

Tenmile *draft* meeting minutes – June 14, 2017

Attendees: Andy R, Bob M, Marge L, Christine W, Alan C, Hank K, Lee with guests from Whatcom Conservation District: Scarlett, Aneka, Meg

Past meeting minutes were approved with no changes. No additions were proposed to tonight's agenda.

Announcements: Whatcom Water Weeks is September 16-23, 2017. Check Whatcom Watershed Information network for details and to register events.

There is a Bellingham Bay symposium on Sept 20 & 21. Details coming soon.

Lee is organizing a tour called "beavers in the ecosystem; benefits and challenges." It will be held on Sept 19th from 2-5pm. Registration is required.

Meeting Notes

- Report from the Laurel WID (Andy and Hank): The letter sent by Tenmile to the WID was discussed. WID board members indicated that if the Tenmile project would send a letter to the WID expressing concerns about RE Sources' actions on the CAFO permit, it would be appreciated. The WID has not responded to the Tenmile letter. Since the WID meetings are postponed in the summer, there isn't a time crunch on this issue. Portage Bay partnership was discussed – the farmers and Lummi can't agree on experts to write manure management plans, so the process is stalled. The WID has annexed four parcels (involving two owners) on the north side of Barrett Lake. In order to reallocate funds according to new priorities, the WID won't be doing any more fecal coliform sampling until the fall, and they won't participate in bracket sampling that they agreed to do previously. Mike Boxx will still help with gaining landowner access. We can still work with Ecology, Whatcom County Health, and Department of Ag if extra sampling needs to be done, for bracketing or otherwise.
- There was a discussion about the interaction of the Nooksack River and Tenmile flows at the downstream station (T1). During floods and high tides, river water has been observed flowing upstream, but nobody knows exactly how far this flood water travels upstream. Such conditions may result in T1 samples being less representative of upstream water quality.
- Water Quality Update (Lee): Recent data was displayed and discussed. WID sampling from May 11th and 16th was presented. Both of these sampling events followed major rain events. Fecal coliform in Deer Creek was very high. Fecal coliform was also very high upstream of where Deer Creek joins Tenmile (at horse property where Mike Boxx arranged for sampling access).

Presentation from Whatcom Conservation District Staff: notes of highlights.

- ZAPS Analyzer Update (Scarlet). Analyzers take continuous readings of bacteria (E.coli), nutrients, TSS, and hydrocarbons. Up to six units will be deployed in the Nooksack watershed. Results will be available online. The project has a 2-year duration, is funded by the EPA, with partners including but not limited to Whatcom County, the Lummi Nation, and others. The units will be removed when the grant is over.
- Three units are currently installed: two on the Nooksack River, one on Fishtrap Creek. The Conservation District is planning to install three more: ideas include the Canadian border on Double Ditch (Fishtrap Creek trib), and the mouth of Bertrand and mouth of Tenmile Creek. WCD is working with the Laurel WID to consider a site at the Barrett Rd bridge. If we want to propose a site on Deer Creek to isolate that reach for analysis reasons, we should work with Scarlett to write up a proposal.
- National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) Tenmile Pilot Project (Aneka and Meg): NRCS and partners work with producers and landowners to implement voluntary conservation practices that improve water quality in high-priority watersheds while maintaining agricultural productivity. The project will run through September 2018. There will be specific water quality goals, and in combination with understanding producers' needs, the intended outcomes are long-term watershed planning and water quality improvements.
- Tenmile watershed was selected out of other sites nationally because there already is an existing focus on improving water quality in the watershed, and other reasons.
- The specific outcomes are detailed characterization of physical landscape and land uses in the watershed, and other outcomes. The opportunity for our group is to be a key bridge between the project and specific landowner groups, including project communications, focus groups to consider best practices and programs to implement improved land use practices. This has the potential to increase landowner involvement in our group and in water quality activism.
- The next steps: approval to use the Project's water quality data, to co-sponsor a letter to introduce this projects to watershed residents, TMCWP mailing list, and email list.
- There was general agreement among the attendees that we should lend our support to this study.

Next meeting is Wednesday July 12, 2017.