

**Spokane River DO TMDL Advisory Group Meeting
Minutes
September 20, 2016**

In Attendance: Jim Ross, WDOE; Ben Brattebo, Spokane County; John Beacham, Post Falls; Adriane Borgias, WDOE; Tome Herron, IDEQ; Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe of Indians; Adrienne Pearson, City of Spokane; Dave Moss, Spokane County; Pat Hallinan, WDOE; Walt Edelen, Spokane Conservation District; Charlie Kessler, Stevens County Conservation District; Lisa Dally Wilson, Dally Environmental; Mike Coster, City of Spokane; Dave Knight, WDOE; Jerry White, Spokane Riverkeeper; Tom Agnew, Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District; Bud Leber, Kaiser; Jeff Donovan, City of Spokane; Jeremy Jenkins, Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District; Meghan Lunney, Avista; Karin Baldwin, WDOE, Doug Krapas, Inland Empire Paper.

Phone: Paul Pickett, WDOE; Amanda Parrish, Lands Council

Spokane River Forum Staff: Andy Dunau, Cami Haveman

Welcome and Introductions

Andy Dunau welcomed participants to the meeting, each of whom introduced themselves.

Materials handed out can be found on spokaneriver.net/dotmdl web site.

Hangman Creek Watershed Video: Washington Department of Ecology provided the Spokane River Forum a grant to produce a ten-minute video to increase public awareness of the need and efforts to address nonpoint source pollution in Hangman Creek. Andy thanked Riverkeeper, the Spokane Conservation District, Lands Council and others for helping develop the video, which is online at www.spokaneriver.net/hangman. It will be shown and promoted with various groups and stakeholders interested in the subject.

The video was well received, with the following specific comments and suggestions:

-) Advisory group members should encourage its distribution.
-) Riverkeeper litigation with EPA regarding Hangman TMDL continues to be in settlement discussions.
-) Jerry encouraged people to have their voices heard in two state efforts: the Agriculture and Water Quality Advisory Committee, which is being chaired by Ecology and Farm Bureau; and the Ecology process to develop water quality guidance that identifies (BMPs) to support compliance with state water quality standards.
-) Ask Channel 5 (city cable channel) to air the video.
-) Walt explained that Spokane Conservation District is working on updating their PFC (proper functioning condition) report for Hangman and can share at next meeting. In response to a question, Jerry and Walt indicated a majority of Hangman Creek was in need of restoration support.
-) Walt also commented on erosion, sediment loading and other concerns stemming from the recent Rock Creek area fire.

NPDES Permit Update

Ecology provided a schedule and status information as part of a PowerPoint that is available in the meeting materials posted on DO TMDL web site.

For Liberty Lake, Kaiser and City of Spokane, the public comment period ended Sept. 13, 2016. Staff are working on responding to comments, which will be memorialized in release of a fact sheet. An example of a comment is the proposed permit limits for one discharger are more restrictive than the TMDL waste load allocation due to actual performance being achieved.

For Spokane County and Inland Empire Paper, the factual review is in process and Ecology is hoping the public comment period starts on, or shortly after, October 1st. A public hearing and open house will be announced as part of this process.

The goal is to complete all permits by the end of 2016. Dave Knight also confirmed that Ellie Key is transferring to the Lacey office and Ecology is anticipating she will continue working to re-issue the permits.

Biennial Report

Karin presented information on the 2015-16 Biennial Report and the group discussed the content and process at length. A PowerPoint presentation supporting this conversation is also part of Ecology PowerPoint posted on DO TMDL web site.

Discussion included:

-) The general timeframe that Karin will begin gathering data is January 2016. She hopes to have a draft report for review in the June, 2017 timeframe.
-) Monitoring, Progress Report and Future Outlook parts of the outline are of most interest for input.
-) Monitoring will include updates to the previous report and consider new data sources. Examples of data include Lake Spokane ground water monitoring, Idaho discharger surface water data, 2015 groundwater monitoring, Spokane Conservation District ground water monitoring in Hangman and West Plains, Avista Lake Spokane Water monitoring, Riverkeeper citizen monitoring, additional information for the Little Spokane, and EAP monitoring.
-) The monitoring work group will be reconvened November 8th to continue the discussion.
-) Specific to nonpoint sources, effectiveness monitoring is an on-going discussion.
-) Ecology needs to determine who is available to help with data analysis.
-) There was a suggestion to use a summary of the Progress Report section to create an Executive Summary for the report.

10 Year Assessment

Karin and Dave updated the schedule for the 10-year assessment. Development of the 10-year assessment is not expected to begin before 2021. This reflects the need to a) provide sufficient time for AKART technologies in permits to be optimized and, 2) Lake Spokane to

environmentally react to decreases in point and non-point sources. As a practical matter, therefore, any information gained from the 10-year assessment would be available for use during the 2026 NPDES permit re-issuance. This is an adjustment from the TMDL, which stated the 10-year assessment would be performed before the second round of permits would be re-issued.

Point source dischargers expressed the position that if they are meeting their permit limit, the 10-year assessment should not be used in a manner that could result in stricter waste load allocations. Per discussion at previous meetings, there is still uncertainty about use of the model, empirical data and other options to support the 10-year assessment. Ecology indicated that the literature search being conducted by Paul Pickett will help move this conversation forward. Ecology hopes to share the scope of work for the literature review with the group before the end of the year.

Discussion also focused on trying to assure that data being collected and used for the biennial reports reflects data that may also be used to support the 10-year assessment.

USGS Groundwater Study

The USGS is getting ready to collect the first groundwater samples for their study on the Stevens County side of Lake Spokane. The USGS will be collecting groundwater samples quarterly for two years and measuring the amount of flux (or flow) to determine the amount of nutrients entering the lake from groundwater. This is an expansion from an earlier study.

The USGS would like to sample the Spokane County side of the lake as well. They are seeking up to \$40,000 to sample during the first year (from October-December 2016 through April-June 2017). The Spokane Conservation District is applying for funding that could pay for the second year. In other words, funding for sample collection beginning July-September 2017 through April-June 2018 could potentially come from a grant being proposed by the Spokane Conservation District. This funding would support sampling 30 sites on a quarterly basis. The sample locations have not been identified. These additional sites are recommended by the USGS because they would:

-) Enable a better interpretation of groundwater nutrient inputs to the lake.
-) Allow comparisons and contrasts with the Stevens County side of the lake (same flow and weather conditions that could affect groundwater levels).
-) Result in greater public acceptance because one community is not targeted.
-) Leverage funding already in place which keeps costs for additional sites lower, so the USGS is able to do more research for the money.

Non-point Source Updates

Walt Edelen gave an update on RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is targeting \$7.7 million of their funds to the application of conservation practices across nearly 6,000 square miles in the greater Spokane Watershed between Washington State and Idaho. A group of partners have committed to matching the NRCS' contribution, one-for-one.

Projects in Hangman Creek and Little Spokane will reduce nonpoint source pollution contributions to the Spokane River. The guidelines and application for proposals are close to completion, and interest from possible recipients is very strong. Sign-ups for the first of four rounds of funding is expected to occur in the November/December timeframe. As part of this funding, the SCD is also hiring a riparian buffer coordinator to work with landowners to successfully implement projects.

A particularly innovative feature of the RCPP program is the “commodity buffer,” which compensates farmers for land they agree not to farm in a riparian buffer area. The compensation would be more equivalent to the amount of money the landowner would receive if the buffer contained a crop. This part of the program is being supported by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Andy Dunau gave an update on the nonpoint source mapping and data base project, which the Forum is doing as a subcontract to a 319 grant received by SCD. The project scope has expanded to include not only mapping and tracking of nonpoint projects related to the DO TMDL, but the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) and RCPP. All require tracking and the ability to summarize information, e.g.—total feet of riparian restoration across federal, state, local and private projects.

The challenge is that over the years different funding programs have reported implementation in different ways. For example, in the past the focal point was demonstrating a project was installed, rather than how it relates to the sum total of activity and/or nonpoint source reduction in a watershed or river reach. As such, the first major task is to “normalize” the data as much as possible to be able to report results across projects. To the greatest extent possible, information for projects previously identified will be updated. Going forward, tracking and reporting efforts will be much more seamless.

Andy stressed that while this project will make a critical contribution to identifying level and location of efforts, it is not the same thing as effectiveness monitoring, e.g.—understanding the specific contribution one or more projects makes to water quality at the confluence of the Spokane River and Hangman Creek. Andy also noted that the challenges regarding tracking and effectiveness monitoring are state-wide and national.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

Due to time constraints, the CEQUAL Q & A and zinc inhibition agenda items were differed to the next meeting.

The next DO TMDL Advisory Group meeting will be December 6, 10:00 a.m., Spokane County Water Resources Center.