

**Goose Creek Watershed Meeting
March 09, 2017
Downtown Sheridan Association Community Room
Meeting Minutes**

Present:

Orrin Connell, SCCD
Edith Heyward, SCCD
Bill Adsit
Robert Brug
Dave Garber

Don Crecelius
Jack Landon, Jr
Lane Thompson, City
Sandy Baird, DSA

Travis Cundy, WGF
Dave Engels, EnTech
Chelsea Coli, Press
Carrie Rogaczewski, SCCD

Open and Introductions:

Orrin Connell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and introductions were made. Orrin reminded everyone about the advisory nature of the group. Formal positions can only be made after discussion and approval by the SCCD Board of Supervisors.

Brief Background Summary:

Carrie provided a brief background on the Goose Creek watershed effort for new members. In 2001-02, the Sheridan County Conservation District partnered with the City of Sheridan and Sheridan County to conduct the Goose Creek Watershed Assessment. After the assessment, a watershed plan was developed and approved by WDEQ. The plan included several recommended actions, including cost-share assistance programs, information and education activities, and continued monitoring. In 2008, WDEQ moved forward with the development of the Goose Creek Watershed TMDL. Upon completion of the TMDL, the group incorporated some of the recommendations from the TMDL into an Implementation Strategy, which was updated in 2016. As with the initial plan, the Implementation Strategy includes assistance for projects, information and education activities, and monitoring. Most the recommendations are being addressed by SCCD, City, and County programs.

Goose Creek WWDC Level 1 Watershed Study Update:

Dave Engels, EnTech, gave an update on the Goose Creek WWDC Level 1 Study. In 2015, the SCCD was approached by a water improvement and service district requesting the District to pursue a Level I Study through the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC). The SCCD Board decided to include the entire Goose Creek watershed in the request. There have been several potential projects that have been identified as candidates for WWDC funding in the Goose Creek Watershed, but those funds cannot be accessed until a Level I Study is complete. As part of the study, EnTech will complete 11 different tasks. The Watershed Inventory and Characterization Task includes evaluating existing irrigation infrastructure and identifying opportunities for surface water storage and upland water development. Most of this task is completed. A large part of the surface water storage task involved incorporating information from previous studies, as there have been several in this watershed. The Watershed Management and Rehabilitation Plan Development Task includes providing more detail for identified potential projects. Upon completion of this task, potential projects will have the information needed to prepare WWDC funding applications. EnTech expects to submit the Draft Report in August or September of 2017; a final public meeting will be sometime after that. There was additional discussion about the potential for storage reservoirs that could provide additional water through the City in drier summer months. There are a lot of other factors to consider before this could be a reality.

Storm Sewer Maintenance/E. coli Detection Project Update:

Lane Thompson, City of Sheridan, provided an update on the 319 Grants the City received to address sedimentation and bacteria loading within the City. The City was able to install stormceptors at outfalls. A total of 7 have been installed, some with 319 dollars and some with other City funding. These stormceptors act as sediment traps and will also filter out hydrocarbons. The City also received a 319 grant to clean biofilms (which may be a source of E. coli) and do video inspections to rule out cross contamination. This grant also included some before and after sampling and information/education activities. A more recent grant is being used to try portable drain catchment basins in downtown. The City and SCCD are partnering together on an information/education campaign for stormwater issues. Through this partnership, the City would provide some funding (as part of their match requirement) to the SCCD; SCCD will be providing a description of items and budget to the City later in the month.

There was discussion on the discharge standards for the City, which are still voluntary, and the effectiveness of the sediment traps. The City knows the sediment catchments are doing their job because they have to clean them and remove the material that is trapped.

SCCD Goose Creek Social Indicators Survey Update:

In 2015, SCCD convened a group of agencies/organizations with an interest in the Goose Creek Watershed. The purpose was to complete a survey process to determine the level of awareness on watershed issues and programs and be able to understand what may be preventing people from making changes or participating in programs. The group developed two surveys: one targeted toward urban residents and one targeted toward rural residents. The summary report, with responses, was provided to all of the entities that participated so they can use that information in their own programs. Despite low response rates, particularly among larger landowners, there was some valuable information that SCCD can use. Respondents were generally aware of water quality concerns and recognized septic systems and livestock as potential sources. Sediment and stormwater were not considered much of a problem from urban respondents (good opportunity for the City/SCCD information campaign). There was unfamiliarity with riparian buffer management, irrigation water management, riparian fencing, off-channel watering facilities, and grazing management, but many that would be willing to try. The limiting factors for implementing practices were generally related to not knowing how to do it and cost; however for grazing management a main limiting factor was insufficient proof of water quality benefit. Based on the responses, there are definitely some education opportunities.

Implementation Strategy Update:

The group reviewed the completed and upcoming activities for the Implementation Strategy, which was updated in 2016. Annual meetings and watershed newsletters were completed as planned. The County continues to distribute septic folders and information with permits. Carrie gave a few presentations and demonstrations with a few more coming up this year. Carrie is still working on a process for follow-up on completed projects.

Progress Register/Priority Areas:

The group reviewed the Goose Creek Watershed 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 are primarily those done through the SCCD office and do not reflect other activities/projects completed by other organizations or individuals. Overall, across all watersheds, project requests are down, though there are some under construction in the watershed. It is unclear whether that is because all of the "easy" projects are done, current economic conditions, or lack of awareness on issues/programs. To

date, SCCD has assisted with 50 projects including corral relocation/modification projects, septic replacements, diversion replacements, fencing/stockwater installations, stream stabilization and willow planting projects. The SCCD offers willow planting services on stream banks to landowners free of charge.

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. 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. This year the maps were included in the annual newsletter because of a request from one of the other watershed groups. In 2015, load reduction requirements improved in most areas, with most subwatersheds being in the Low to Medium category.

Other Business:

Carrie distributed information from Weed and Pest on invasive grasses. Two new invasive grasses have recently been identified in Sheridan County: Ventenata and Medusahead. The Weed and Pest and UW Extension have efforts underway to understand the distribution and control of these species.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 2018.

Submitted by Carrie Rogaczewski, SCCD District Manager