

Moses Lake Watershed Council Meeting

November 16, 2021 10AM-12PM

Meeting Notes

Attendance: Harold Crose (GCCD), Kristina Ribellia (GCCD), Ronald Scerbicke (GCCD), Elliott DeLong (GCCD), Deanna Elliott (GCCD), Ron Sawyer (Tourism), Amanda Richardson (DOE), Mike Schmuck (WDFW), Gina Hoff (USBR) Bill Auckett (City of ML), Allison Williams (City of ML), David Bren (City of ML), Stephanie Shopbell (GCHD), Jeff Foster (MLIRD), Stephanie Shopbell (GCHD), Ty Swartout (Citizen), Gene Wing (Soap Lake Conservancy)

Council Member Updates

City of Moses Lake – The project to remove the stormwater outfalls along Stratford Rd has been completed. The next project will be for the Valley Rd rebuild to manage that stormwater system. The Moses Lake Comprehensive Plan has been approved by the City Council. This plan will include lake health and MLWC participation as an important component. The city also approved some outreach within the plan to include public videos that focus on priority areas and relate to current events around lake health.

Grant County Health District- The last sample on Moses Lake was taken 11/01/2021 and due to funding will be the final sample. The advisory on the lake will be posted until December 1st. Between 11/1 -11/30 blooms can be tracked using the Cyan App.

MLIRD – An MOU between the City of Moses Lake and MLIRD to move irrigation through the lake to cover irrigating public spaces. Currently, the irrigation is done through wells. This would have double benefits of removing stress on well water and increasing the amount of water the USBR could route through Moses Lake. The interlocal agreement was signed on November 12, 2021.

GCCD – Grant County Conservation District is working on funding for watershed activities. More detail will be covered when we discuss the current grants.

DOE – Not much to report. Grants are being evaluated and final decisions will be announced in January. The DOE has met a discussed statewide TMDL prioritization. Moses Lake is still a priority area to DOE, however, the existence of the MLWC makes the situation unique. The MLWC is a move in the correct direction for the management of the lake.

USBR – no update

Tourism – The Tourism Commission had the LTAC (Lodging Tax Advisory Committee) Committee meet to hear proposals for funding in early November. A proposal was submitted by GCCD and the announcement should be out in a couple of weeks

Other – The 2022 Bowfishing Carp Tournament will be the third weekend of May (May 21st, 2022).

Outreach – MLWC has conducted a survey previously and got an overwhelming response that the lake was of significant importance and this is further reinforced by the attendance at the public meetings. While no public meetings are likely in the near future, the emphasis on keeping the public engaged and informed remains. The website will probably be the best place to provide community information, so updates will be coming for the non-point grant, WaterSMART grant, and 2021 water quality information.

Other Items

Soap Lake Conservancy – Introduction and background provided by Gene Wing. The chemistry of Soap Lake is changing due to the increase in freshwater infiltration. The freshwater and water level are increasing regardless of USBR pumping activities. Lake alkalinity has dropped significantly and Soap Lake is moving much closer to a freshwater lake. The Conservancy has looked to DOE and USBR groundwater studies to help pinpoint the freshwater influx that has impacted the lake in recent years.

GCCD Grant Updates – GCCD has put in for three grants recently.

DOE Non-Point Source – The DOE non-point source grant was submitted on October 12th, with an announcement date in January. The non-point grant focus on nutrient sources that are not as direct (groundwater, shoreline, etc.) as other sources. To manage these types of sources GCCD will develop outreach and a voluntary stewardship type assessment for shoreline properties.

LTAC Grant – The LTAC grant for funding from the Grant County Tourism Commission is for two projects. One is a lake usage study to determine the financial impact of postings, the second is the establishment of a citizen science program to involve community members in lake management.

ARPA Grant – GCCD was contacted by one of the Grant County Commissioners about developing an application for funding through the America Recovery Program fund to help address lake and community health. The package developed provided the option for a variety of treatments including alum, carp population and bounty program, phytoremediation studies, beaver dam analog (BDA) implementation, and a more robust citizen science program. All of these have a benefit to water quality in Moses Lake

Lake Conditions – With the season at an end, it is evident that there are benefits to increased low phosphorus water has on the lake. While there may be inflows increase in inflow in the coming seasons it is unlikely to be something that can be counted on as a solution. Additional activities such as treatments and monitoring still have an important part in lake health and will be something that needs to be pursued going forward.

Final Thoughts -

The next MLWC meeting is set for December 21st, 10-12. It will be held via ZOOM.