

# **Lower Basin Collaborative Meeting Notes March 6, 2012**

## **Participants:**

**Citizens:** Mark Wagner, Ellen Scriven, Shawn Unger, David LePard, Ernest Ecklund, Myra Ecklund, Keith Shannon, Carol Young, Bob Hanson, Marcella Hanson, Verne Blalack, Bonnie Douglas, Dave Fortier, Tina Pinzotti, Gordon Sanders, Susan Mitchell.

**Agencies:** Ed Moreen, EPA; Bill Rust, Shoshone County; Denna Grangaard, IDEQ; Terry Harwood, BEIPC; Jeri DeLange, BEIPC; Rebecca Stevens, Cd'A Tribe.

*Note: These are combined notes from the Harrison and Medimont meetings.*

## **Purpose:**

To generate increased interest in the Lower Basin Collaborative – a group of concerned citizens interested in early involvement in the Lower Basin Superfund clean-up decision processes.

## **Objectives:**

- Introduce the Lower Basin Collaborative – history and purpose
- Present snapshot of the environmental reality in the Lower Basin
  - include overview of Lower Basin timeline and potential opportunities for early involvement
- Identify citizen concerns, interests, and questions

## **1. Lower Basin Collaborative –Purpose**

Susan Mitchell provided background on the formation of the collaborative. A small group of citizens and EPA and IDEQ representatives began meeting in May 2009. These discussions eventually led to the collaborative concept.

This past November the Basin Commission voted to include collaboratives in the Citizens Coordinating Council. The CCC is the citizen arm of the Basin Commission, which was established by the Idaho legislature. The purpose was to provide a way for state and local government and citizens to have a voice in Superfund cleanup.

The Lower Basin Collaborative provides a structure that narrows that focus to the concerns of a specific geographical area and community—the lower basin—and provides an avenue for local people to make cleanup recommendations. Our goal is to build broad community buy-in so that we, as citizens, have a greater chance of

success when we weigh in on issues.

We know cleanup is a given, but what the cleanup will look like is an area we can influence. As members of the local community, we can engage with agencies around the process of cleaning up the river and wetlands. We learned from the experience at East Mission Flats Repository that the public needs to be involved as early as possible in order to have a meaningful place in the planning and implementation.

A collaborative represents diverse voices: e.g. property rights, clean water, economic growth, human health, hunting, small business development, protecting fish and wildlife, promoting tourism, etc. This diverse core group looks at the issues from a place of understanding the science, applying what we know about the place we live, sharing differing perspectives, and coming up with proposals to influence what the cleanup will ultimately look like.

The agencies—EPA and DEQ—are present at meetings as resources, not voting participants. They provide information, help us understand the science in lay person's terms, and make sure we know the federal regulations that the cleanup must meet. While citizens do not make the final decisions, we can work in partnership with the agencies and influence what happens.

## **2. Snapshot of environmental reality in Lower Basin**

Dave Fortier gave an overview of Superfund since its inception, beginning with the 1986 designation of the Kellogg/Pinehurst 21 square mile Superfund box. The Superfund designation expanded to Spokane and Lake Roosevelt in the 90s.

In the early years the Cd'A River ran gray with tailings. In the Lower Basin, mining companies began settling lawsuits in the teens and 20s by purchasing contaminated easements along the Cd'A River. By the 1970s direct discharge ended but the environmental contamination remained. Flood events continue to re-contaminate the lower basin.

The greatest source of current contamination is the Dudley reach, not the upper basin. This was clearly seen in the data from an EPA study showing lead concentrations between Enaville (just under 3000mg/kg) and the Harrison Slough. The heaviest concentrations fall between Dudley and Springston, with Dudley far and away the most contaminated—close to 8700 mg/kg.

The 2002 RODA addressed human health issues throughout the upper and lower basin. Lower basin cleanup to date has focused on yard cleanup and making recreational sites safe for public use. Experimental cleanup has been done in some wetland areas in an effort to create safe havens for wildlife.

People in attendance had lots of questions and acknowledged in some cases they needed more background information in order to know what concerns they might have.

Terry Harwood, Basin Commission Executive Director, provided additional background information on the Basin Commission, the recent mine settlements with EPA, and the funding sources for Lower Basin cleanup. He also explained that yard cleanup was mandated by the 2002 RODA and is not an item the public/collaborative would discuss. It's anticipated that this project will be completed within the next three years.

### **Draft timeline for Lower Basin cleanup activity — current best estimates.**

#### **2011—2013**

Period of data collection and modeling

- From this work, agencies will know whether 2002 RODA is adequate or requires modifications.
- The '02 RODA has selected a subset of cleanup actions that what would be necessary to form a comprehensive cleanup in the Lower Basin. This includes capping, recreation site cleanup, dredging a discrete segment, bank stabilization, wetland cleanup, property remediation and repositories. The agencies would not dredge or site repositories without community discussion. Some cleanup of recreation sites, bank stabilization and a wetlands remediation has already been done, as well as property remediation.
- Perfect time for citizen input on model alternatives.

#### **2013—2016**

- Identifying and evaluating cleanup alternatives.
- Looking at options for repository sitings
- Initiating pilot projects as appropriate

#### **2016-2019**

- Amending the 2002 RODA if necessary
- Implementing cleanups
- Developing repositories

### **3. Open Forum—Discussion**

We posed three questions for discussion. Our goal was to get a sense from those attending of the kinds of forums in order to build our knowledge and offer the agencies well-informed input as cleanup progresses. We also want to approach community involvement as efficiently as possible.

- a. What concerns do you have around the cleanup?
- b. What are your hopes for the cleanup?
- c. What would be useful to you to learn more about?

### **Concerns:**

- How much contamination of lower basin comes from the upper basin? from the lower basin?
- The lack of stability of the Cataldo (Canyon Rd.) bridge in a major flood event and the devastating ramifications for interstate travel/transportation if that bridge went down.
- Consider using the Cataldo flats as a way to reduce flooding downstream in a major flood event,. Possibilities: dikes, flood gates, breaching the I-90 levee.
- Making sure we use monies (starting asap) for cleanup rather than years of research.
- Potential for sportsman access to spread contamination
- How will politics, budgeting and changes in nat'l leadership influence cleanup? Could it stop cleanup?
- How disruptive will cleanup be for wildlife, ecosystem and human quality of life?
- How are properties selceded for cleanup?
- Need more information on studies/results of data collection: bank sampling, water quality, what's already cleaned up, effects on future development, effects of potential institutional controls.
- How to control public exposure, eliminate/reduce recontamination, trap/collect sediment, fence public land where necessary.

### **Hopes:**

- Maintain current lifestyle
- No negative effect on recreation or home values
- Preserve quality of life
- Limited disruption from cleanup
- Create effective solutions and local jobs
- Use money for real cleanup not just studies/design/admin
- Enhance wildlife habitat
- Involve community in water quality issues
- Accountability
- Pave the pave-able things so capped off

- Politicos work with community

### **Areas for more learning:**

- Use of settlement money, what can and cannot be invested
- Superfund designation
- National Resources Trusties—who they are, what they'll do and where there money comes from
- Cleanup vs. restoration
- Floodplain/channel filling
- Find and review cross section studies done around 1974 in Cataldo (I can't remember why this was important. Does someone else?)

### **Suggestions:**

- Local libraries: provide basic information, vocabulary, guide to acronyms
- Condense the information; provide sources/links for information
- Make info user friendly, non-technical
- Create topic index
- Email above info and links to citizens

## **4. Upcoming events**

- Four part series: Understanding Contamination in the Lower Coeur d'Alene River Basin
  - Revised dates for first three sessions:
  - Wednesday, April 11, 6:30-8:30 p.m.—Rose Lake Historical Society, tentative location
  - Wednesday, May 2, time TBA— Harrison, EMT conference room, tentative location
  - Tuesday, May 29, time TBA— Medimont Grange, tentative location
- Fall 2012— Workshop on Clean-up Alternatives

## **5. Adjourn**

Contact us at: [lowerbasincollaborative@gmail.com](mailto:lowerbasincollaborative@gmail.com)

**Next CCC meeting:** April 18, 6:30-9 p.m. Wallace Inn