some connection to the objectives of the TMDL, perhaps interacting with any governance structure resulting from a TMDL Implementation Plan. In terms of cost, the Workgroup suggested framing cost estimates for a Monitoring Program in terms of per sample, per site and gave an initial rough estimate of $250,000/year for a robust program. It is unknown at this time how much further this estimate could be refined. The timeframe for a Monitoring Program was not determined and will likely depend on the trends following actions resulting from a TMDL Implementation Plan. The Workgroup will meet again on November 14 and will have a draft outline of recommendations by the November 22 Full Group Meeting. The Workgroup may need to meet once more after the November Full Group meeting to complete its charge. Dale Arnold asked if the Monitoring Workgroup discussed whether a program would include other elements beyond dissolved oxygen. The Workgroup will primarily focus their monitoring recommendations to address dissolved oxygen; however, the Workgroup did mention the potential cost-effectiveness of coupling these efforts to the need to measure and understand other water quality elements.

2. Discussion of Scenario Development

The recent cancellation of the October 28 Full Group meeting was in consultation with Full Group Co-chairs and a decision was made to provide additional time for scenario development. The group of dischargers developing a scenario had three particular reasons driving their request for additional time, including a need to ensure that all discussions around the various scenario elements had come to fruition, to reach out to broader set of elected peers to answer their questions, and to address the open question of how to establish an appropriate performance target of technology.

John Spencer described that CH2M Hill and HDR sent staff to obtain data runs based on monitoring and reporting from nine exemplary plants identified by the Technology Workgroup's facility survey. The teams gathered information on each plant's NPEDS permit limit, total flows, quality of secondary treatment before tertiary treatment, and effluent quality. The engineering teams then performed a statistical analysis on this information to determine the average 95th percentile, the 5th percentile, and the seasonal average. The analysis revealed inconsistency amongst the facilities' data. One plant in NY was reporting effluent phosphorous levels of approximately 10 µg/L, however it was found that reporting samples may have been timed to optimize readings. In another case, a treatment plant in Alexandria, VA was shown to perform in the in 30-40 µg/L range, but the data was off by order of magnitude. Other exemplary plants from the survey, especially the larger plants, were found to be performing in the 100+ µg/L range. The Rock Creek treatment plant was performing at 60 µg/L, but is now discharging effluent near 80 µg/L, due to a higher permit limit. The Upper Occoquan plant is a water treatment plant, subject to different variables than a wastewater treatment facility. Overall, the additional analysis performed by CH2M Hill and HDR show a significant range in facility performance. Under these circumstances, the engineering community is challenged with recommending a specific technology performance number.

Dave Peeler asked how effluent limits appeared to relate to permit limits. Mr. Spencer replied that there was a clear correlation showing that permit limits were driving the performance of these surveyed facilities. Bruce Rawls commented that open questions remain as to how the technology pilots will apply to actual flows. Dale Arnold reported that the City of Spokane does have raw data on their technology pilots, but that this will need to be reviewed by engineers before any verified findings are released.

The Steering Workgroup discussed the need to describe this more detailed information on the targeted facilities with the Full Group on November 22. Todd Mielke suggested that the dischargers brief the

Technology Workgroup on these most recent developments. The Steering Workgroup agreed that the Technology Workgroup is not in a position to make policy decisions about the technology performance number, and therefore will not ask the Technology Workgroup to resolve this discrepancy before the next Full Group meeting. Scenario development will continue with the extended deadline of November 15.

Bill Ross anticipated that it would be useful for people to share this information as the scenarios are being developed. During their October 19 discussion of scenarios, the Sierra Club raised a question of how to develop a technology performance number that will translate to the design and construction of treatment plants. Bill Ross suggested that a conversation between the Sierra Club and the group of dischargers would bring better understanding to the challenge in selecting a technology performance number at this time, given the current variables at play. John Spencer, Dale Arnold, Dave Peeler, Jim Bellatty, and Mike Sharar will meet with Sierra Club members, along with Bill Ross, on October 28 to discuss the notion of this issue.

3. Discussion of Collaboration Next Steps after Full Group Consideration of Scenarios

As, questions arise around the question of technology performance and other elements of the scenarios submitted for consideration on November 22, the Full Group will provide direction to existing Workgroups, other small groups, or individuals for the weeks leading to the December 16 Full Group meeting, as appropriate. The process to reaching a conclusion and an agreeable TMDL Implementation Plan after scenarios are considered by the Full Group will involve Ecology expressing its view of the right mix of phosphorous reduction elements and a confidence that adjustments to cover any variability in technology (and therefore the delta) may be achieved. Commonality in the scenarios will provide Ecology the opportunity to better describe what mix of elements could provide reasonable assurance. At this point, the implementation would enter into a process path for decisions around technology and could start the process of implementing other actions around non-point source control, conservation, re-use, etc. The form of the agreement is not clear at this point, may not be one that all Full Group members are required to sign.

Jack Lynch asked how Ecology would include non-point source, re-use, and conservations element into permits and the strategy for the implementation and incorporation into the issue of total loading. Dave Peeler replied that he could not answer this question at this time. Ecology has begun this discussion with their attorneys and is thinking that they could have some form of agreement that would be referenced in the permit, rather than these details in the permit itself. Ecology understands the need to have a permit that states what a discharger can do, but that there is a tradeoff dependent upon what actions under these other elements each discharger would take.

Before closing, Bill Ross reiterated the Collaboration principle of avoiding characterizing or judging the motivations of others.

The meeting concluded at approximately 6:00 P.M.