

Water Quality Standards (WQS) Workgroup Meeting Summary Draft
October 17, 2007, 1:00 – 4:45 p.m.
288 North 1460 West, Salt Lake City, Cannon Health Building Room 125

Attendance

WQS Workgroup Members and Alternates in Attendance

Ying-Ying Macauley, Division of Water Quality
Bill Moellmer, Division of Water Quality
Dave Moon, EPA Region 8
Nathan Darnall, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Carmen Bailey, Division of Wildlife Resources
Roy Gunnell, Department of Agriculture and Food
Leland Myers, Central Davis Sewer District
Florence Reynolds, Salt Lake City Public Utilities
Shazelle Terry, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Lisa A. Kirschner, Parsons Behle & Latimer (representing Utah Mining Association)
Brad Rasmussen, Aqua Engineering (representing Utah Food Industries Association)
Bret Randall, Chapman and Cutler (representing Utah Manufacturing Association)
Merritt Frey, Utah Rivers Council
Paul Dremann, Trout Unlimited
Mark Peterson, Utah Farm Bureau Federation

Others Present

Dave Wham, Division of Water Quality
Harry Judd, Division of Water Quality
Tom Toole, Division of Water Quality
Mark Quilter, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
Reed Oberndorfer, Central Utah Water Conservancy District
Don Summit, JBS Swift Beef
Douglas Stipes, JBS Swift Beef
Jeff Salt, Great Salt Lake Keepers

Bill Moellmer called the meeting to order and had the meeting participants introduce themselves. Ying-Ying Macauley presented the WQS Workgroup information that would be presented to the Water Quality Board during its meeting on October 19, 2007. The presentation slides are posted on the WQS website.

Bill Moellmer used the presentation slides to lead the discussion through the meeting. Bill's presentation slides are also posted on the WQS website. Bill first clarified the role of the workgroup as a sounding board, and the Workgroup is to provide feedback and recommendations to the Division of Water Quality (DWQ). DWQ is the body that would craft regulatory language and make recommendation to the Water Quality Board.

Antidegradation Review

Bill presented his suggested language of combining Off ramps #2, 4, 8, and 9:

“The receiving water body is (a) listed on the current 303(d) list for the parameters of concern, or (b) existing water quality for the parameters of concern does not satisfy applicable numeric and/or narrative water quality criteria. In this

case a discharge permit would have effluent limits set at the water quality standard for the parameters of concern.”

Leland suggested listing bullet points under “the following are water quality off ramps for...” Merrit commented that Off ramp #2 was not addressed in Bill’s proposed language. The conclusion is to re-craft the language to include all four off ramps.

Bill discussed the existing rule language for Off ramp #10, especially 10(b). Bill presented the original Off ramp 10(b) “(b) if the increase in pollutant loading to the stream is less than 20% over the existing background”, and a new version with clarification as “(b) if the increase in pollutant loading to the stream causes more than a 20% increase in concentration over the existing concentration at the downstream edge of the mixing zone.”

The Mayfield Level II antidegradation review example was discussed. Bret Randall commented on the possibility of unreasonable administrative burden if the antidegradation review threshold is set too low. Bill suggested that he would take some wastewater treatment plant data and test them to find out the cases of Level II reviews at a certain threshold. The workgroup decided to re-work Dave Moon’s previous strawman language for Off ramp #10 which contained a three-tier approach.

With regard to Off ramp #10, Bill asked for feedback on two issues:

- If a discharger causes a loss greater than X% of existing remaining upstream assimilative capacity a Level II Review would be required?
- Any increase in concentration caused by a proposed discharger that would reach X% of the total upstream assimilative capacity of a stream would require a Level II Review?

Reed Oberndorfer suggested setting a cap of pollutant load, similar to the TMDL approach, to prevent antidegradation and to prevent total assimilative capacity being completely used up. The Workgroup discussed this issue extensively without reaching consensus.

Brad Rasmussen commented that it is hard for the industries to deal with the uncertainty in determining social and economical benefits during the Level II antidegradation review process.

The Workgroup discussed Off ramp #6 extensively. Carmen Bailey presented two GIS maps showing overlay of DWQ water bodies of beneficial use classifications and DNR’s aquatic life species sites. Merrit commented that Off ramp #6 allows 3C and 3D waters to be polluted up to the standard without requiring Level II reviews, while some 3C waters do receive effluents from wastewater treatment plants. Dave Moon commented on the lack of chronic ammonia standard for 3C and 3D waters and the need of revisiting the numeric water quality standards for 3C and 3D waters. Nathan Darnall commented on the need of re-evaluating streams and their classifications, for example, the segment of Weber River below I-15 classified as 3C. Leland suggested keeping Off ramp #6 until good science proves otherwise. Dave Moon commented on replacing the 3C and 3D language in Off ramp #6 with a data-driven approach. After extensive discussion, the conclusion is to place Off ramp #6 in the parking lot for now. DWQ and Department of Natural Resources will continue working together. The Workgroup will continue the discussion on Off ramp #6 in the January meeting.

The Workgroup was informed that Off ramp #7 has never been applied for any antidegradation review. The Workgroup agreed to remove Off ramp #7.

Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)

The Workgroup discussed the problems with the current rule language for TDS, and possible solutions, including:

- Set a single TDS standard with an averaging period,
- Define seasons,
- Define water bodies specifically for stockwatering use,
- Problems related to store the water during winter season,
- De-icing salt application, and
- Site specific criteria for TDS.

Harry Judd clarified that the site specific criteria typically are for naturally occurring high background concentration of TDS. Mark Quilter commented that low TDS water is important during seeding and germination season of crops. The Workgroup discussed having a single TDS standard of 1200 mg/l year round while allowing site specific criteria for winter season based on data. The site specific criteria could be moving up or down from the current numeric criteria based on data. The conclusion is to have DWQ craft a proposed language and present in the next meeting of single TDS standard with flexibility in setting site specific criteria.

E. coli

Tom explained the assessment methodology as 5 samples over 30 days during the recreation season, and mentioned that DWQ has received bacteria data from Salt Lake City. Florence Reynolds commented on the poor correlation between membrane filtration method and E. coli. Dave Moon suggested the reference of EPA document titled "Implementation Guidance for Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria" dated March of 2004. This document is available on the WQS website. Due to the time limit, the E. coli discussion will continue in the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The Workgroup has three more meetings before completing the work and formal initiation of the triennial process.

11/14/2007 W, 1-5 p.m. (DEQ Room 201, 168 N 1950 W)

12/12/2007 W, 1-5 p.m. (DEQ Room 201, 168 N 1950 W)

1/16/2008 W, 1-5 p.m. (CHB Room 125, 288 N 1460 W)

The next meeting is on November 14, 2007 in Department of Environmental Quality building Room 201 at 1 p.m.