



April 5th, 2022 Meeting Notes

The meeting occurred at Meadows Valley Community Center from 11:00am to 3:00pm with a total of 29 attendees. Captured minutes are from group discussions and presentations.

Recordings of presentations are available on the [Little Salmon River Watershed Collaborative YouTube Channel](#) or on the [website](#) in the Meeting Agendas, Minutes & Presentations section.

Participants

Online

Cameron Carsley

Mike McConnell

Chase Cusack

Randall Annunziato

Chris Clark

Wendy Green

Clinton Daniel

Dani Terhaar

In Person

Darren Parker

Aaron Humpherys

David McIntyre

Darrell Clay

Emily Washburne

Gary S. Thompson

Johnna Sandow

Johanna Stangland

Kris Stone

Keisha Miller

Kyla Gardner

Linnea Hall

Lance Holloway

Randy Fox

Leigh Bailey

Rebecca Levandowski

Micki Eby

Viki Purdy

Mike Ackerman

Wes Keller

Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program in the Little Salmon River

Presentation from Emily Washburne, Water Quality Analyst with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ)

BURP- Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Program

- Flagship monitoring program designed to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act
- The goal is to assess streams of Idaho for their beneficial uses including:
 - Cold Water Aquatic Life Support, salmonid spawning support, primary and secondary recreation, drinking water, wildlife habitat, and more
- 2022 field sampling will start mid-June and end in mid to late September

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- Standard procedures are adopted to collect aquatic insects, conduct fish surveys, perform basic water chemistry analysis, and assess habitat condition

How is BURP Data used?

- Sites are scored based on three categories:
 - Macroinvertebrate Index (looking for specific cold water obligates, or species known to be sediment intolerant)
 - Fish Index
 - Habitat Index
- These three indexes provide a snapshot of the conditions over time in a particular stream.
- Scores are then compared to streams in ‘reference’ condition in different ecoregions (Plains/Valleys, Foothills, Mountains)
- All data are included in IDEQ’s Ambient Monitoring Program and reported out to internal and external stakeholders.
- Sites that do not meet standards in the assessment will have follow-up monitoring arranged to deduce causes.

Integrated Report

- A comprehensive analysis of Idaho’s surface water based on data collected between January 2016 through December 2020.
- Focuses on impaired waterways that IDEQ needs to make new Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for.

Integrated Report Format

- All state waters are placed in 1 of 5 different categories based on available water quality data, beneficial use (BU) standards, and types of impairment.
 - Category 1: Waters presume to be fully supporting all BUs
 - Category 2: Fully supporting some BUs
 - Category 3: Insufficient information
 - Category 4: Waters do not support one or more BU, but do not require a TMDL
 - Category 5: BUs not supported and TMDL needed

Little Salmon River Subbasin

- Split between two DEQ regions along Idaho – Adams county lines
- North portion is under the Lewiston regional office jurisdiction, Sarah Ansaloni
- South portion is under the Boise office which will handle the potential sites in this subbasin

Potential sites to be sampled in 2022:

- West Branch Goose Creek
 - Assessment units are divided by stream order and may be split into multiple sections.
 - Last samples in 2004 determined it to be a Category 4.
 - The aim is to sample streams every 5-8 years, so this stream is overdue.
- Mud Creek
 - Last samples in 2008 determined it to be a Category 2

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- Brundage Reservoir Tributaries
 - Last samples in 2006 determined it to be a Category 2
 - This site had scored highly for its fish habitat, deep varied pools, shade and little to no anthropogenic reach.
- Goose Creek – 1st and 2nd Order
 - Last samples in 2006 determined it to be a Category 2.
 - Good habitat and macroinvertebrate score but failed in fish habitat by finding a Brook Trout which is an invasive species that has colonized this reach.
 - The area will be re-scored to see if Brook Trout are the only indication of “poor” fish habitat in which case, it would be concluded that it is fully supporting.
- Sixmile Creek
 - Last samples in 2004 determined it to be a Category 2.
- Hazard Creek Tributaries
 - Any stream that is deemed perennial can be tested and counted for the whole tributary area.

Last samples in 2006 determined it to be a Category 2.
- Hard Creek
 - Last samples in 2008 determined it to be a Category 2.
 - High macroinvertebrate and habitat score, but the fish assessment was omitted because spawning salmonids were present
- Little Salmon River – Meadows Valley Tributaries
 - Considered unassessed due to inaccessibility or the sites were streams that are not perennial.

Potential contacts for access to Fourmile creek:

- Rolly Omerkaust
- Kelly Thomas and Karen Jay
- Deborah Campbell Trust

Linnea Hall has volunteered to reach out to these folks to see if they would allow access testing to happen from their property.

Overview of [Interactive Report Mapping Tool](#)

- This site will be updated as soon as the new report is released.
- Ability to check the current overall status of any assessed streams along with all past data from the stream or tributary.

Questions

Q: When you get a TMDL based on temperature, is that purely based on the macroinvertebrates, fish, and habitat measurements or is it also based on the water quality data?

A: The BURP is a rapid biological assessment that can give us an overall signal of impairment. If sites fail in an area, then we go in for extra monitoring to establish the cause of harm. We do accept external Tier 1 data collected by the Forest Service or United States Geologic Service.

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Q: Do you have permanent temperature loggers in some of these sites?

A: No, we do not have any permanent temperature loggers. We can go in to conduct follow up monitoring if needed or look for other Tier 1 data to fill in the gaps.

Q: Is agriculture a beneficial use you consider at Brundage Reservoir?

A: The Cold Water Aquatic Life assessment is only one of the things we monitor. Agricultural use is also seen as a beneficial use by DEQ. We're not assessing the reservoir itself, but only some tributaries. Low fish scores would not justify a failing score. All tributaries were fully supporting when we were able to collect data over 10 years ago. I suspect it will still be in good condition, but we just want to verify the current data. We expect it to still be in good condition from past scores.

Q: Do you consider other factors contributing to the results of the assessments? Goose Creek will probably see temperature changes from the removal of dead trees due to a bug kill.

A: After we conclude our assessment, it takes about eight months to receive the macroinvertebrate data. If a habitat is deemed impaired, we conduct follow up monitoring to determine the cause and whether or not a new TMDL is necessary.

Q: Do you need written permission from landowners and is there a form for that?

A: Yes, and yes. We require written consent and we do have a form that we give to the landowners.

Q: What other external data do you accept?

A: We require Tier 1 data. To meet that requirement, there are several specific conditions that need to be met. Government agencies with sampling and quality assurance protocols are considered Tier 1. Community scientists can also contribute data when specific training and protocols are in place.

2023 Agricultural Best Management Practices Grant Program

Presentation from Chase Cusack, Water Quality Analyst with IDEQ

Non-Point Source Funding at DEQ

- Federal 319 Programs
 - Annual grant opportunity for Non-Point Source pollution management.
The focus of the project needs to be improving water quality.
 - Examples: Agriculture, urban stormwater, transportation, forestry activities, mining, groundwater protection, wetland reconstruction, etc..
 - Application opens April 15th and closes July 15
 - 3- year implementation timeline
- State Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - Annually appropriated grant program for agricultural BMPs.

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- Focus must be reduction of pollutants and agriculturally-based BMPs
- Who qualifies?
 - Agricultural produces
 - Irrigation providers
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Funding goes towards groundwater protection and agricultural BMPs specifically.
- This funding is ideal for ready-to-implement projects.
- Opens March 14th and closes April 14th
- 18-month implementation timeline
- Guidelines for both federal and state grants:
 - Funds awarded cannot exceed \$250,000
 - 40% match required (minimum)
 - Process includes: Project Identification > Application and Project Budget Submittal > Project review and ranking by DEQ and Basin Advisory Group > If chosen, funding is dispersed the following year
 - Detailed project proposals addressing specific issues go a long way in the review process
 - See website for more information - www.deq.idaho.gov
 - Chase Cusack is available for application assistance or a site assessment. Reach out to LSRWC@redfishbluefishinc.com for Chase's contact information.

Water Quality Program for Agriculture funding from the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission

- Funds awarded for water improvement projects and agricultural BMPs
- Flexibility to be combined with other funding sources. Joe Peterson with Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission will be talking about the Water Quality Program for Agriculture at the Adams Soil & Water Conservation District meeting April 13th at 6:00pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please contact aswd@ctcweb.net for meeting details.

Questions

Q: I have done BMPs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) here in Meadows Valley. Are you working with NRCS or is this independent?

A: That is a great question to point out how many different funding sources are available for watershed projects. We work with NRCS but the funding you are describing is in a different pot than this source. The Water Quality Program through Idaho Soil and Water and Conservation Commission funding provides separate oversight and NRCS oversees their programs. Even if the funding is designated federal or state, the agency that oversees it has separate applications and monitoring.

Q: How does the 40% cost share work?

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A: In-kind cost sharing is an option, not only monetary contributions. There are some opportunities to use other grant funds to help match as well. We are here to help people figure out how financing would work for each particular project.

Q: What is the cost per foot for a four-wire fence? (It's minimum \$4 a foot but can go up to \$8 a foot which equates to \$20,000-\$40,000 per mile).

A: I do not have any estimates on cost. We're concluding a fencing project on the South end of the Cascade Reservoir which had a lot of partners and agencies that contributed to reducing the cost. I personally would like to see this funding going to areas that are not already utilizing it.

Comment:

Chris Clark used the 319 grants while working with the Idaho Department of Lands in Cascade. He highly recommends the program for its ease of use and project success.

IDEQ's Community Science Network

Presentation from Chase Cusak, Water Quality Analyst with IDEQ

Current State of Community Science

- Active Community Science (ComSci) data is collected throughout Idaho but cannot currently be utilized by DEQ due to lack of standardized testing protocols.
- The goal of this network is to train community science members on proper data collection protocols so DEQ can use it in reports.

Tiered Data System

- Only Tiers 1 & 2 can be used for assessments
- ComSci data is currently Tier 3 in Idaho, but could become Tier 1 with proper training and protocols

Values

To the Agency

- Fills data gaps and needs by increasing testing capabilities
- Enhances transparent interaction, trust, and respect from the public

To the Community

- Education and hands-on experience observing their environment
- Trust in government and science through action and participation

Network Hierarchy

State office

- In charge of database management, funding opportunities, and outreach

Regional Office

- Leads volunteer trainings, conducts sampling audits and controls project selection and design

Initial Focus

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- A major concern is looking for both short-term and long-term funding opportunities to initiate this project
- We want to develop a new data storage and management system as well

Purpose of the Network

1. Provide regional offices with tools necessary to create withstanding relationships with community scientists in their region
2. Fill data needs and gaps
3. Bridge communication and trust between government and the public on science for community science projects
4. Provide short-term and long-term funding
5. Unite community science with agencies across the state

The Little Salmon River Community Science Monitoring Pilot Project could be a great opportunity for this collaborative to engage in water quality testing and

Questions

Q: Are you encouraging people to go on private property?

A: No, we require permission as an agency. However, as a community you have better relationships and access to these waterways. Community science members also guide the information people want to know in their area.

Q: Landowners here may be uncomfortable with community members taking data. We believe biased people taking the data will report with bias as well.

A: Many other states implement community science programs. They are not looking to regulate at all, but instead get community members involved in the area they live. It's allowing them to review and analyze the data themselves and go from there. It is being used in many other states and has been happening in Idaho for a long time, but no protocols have been set for the data to be considered. This is another way for us to see what is happening without having the resources to go everywhere.

Q: What securities are implemented on the data when it is collected?

A: The data is owned by whoever collected it or the community science group. If the group chooses to submit to IDEQ, the information will become public. The quality controls would be implemented through this network where the data would be rigorously scrutinized before the data would become usable.

Comment: Dean has had the experience in the past of the NRCS publishing his name and the amount of money given for a watershed project. A third-party interest group took it and posted his personal information on their site making claims about environmental harm.

A: All things run through the state are supposed to be public and transparent. Some groups do go out of their way to find it and abuse that privilege. Ultimately, we hope that the direct effects of the program outweigh the negative aspects.

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Q: What types of incentives are there for participating?

A: There are no incentives, it is completely voluntary. Groups that are interested range in size and areas across the state. There is no pressure from the government to participate.

Q: How are you considering the possibility of padded data by special interest groups?

A: Unfortunately, padded data occurs already. Special interest groups typically go through other processes of hiring their own scientists to submit data, not the community science program. This program is in part response to that feedback by giving the ownership back to the citizens of the area to gather data and share with IDEQ. The quality assurance standards we are developing would scrutinize all data for validity.

Collaborative Work

- Feedback on LSRWC website
- Discussion of Collaborative purpose and objectives
- Individuals shared reasons for attending LSRWC meetings

Action Items

- Follow up with landowners regarding access to Fourmile Creek BURP sampling sites
- Improve website using feedback from this meeting
- Steering Committee- plan May meeting to include more time for dialogue and no presentations

Next meeting **May 10th, 2022, 7:00pm-9:00pm MST** at the Meadows Valley Community Center

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