

Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Meeting
February 26, 2015
Prairie Dog Women's Club
Meeting Minutes

Present:

Larry Barbula

Bonnie Brady

Bruce Davidson

John Kane

Robert Ligocki

Wayne Lesch

Amy Doke

Carrie Rogaczewski

Meeting Opening and Introductions:

John Kane called the meeting to order at 6:05. John welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to provide a brief introduction.

2014 Monitoring Results:

Carrie passed out the results from the 2014 monitoring season. Prairie Dog was on a three year sampling rotation with Goose Creek and Tongue River. The standard for bacteria used to be based on 5 samples within 30 days. In 2014, it switched to 5 samples within 60 days. The 2014 sampling season consisted of an early period (May-June) and a late period (July-August). There are still the same number of samples.

Most of the sample sites behave the same based on the type of year we have. If we continue to sample over a long enough period of time, hopefully we'll start to see some trends (we are not seeing any yet). The data for 2014 is still provisional. We need to make sure it's accurate before submitting it to WDEQ.

Bacteria Load Reduction Needs/Requirements:

Priority Areas:

The Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Plan was developed in 2011. Load duration curves for bacteria were developed based on the 2007-2008 Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Assessment as well as the 2011 interim monitoring data. The load duration curves relate bacteria to flow. They determine how much bacteria levels need to be reduced in order to meet the standards. Amy developed maps based on the past years data to compare where bacteria levels have increased/decreased within the watershed. These maps are not necessarily going to be used to try and determine trends (there simply isn't enough data), but may be used to help prioritize projects. They can help us weigh one project against another in a low funding situation.

Progress Registers:

Progress registers were developed for all three watersheds to help document water quality work. They are a way of documenting/showing water quality progress on the watershed since standard water quality monitoring doesn't reflect water quality changes in the short term. The Progress Registers are maps showing where water quality projects have been completed, demonstrating work within the watershed. In the Prairie Dog Creek Watershed, these maps show that most of the projects have been in the upper end.

Plan Progress Review and Update:

Completed and Upcoming Action Items:

The current Prairie Dog Creek Watershed Plan was approved by WDEQ in 2012. Within the Plan there are certain action items/milestones set for a certain amount of time to keep us on track. Right now we are partially on track. We haven't been able to meet all the goals, but this is possibly because due to being too ambitious. We've tried to do project follow ups within the watershed and the other two watersheds, but haven't been able to get as far as we've wanted to. The initial survey we sent out had a very poor response, and we haven't had the time to do a follow up.

Revision and Update Schedule:

The current watershed plan is set to expire in 2015. Carrie wanted to know how the group would like to proceed. Should we extend this plan, re-write or wait until next February to decide? In order for SCCD to be able to provide cost-share assistance to landowners, we need to have an approved watershed plan in place. Our District has a good relationship with WDEQ and we have quite a bit of funding available for upcoming projects. We also have a 319 grant that we haven't used yet and we also have another big grant through USDA we can use to help fund projects in Sheridan County. The group would like to revisit the Plan later this fall.

SCCD Cost-Share Program Update:**Program Changes:**

The SCCD Board and staff decided to make a few changes to the cost-share programs. For the past few years, the programs have been a revolving door. The District was reviewing applications at every meeting and sometimes reviewing the same application multiple times. The Board will review applications in April and August, so participants need to have their applications turned into the District by March 1st and July 1st. This allows District staff to look at potential projects prior to the Board meetings. The staff felt like these two dates still allowed plenty of time for summer and fall construction, which is typical for most projects. The Board did request for an emergency provision to be included for septic systems that failed outside of the batching period, but would otherwise qualify for funding. The staff is working on getting the process up on the District website, along with project applications.

Grant/funding opportunities; including RCPP:

The District/NRCS along with The Nature Conservancy and the Sheridan Community Land Trust were one of 2 applicants in Wyoming that were awarded a Regional Conservation Partnership Program. This grant is for 1.9 million dollars to be spent on projects in Sheridan County over the next three years. It will function very similar to the EQIP program, but participants in the program will not have to compete for funding against Johnson and Campbell Counties. It will follow the EQIP timeline for sign-up dates and deadlines. We don't have an official agreement yet, but expect to have one soon.

Public Information and Education:**Watershed Newsletter:**

Amy explained that the most recent watershed newsletter was just sent out. We continue to do these on an annual basis to help keep people up to date on what's going on with water quality work within the watershed and to announce upcoming meetings, program sign-ups, etc.

Pollinator Workshop:

For the past couple of years, the District has held a workshop or series of workshops in conjunction with Soil and Water Stewardship Week. This year the theme is "Local Heroes: Your Hardworking Pollinators". The District has lined up guest speakers from the University of Wyoming Biodiversity Institute. They are also having people who preregister enter into a drawing for a preplanned pollinator garden. The garden will consist of \$150.00 worth of regionally native plants to attract pollinators. The workshop will be on Wednesday, May 6th at 6:00 p.m. at the Sheridan Fulmer Public Library in the Inner Circle.

Septic Folder/Inserts:

Amy also explained that the SCCD recently revamped some information to be distributed to homeowners who apply for septic permits through Sheridan County. In the past, the District had

supplied the County with “Homeowner Folders” through the Small Flows Clearinghouse out of West Virginia. The assembled folders are no longer available for purchase, but the information in the folders can be downloaded from the Small Flows Clearinghouse website. The County ran out of folders and was downloading the information for people when they came in to apply for their permits. This process was a bit cumbersome, and the information, while good, was a bit redundant and more than was necessary. Amy and Carrie went through all of the information that was included in the original folders and condensed it onto a front and back, full color, septic fact sheet. They also had new folders printed through Quick Printing. The County is now distributing the folders with only the septic fact sheets inside.

Additional Comments from the Group:

Amy asked the group how they prefer to receive information about upcoming workshops/program signups/etc. The responses were varied, from e-mails to postcards. However, most of the group agreed that information on the radio, either via AM 930 or Public Pulse is a good way to reach people.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for fall of 2015.

Submitted by Amy Doke, Program Specialist