

**Goose Creek Watershed Meeting Minutes  
February 27, 2020  
Century 21 BHJ Realty Conference Room**

Susan Holmes, SCCD  
Orrin Connell, SCCD  
Edith Heyward, SCCD  
Cory Medill, City  
Hanns Mercer, City

Tom Manolis, City  
Travis Cundy, WGF  
Clark McClung, DSA/Chamber  
Jackie Carbert, SCCD  
Laurie Bratten

Mike Watkins  
Roger Reinke  
Paul McCreery  
Donna Boyd

**Open and Introductions**

Susan Holmes called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and introductions were made. Sheridan Area Water Supply Updates was removed from the agenda as Dan Coughlin was unable to attend the meeting. Susan gave a brief introduction of the District's past and future efforts within the watershed.

**Load Reduction Priorities & Progress Review**

SCCD uses load duration curves and load estimates to relate bacteria to flow information and demonstrate how much bacteria levels need to be reduced in order to meet the standards. Load reduction requirements are calculated for each subwatershed for the most recent monitoring year. Maps depicting the load reduction category (Low, Medium, High) provide a visual representation of general changes in reduction requirements over time; however, the maps are not intended to be used to determine specific water quality trends within the watershed. There are too many variables and not enough data to accurately develop trends in the short-term. SCCD uses the maps when ranking projects; the load reduction category of the appropriate subwatershed is one of several ranking criteria used to determine whether a project is funded. As of 2018, all the mainstem subwatersheds were in the low or medium reduction category. Tributary subwatersheds were more variable, with the majority falling in the medium category, apart from Soldier Creek which was high and Jackson and Kruse Creek which were in the very high category.

The group reviewed the updated progress register. Progress registers document water quality improvement projects within the watershed to demonstrate progress that may not be reflected in water quality monitoring in the short term. The projects that are on the progress registers have primarily been those done through the SCCD office; however, the District has recently begun adding NRCS and other partner projects related to water quality. NRCS projects have been added through 2015, along with some more recent invasive grass treatments, and additional Russian Olive removal projects through the Sheridan Community Land Trust. To date, SCCD has assisted with approximately 92 projects within the watershed including septic replacements, corral, stockwater and fencing projects, irrigation improvements, diversion replacements, Russian Olive removal, invasive grass treatments, storm drain labeling, and bank/channel stabilization through structural work or willow planting. Projects completed by SCCD in 2019 include two septic system replacements (one on Big Goose and one on Little Goose), one corral run-off project and one streambank stabilization project on Little Goose, and one Russian Olive removal project on Swaim Draw. There are a couple pending livestock and stream stabilization projects on Big Goose, as well as some diversion rehabilitation projects on Little Goose and Jackson Creek. The SCCD offers willow planting services on stream banks to landowners free of charge.

On-going and completed milestones as part of the Goose Creek Watershed 2016-2020 TMDL Implementation Strategy have included the annual watershed meetings, progress register updates, and

annual watershed newsletters, which most recently focused on riparian buffers and cost-share assistance programs. The stormwater education campaign with the City was concluded this last year and seemed to go well. Some of those funds were used to develop a stormwater display which has been used at Third Thursday events and in the District's display at the library. The District is planning on looking at different ways to analyze and present data from monitoring. There will be a workshop for horse owners on pasture and mud management on April 25<sup>th</sup>, location to be determined.

SCCD, along with numerous other partners, submitted a new RCPP proposal in December. The request was for approximately \$5.5 million and would include numerous types of projects aimed at improving water quality and habitat in the upper Tongue River watershed. Award announcements are expected to take place in March.

Susan reminded the group that project requests continue to be down, though there are some pending and upcoming in the watershed. It is unclear whether that is because all "easy" projects are done, current economic conditions, or lack of awareness on issues/programs. Any help on getting the word out would be appreciated.

### **Big Goose Creek Watershed Control Plan**

Cory Medill, City of Sheridan, updated the group on the Upper Big Goose Creek Watershed Control Plan. The purpose of the plan is to analyze the prevalence of *Cryptosporidium* pollution in the Big Goose Creek watershed above Sheridan's drinking water intake facility. The initial plan was written in 2014 with stakeholder input and was approved by the EPA in January 2018. Sampling began in 2004 and indicated low levels of the bacteria, which can make it difficult to monitor. The last hit for *Cryptosporidium* was in 2014. As such, the City has begun to focus more on sampling for *E. coli* and total coliforms at the intake facility. Most recently, the spikes in bacteria samples were during low flows in August and September. The plan is to add more sampling sites and possibly microbial source tracking to help pinpoint the source. The City continues work on developing a more thorough septic inventory on the forest service and included the SCCD's septic assessment and flyer in their most recent mailing to the recreational cabins. A new webpage was added to the City's website that includes information on source water protection, their management plan, and more.

Discussion was had regarding the shutdown of the intake facility this past spring. The shutdown was not solely because of high turbidity, but also because the access road was washed out. Turbidity measurements were as high as 3200 NTU. The last high measurement was 1300 NTU back in 1995. The intake facility was able to treat that water for use this spring. The Sheridan facility can provide water to SAWS customers for a short period of time in the event of a shutdown at the intake facility on Big Goose. Big Goose is the single source for drinking water for all SAWS customers, the VA and Downer Addition residents. The City will be considering other water sources in their long-term planning.

### **City of Sheridan Updates (Landslide EWP, Goose Creek, other)**

Hanns Mercer, engineer for the City of Sheridan, provided updates on several water-related projects within Sheridan. Construction on the hill slide has been halted for winter. Work will resume this spring and will include completion of the maintenance road, and the installation of riprap and other stabilization measures. The sluffed material has been removed from the creek and the channel widened so that high flows shouldn't be a problem this spring. There will be a pathway along the maintenance road for public use. Horizontal drains are located throughout the wall that go 150 feet back into the hill; the maintenance road will be used so the City can access and flush out these drains as needed. Some staining and 'boulder-scaping' techniques will be used to help the wall blend in and appear more

natural. Some concern was noted about the construction and additional material left on the creek bottom contributing to higher turbidity. The City will be overseeing completion of the project and will ensure, as much as is possible, that the area is returned to a natural state. Total project cost is approximately \$8 million with about \$5 million coming from the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program through USDA NRCS.

The City continues work on the Section 1135 agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers to improve fish passage and habitat within the City of Sheridan, with the hope of returning the creek back to a cold-water fishery. Construction is expected to occur in three phases. The first phase is at a 60% design level and would include work from Sheltered Acres up to Washington Park. Later phases will address the drop structures near Lewis Street. The project will include re-vegetating the banks and adjacent areas with native plants and shrubs. A few additional projects are being addressed through an 8499 Corps agreement, as “time is of the essence” projects. Most were a result of the most recent flooding, such as on the Sheltered Acres levee and a large washout near the Avoca Apartments.

A question regarding the North Park fishponds was directed to Travis Cundy with the Wyoming Game and Fish. The WGF is working on piecing together funding for the project and is getting very close.

#### **Additional Comments from Group**

The City was asked to explain the process by which landowners are notified of a water shutdown at the intake facility. Notification would be done by phone, so landowners should make sure to keep their contact information updated with the City’s SAWS department. A landowner expressed concern about eroding banks on their property and inquired where they should look for assistance. The City recommended that the landowner start with the Army Corps of Engineers office in Cheyenne for technical assistance and permit requirements. Travis, WGF, explained that financial assistance can be hard to come by and that there some private contractors that can help with the overall process, such as Steady Stream Hydrology.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 2021.

Submitted by Jackie A. Carbert, Program Specialist