Portneuf Watershed Advisory Group
July 17, 2007

Group Memory

Snake River Conference Room, Pocatello Regional Office
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Pocatello Regional Office hosted a meeting on Tuesday, July 17, 2007 in the Snake River Conference Room at the Regional Office located at 444 Hospital Way, Suite 300 in Pocatello, Idaho.

Meeting participants included the following voting members of the Portneuf Watershed Advisory Group: Kim Gower (JR Simplot Company), Jon Herrick (alternate, City of Pocatello), Brad Higginson (Caribou-Targhee National Forest), M. Keene Hueftle (Southeast Idaho Environmental Network), Jim Mende (Idaho Fish and Game), John Sigler (City of Pocatello), Bud Smalley (alternate, Southeast Idaho Flyfishers), and Candon Tanaka (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes).

The following non-voting members were also in attendance: Greg Mladenka (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality [DEQ]), Andrew Ray (DEQ), and Sue Skinner (US Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]).

Visitors included: Doug Anderson (Hoku Materials) and Roger Turner.

Members who were absent from the meeting included: Larry Ghan (alternate, Bannock County Commission), Wilder Hatch (Caribou County Soil Conservation District), Kevin Koester (Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District), Hannah Sanger (Portneuf Greenway Foundation), Roger Thompson (Southeast Idaho Flyfishers), Elliot Traher (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Louis Wasniewski (alternate, Caribou-Targhee National Forest), and Lin Whitworth (Bannock County Commission).

Wendy Green Lowe of P2 Solutions facilitated the discussion. This "group memory" documents discussion and decisions that occurred.

Review and Approval of Previous Group Memory

The group discussed the draft group memory from the June meeting. No one had an opportunity to review the draft before the meeting and it was decided that the group will consider approval of the group memory at its next meeting. It was further agreed that **Andy Ray** will include the URL for the draft group memory with all email messages about upcoming meetings. This will help people review the group memory documents before attending the meetings.

Revisit Discussion of Pollutants for Inclusion in the Revised TMDL

Andy Ray explained that sediment, nutrients, bacteria/pathogens, and oil and grease were covered in the 2001 TMDL and will be addressed again in the revised TMDL. Discussion at the last meeting had focused mostly on sediments and nutrients; bacteria/pathogens and oil and grease were not discussed at length. DEQ personnel want to make sure everyone understands what will be covered and what will not, along with the rationale.

It was also explained that temperature and dissolved oxygen (DO) will not be covered in any detail in the revised TMDL because - with the exception of Hawkins Reservoir (listed for DO) - these impairments are not included on the existing 303(d) and 305(b) listings of pollutants within the watershed. DEQ monitoring data show that standards for dissolved oxygen and temperature are exceeded on a regular basis in the Portneuf subbasin. **Andy Ray** explained that for this reason, DEQ will recommend that they be included as the 303(d) list is updated and this will require that subsequent TMDL revisions address these impairments.

Regarding oil and grease, it was pointed out that there is not much data available. Sampling is done quarterly and after big rain events. Sampling in the first flush after a rain event (one to six hours after the

beginning of runoff) best categorizes the event mean concentration of the storm (see Khan et al. 2006). Recent sampling following a rain event resulted in two samples exceeding the target established in the Portneuf TMDL for oil and grease. Samples collected during base flow resulted in no detections of oil and grease in excess of the target, however. **Andy Ray** stated that DEQ will sample additional upstream reaches because oil and grease were detected upstream of Pocatello in the rain event sample.

Idaho State University (via the Portneuf River Monitoring Project) is also monitoring for dissolved carbon – which has been shown to correlate with oil and grease (Khan et al. 2006).

There are no numerical standards for oil and grease. The result is that there is no regulatory requirement for reducing oil and grease in water. The Clean Water Act mentions sheen; sheens are not commonly seen on the Portneuf River. There is no oil and grease load reduction requirement in the current TMDL.

Questions were asked about mercury, arsenic, and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs). It was explained that mercury pollution may be covered in the next TMDL for American Falls Reservoir following listing on the 303d list. **Greg Mladenka** said that he would review available data regarding arsenic and PCBs in the watershed.

Andy Ray believes that there is room for improved coordination among all parties involved in monitoring of the various pollutants discussed.

The **Watershed Advisory Group** members discussed the possibility of making a formal recommendation to DEQ regarding other pollutants. It was agreed that there are three categories of pollutants not already addressed in the TMDL for the Portneuf Watershed:

- Those pollutants for which there is adequate data to demonstrate that one or more reach within the watershed is/are not meeting standards, which include dissolved oxygen, temperature, and possibly mercury
- Arsenic and PCBs – for which Greg Mladenka believes some information exists
- Other pollutants for which there is little or no information for the Portneuf subbasin (including personal care products, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals).

The Watershed Advisory Group requested additional information regarding the above categories of pollutants. It was agreed that the Watershed Advisory Group will consider additional information and discuss this subject again. It is expected that the Watershed Advisory Group will attempt to reach consensus on advice to provide to DEQ regarding how these other pollutants should be addressed, perhaps as early as the September meeting.

It was pointed out that Union Pacific Railroad may have additional information regarding pollutants that would be of interest.

Regarding bacteria/pathogens, **Andy Ray** explained that bacteria loading often occurs by direct loading from livestock and wildlife, indirect loading from runoff that captures livestock and wildlife feces, failed septic system discharges, and pet waste. Because cattle grazing is often visible in the vicinity of undeveloped tributaries and mainstem reaches, it is thought that livestock contribute disproportionately to the fecal bacterial load on heavily grazed lands. When fecal bacterial exceeds standards, impairment of beneficial uses results, particularly in contact recreation. *Escherichia coli (*commonly known as *E. coli)* is the indicator used by the State of Idaho in assessing fecal material. **Andy Ray** explained that bacterial/pathogenic pollution is estimated using a geometric mean sampling technique. (DEQ will post information on the project website regarding the monitoring results in the Portneuf watershed for *E. coli*.)

It was noted that Best Management Practices (BMPs) adopted by producers can be very effective at reducing bacterial loading. Examples include keeping cows out of/away from tributaries and placing berms between developments and water bodies. These simple measures can help keep bacteria levels lower.

List of Impaired Mainstem Reaches

Andy Ray explained that the 1994 and 1998 303(d) lists of impaired water bodies in the state of Idaho included 27 stream segments along the mainstem of the Portneuf River, its 16 tributaries, and Hawkins Reservoir. All of those segments had sediment as a pollutant of concern. Approximately one-half of those segments listed nutrients as a pollutant as well. The mainstem is also listed for bacteria, flow alteration, and oil and grease. Hawkins Reservoir is listed for dissolved oxygen.

Accordingly, the TMDL for the Portneuf River Subbasin addressed:

- Fecal coliform
- Oil and grease
- Suspended sediment
- Total inorganic nitrogen
- Total phosphorus

Since 2002, the State of Idaho has been preparing an integrated report in compliance with the Clear Water Act. This integrated report addresses 303(d) stream segments as well as 305(d) segments. Section 305 requires classifying all water bodies in four categories, including:

1. not assessed
2. achieving beneficial use
3. not achieving beneficial use, but not addressed by a TMDL, and
4. those for which a TMDL has been written.

One key distinction of the Integrated Report is that some stream segments now overlap; stream segments or reaches are now identified by unique identifiers used during stream assessments. However, assessment units are at times separated at land use or ownership boundaries rather that by hydrologic characteristics. In addition, small streams (first and second order) are often lumped to include arbitrarily clustered tributaries in similar geographic areas.

The Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program has demonstrated that several segments are supporting their beneficial use. DEQ expects to recommend to the EPA that those segments be taken off the 303(d) list.

Review of DEQ's List of Tributaries with Monitoring Information

Andy Ray asked all Watershed Advisory Group members to provide monitoring data (for tributaries to the Portneuf watershed) to DEQ (if they have not already done so). It was pointed out that Brad Higginson (Forest Service) has already provided data on four tributaries, including Walker, Cherry, Birch, and South Fork Hawkins creeks.

Implementation Plans

A question was asked regarding who (which agencies) must prepare an Implementation Plan after the TMDL has been completed. The response was that all management agencies with management responsibilities for land and activities within the watershed are responsible for preparing an Implementation Plan. Examples include the U.S. Forest Service; Idaho Department of Agriculture; Idaho Transportation Department, the Cities of Pocatello, Lava Hot Springs, and Inkom, and J.R. Simplot Company. A question was raised regarding the BLM's role in the Watershed Advisory Group process. **Brad Higginson** will talk to Dan Kotansky (BLM's Idaho Falls District Hydrologist) and **Jim Mende** will mention the Watershed Advisory Group to Dave Paccioretty (BLM's Pocatello Field Office manager) to see if BLM would consider a more active role in the Watershed Advisory Group process.

Announcements

John Sigler requested that meetings start promptly at the announced time (7:00 p.m.) from now on.

Keene Hueftle announced that Channel 12 taped the June 20 Portneuf River symposium and is replaying that tape now. It is also available for purchase in VHS and DVD formats.

John Sigler announced that the City Creek drainage has been closed for the remainder of the summer to motorized use due to fire danger.

Jim Mende reported that the Portneuf Wildlife Management Area has been closed to motorized use due to fire danger.

Documents Relevant to the July 17, 2007 Meeting

Four documents were provided to participants during the meeting. All can be found on the project website located at:

http://www.deq.state.id.us/about/regions/portneuf_river_tribs_wag/index.cfm

The four documents are:

- Table 19. Water quality limited segments in the Portneuf River subbasin on the 303(d) list
- A table of pollutants for each segment in the Portneuf River Subbasin. List of streams sampled for the Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program, 2001 through 2006
- Table 4 Waterbodies in the Portneuf River subbasin on the 303(d) list
- A handout reviewing the 1994/1998 303(d) List and the 2002/2004 Integrated 303(d)/305(b) Report

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Portneuf Watershed Advisory Group will be at 7:00 p.m. on August 21, 2007 in the Snake River Conference Room at the Regional Offices located at 444 Hospital Way, Suite 300 in Pocatello, Idaho. The objectives for the meeting will include:

- Discuss pollutant targets for the mainstem Portneuf
- Discuss load allocation for the mainstem Portneuf

Next Steps

The following next steps will be completed:

1) Wendy Lowe will prepare the draft Group Memory for review and approval at the next meeting.
2) Andy Ray will post the draft Group Memory on the project website along with copies of handouts provided at the meeting.
3) Greg Mladenka will review water quality information collected by Union Pacific Railroad, U.S. Geologic Survey, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and report back to the WAG.

Wendy Lowe's contact information: (208) 523-6668 and wendy@p2-solution.com

References:

Khan, S., S. Lau, M. Kayhanian, and M. K. Stenstrom. 2006. Oil and grease measurement in highway runoff—sampling time and event mean concentrations. Journal of Environmental Engineering 132:415-422.