

**Tongue River Watershed Planning Meeting
February 18, 2016
Ranchester Town Hall, Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes**

Present:

Amy Doke	Donnie Dobrenz	Jerry Dobrenz
Rick Pallister	Emerson Scott, III	Peggy Dobrenz
Bill Bense	Karl Kukuchka	Tom Scott
Carrie Rogaczewski	Greg Benzel	Doyl Fritz
Travis Cundy	Orrin Connell	

Emerson Scott, III called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Open and Introductions:

Emerson Scott, III local watershed representative from the Sheridan County Conservation District and Tongue River Watershed Group chairman, opened the meeting with introductions.

Bacteria Load Reduction Needs/Requirements:

Progress Registers/Completed Projects:

Carrie presented the Progress Register to the group. The Progress Register was first started back in the late 1990's early 2000's as a way to document work within the watershed that might not be reflected in changes in water quality. The projects that are on the Progress Registers are primarily those done through our office. There may be more work within the watershed that is not reflected on these maps.

Priority Areas:

After reviewing the Progress Register, Carrie presented the group with Load Reduction Maps. These maps compare the last sampling season data (2013) to the previous year's sampling seasons data combined to reflect the most current bacteria levels in the watershed. The different colors on each map (green, yellow, orange and red) reflect different load reductions to achieve the water quality standards within a particular subwatershed. The maps indicate that there was a decrease in bacteria in 2013 from the previous years. However, the decrease in bacteria may have been influenced by a variety of different factors (wet vs. dry year for example) and so the trend may or may not continue into future sampling seasons. The maps do help the District prioritize which areas to try and do projects in if there is a shortage of funds and two equally qualified projects are competing against each other.

Plan Progress Review and Update:

Completed and Upcoming Action Items:

At every steering committee meeting the group looks at completed and upcoming action items to make sure the plan progress remains on track. It's important to note that what we are able to accomplish depends on who requests assistance. So far the District has completed the following action items or milestones:

- Annual Steering Committee Meetings
- Annual Watershed Newsletters
 - Livestock Projects highlight (in SCCD Fall 2013 Newsletter)
 - Water Quality Standards, Monitoring
 - Horse/Livestock Impacts Info; septic project highlight
 - Cost-Share Program info; TMDL meeting insert
- Annual Progress Register and Load Reduction Estimate Updates
- Annual Town Council Meeting Updates
- 2013 Tongue River Interim Monitoring; report approved by WDEQ
- Tongue River Initiative Landowner Resource Guide with SCLT and TNC
- Tongue River Canyon Survey Assessment-Landowner Summaries
- Septic Fact Sheet/Packet update
- Cost-Share program materials update
- Community Events/Presentations
 - Sheridan County Fair-display
 - Third Thursday Street Festivals
 - Sheridan Fulmer Library Display
 - Tongue River High School Field Days
 - Tongue River Middle School Field Day
 - Trout Unlimited Adopt-A-Trout Assistance
 - Sheridan College Presentation

The District is still addressing the following action items or milestones:

- 2016 Interim monitoring; with reduced number of sites
- Discussion of more localized display and/or activity opportunities
- Tongue River Branch Library and/or Community Centers for display
- "Pay it Downstream" Postcards
- Tracking Technical Assistance/Outreach activities better
- Topics to include in future outreach
 - Summary of 2013 Water Quality Results
 - Domestic animal/pet contributions
 - Horse/Livestock management
 - Manure management
 - Winter feeding grounds
 - Septic systems

- Irrigation management
- Riparian Management/buffers
- Pesticide/Fertilizer use
- Urban runoff/storm drains
- Wildlife feeding

Community Events/Display Opportunities

The group suggested Carrie contact Linda Lofgren with the Town of Dayton to see about participating in Dayton Days as well as Erin Kilbride with the Ranchester and Dayton Community Centers to see about putting up a display in either of the two buildings. Greg Benzel with Padlock Ranch would like to provide information to the District on Padlock's Nutrient Management Plan as well their fertilizer/pesticide use. They have some pretty innovative ways of applying and knowing where to apply fertilizers and pesticides that could be of benefit to other producers. Greg is willing to write an article for the upcoming District newsletter that goes out County wide.

Tongue River 2016 Monitoring

After evaluating the District's water quality monitoring program county-wide, the SCCD Board and staff decided to reduce the number of water quality monitoring sites in each watershed. It is very expensive to monitor as well as time consuming. The District took a hard look at which sites had the most historical data, which were they most likely to continue to be granted access to, as well as which sites provided the most consistent, reliable data. Based on these criteria, the District decided to reduce three sites in the Tongue River Watershed. They decided to keep a monitoring site on each tributary, one on each mainstem and the upper and lower most sites to provide baseline data. The monitoring parameters will be the same, with the exception that the District might not continue to monitor for Dissolved Oxygen. The D.O. meter quit working at the end of the last sampling season. Before replacing the meter, the Board wanted Carrie to visit with Game and Fish and WDEQ to see what their opinions are on the value of this parameter. Travis Cundy with Wyoming Game and Fish commented that they usually consider D.O. to be at saturation. To them, continuous temperature is a more important parameter. He would like to see 3-4 permanent temperature locations on this watershed.

Tongue River TMDL Update

Last summer the District was informed that the WDEQ would be starting the Tongue River TMDL. As of now, they have hired a consultant and are working on compiling information to begin writing the TMDL. They are on shortened time-line since the Tongue River EPA Based Watershed Plan is already in place. They can use information in the Plan to help write the TMDL. The consultants wanted names of people in the watershed to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Board generated a list of landowners, steering committee members and others who they felt would be appropriate. Most, if not everyone, on the Tongue

River Steering Committee should have received a letter asking them to be involved on the TAC. The consultants are holding the first of two public meetings on March 2nd at the Dayton Town Hall. They will do a short presentation at the beginning and then proceed to an open house format.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 2017.

Submitted by Amy Doke, Program Specialist