



July 8th, 2021

38 total Zoom participants

Lance Holloway from Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Little Salmon River Subbasin: Overview Presentation

Current water quality conditions

- Size 368,640 acres = 576 square miles
- Beneficial uses: cold water aquatic life, salmonid

Two main types of water quality report

- TMDL. Load capacity = margin of safety + natural background + load allocation + waste allocation
- 5 year review - behind by 10 years
 - 2010/11 last review
 - LSR (Big Creek to Round Valley Creek)
 - Temp improved, E. Coli continued to exceed TMDL
 - Big Creek - E. coli continued to exceed, nutrients weren't sampled for unknown reason
- 2006 TMDL throughout watershed for temperature, e.coli, nutrients, sediments. New areas added after reviews and adds the TMDL
 - Mud and Little Mud Creeks - E. coli exceeded and looked at sediment based on bank stability
- Implementation: developed in Adams Soil Conservation District and Soil Conservation Commission in coordination with other agencies
 - Adaptive management approach for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and resource management system

Role of Watershed Advisory Group

- Provide regions insight
 - Seek out members with broad scopes of interests i.e. agriculture, environmental interest, mining, land management, forestry, etc.

- Identify projects and guidance to Department of Environmental Quality
- Work with the Soil Water Conservation District for grant funding to implement plans

2008 Implementation Plan

1. Riparian areas on Big Creek to Little Salmon River
2. Riparian areas on tributaries
3. All pasture/hay lands - create buffers to have lesser influence on water quality

Accomplishments: 2012-2015 channel bank vegetation, fencing, prescribed grazing, woody residue treatment, integrated pest management, forest stand improvement

2016 Implementation Plan:

Addendums for Mud Creek and Goose Creek: Identified fencing, riparian cover, tree and shrub establishment

Questions/Comments

Holly Becker: How large of a riparian buffer is needed for better sedimentation filtering?

Lance: Don't know exact specs but 10-15 feet could be used for a short term grazing

Jared Everson: Variable on the intent of the buffer and how it can be managed. Don't generally advocate for complete removal of livestock from the stream. But, do it in a manner that still protects the watershed

Julie Burkhardt: Worked on Little Weiser and main Weiser. Fencing is a good tool for restoration but it can be grazed with the right timing, not during a critical growth period. Livestock are a good management tool for weed control along the riparian area. More of a grazing rotation response.

Dean Dryden: Over 1 mile of restoration work on Goose Creek with fences and flash grazing. Use large cottonwoods. Even with all the willows, brush and cottonwoods, the temperature was not meeting the standards. The testing standards were developed in conifer narrow canyons, not a wide valley. Can Lance elaborate on why these standards should be used for this area?

Lance: Development of the tool was for placement of solar power that has been adapted into the water industry to monitor over the growing period. To use, average out the solar load from various areas along the watershed. Streams inherently change with

the landscape so an area that was previously covered may have changed location which would vary results.

Holly: How large of a buffer is needed to lower phosphorus levels? In Nevada, area was fenced off but it then impacted an endangered frog because the vegetation was too thick. A balance was necessary with livestock to protect the local ecology.

Lance: It depends on the area and what type of livestock rotation is necessary to accomplish the beneficial use.

Chase Dryden: E. Coli is very unpredictable but noticed it is mostly temperature driven. Higher sediment loads, higher nutrients in the water. Many factors play into the context of these water bodies and stream segments. Encourages maintaining context and looking more specifically at locations to create a management plan.

Dean Dryden: All the work they've done has been with the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Broad range of management on their land including BMPs. State and federal management agencies have been helping with strategies on land.

Chase Dryden: Relationships have already been developed with other agencies. With all those others in place it makes this collaborative a redundancy. Why are we going through this process when we're already engaged with regulatory authorities implementing plans?

Wes: Yes, a lot of great work has already been done. It would be good to have an update to IDEQ data and as Lance's presentation highlighted there is more work to do in improving water quality. We are trying to incorporate new and different voices to the table for management ideas as well as funding opportunities. The Little Salmon was recently included in the Nez Perce Tribes Watershed project area, enabling us to spend limited restoration funds in this watershed. With new players we are here to help continue the conversation of the previous WAG and move forward together.

Chase: Seems to make more sense to pick up the conversation with existing relationships. Is this collaborative intended to be implementation oriented or purely conversational?

Wes: This grant is only for the collaboration to create an action plan but cannot be used for on the ground implementation.

Jared Everson NRCS: There are currently duplicated efforts from different agencies in overlapping areas. It's a benefit to communicate with everyone on how to manage the watershed. The NRCS can leverage funds but needs to have partners to access them. The synergy of the group makes the projects better.

Field Trip Options - Wes Keller

First field trip: August 11th, 2021 10 am - 2 pm

Option 1: Packer John's Cabin State Park

Topics of discussion:

- 3 meadows valley water districts: Brundage Water Users Association, Goose Lake Reservoir Company, Granite Twin Lakes Water Users
- How water is distributed across meadows valley

Option 2: Idaho Fish and Game Restoration

Topics of discussion:

- Riparian planting
- Fencing

Option 3: Riparian Degradation at Zims Hot Springs

Topics of discussion:

- Riparian planting
- Hot spring discharge

Option 4: Conservation Easements NRCS Conservation Easement

Poll: Select your top three choices for our first field trip. 27 respondents

Results:

3 Water Diversions: 69%

2 IDFG restoration: 81%

1 Riparian degradation potential site for future restoration 93%

4 Conservation easements 48%

Chat

-- Jared Everson NRCS: "happy to assist organizing a visit to this Wetland Reserve Program Easement as well as presenting on how we can do projects like this in the future"

--Adrianna Cardoso: "ID Rural Water Association is a non-profit that has substantial funding for outreach, education and implementation projects without cost to any stakeholders."

Second field trip: September. Date TBD

Potential restoration project field trip locations.

Option 1: Forest Service Improvements Boulder Creek

Topics of discussion:

- Aquatic organism passage
- Road graveling
- Future projects to address watershed conditions in the boulder creek subwatershed

Option 2: Little Salmon Falls

Topics of discussion:

- Bull trout, steelhead, chinook below the falls but not above

Option 3: Confluence of Hazard Creek and the Little Salmon River

Topics of discussion:

- Role of these tributaries
- Critical habitat for esa fish species

Option 4 Rapid River

Topics of discussion:

- Importance to the Nez Perce Tribe and fish

Dean Dryden: Little Salmon Falls is a natural barrier and any fish that used to be upstream have been gone for 120 years. Why are we even mentioning this?

Wes: It's a really important break in the watershed. Need to look at the upper watershed to protect the lower unit. There have been fish previously in the area that people would like to see return.

Jared Everson NRCS: Easements are a good way to gain ecological impact knowledge of implementation strategies for management plans. Not everyone needs to go down an easement path to perform riparian restoration.

Poll: Please select your top 3 choices for our second field trip session. 29 respondents

3 Forest Service Improvements: Boulder Creek 59%

5 Little Salmon Falls 45%

1 Importance of Tributaries: Hazard Creek 79%

4 Importance of Fisheries in the Little Salmon River: Rapid River 52%

2 Wetland Reserve Program - NRCS 62%

Action items:

- Create a list for added resources that people have and if they would like to share their contact information with the collaborative community.
- Arrange field tours and email agenda for next meeting.