



**Moses Lake Watershed Council Virtual Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 16, 2021 – 10:00 AM-12:00 PM**

Attendance:

Marie Lotz (Grant County Conservation District-GCCD), Elliott DeLong (GCCD), Harold Crose (GCCD-Chair), Mike Riggs (City of Moses Lake Council Member), Ty Swartout (Citizen), Ron Sawyer (Grant County Tourism), Chris Overland (Moses Lake Irrigation & Rehabilitation District-MLIRD), Bill Aukett (City of Moses Lake-Stormwater), Brook Otis (Trout Lodge), John Roos (GCCD), Rhonda DeVito (HydroFLOW Representative), Deanna Elliott (GCCD), Kris Ribellia (GCCD), Damien Hooper (Grant County Planning Department), Gina Hoff (US Bureau of Reclamation-USBR), Allison Williams (City of Moses Lake-Administrator), Mike Schmuck (WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife-WDFW), Jeff Foster (MLIRD), Kaj Selmann (MLIRD)

Lotz called the Moses Lake Watershed Council (MLWC) meeting to order at 10:02 am. Introductions were made.

Council Member Reports/Updates:

City of Moses Lake – Riggs reported the City has approved the update for the Shoreline Management Act consultation. The Act since 1971 law for towns and cities, the overall goal is to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines. This will take a year; the consultants will help obtain a Department Of Ecology (DOE) grant for \$22,500 and the balance of \$50,000 the City will pay out of their coffers. The report is due July 2022. Williams added this is a state mandated process through the Growth Management Act (GMA), syncs very well with the planning of the MLWC to freshen their standards and practices on the upland portion. There is a public involvement component and a firm was hired to do an ecological and geo-technical analysis. They have been having great conversations with a variety of agencies on in depth look at the differing shoreline such as urban, rural, and the different shoreline materials. It has led them to new permitting processes that are user friendly and more education upfront and new partnerships. This should work for both the MLWC and the Cities updated plan and sharing information.

Riggs said they have been looking at the MLIRD water replacement to provide irrigation water to the lake in leu of potable water they currently use to irrigate - could save 15 million cubic feet per day when watering lawns. This is in the early phases of study for consideration. He appreciates the discussions with Kaj Selmann, Richard Teals, and Chris Overland going over this process. With the growth of Moses Lake - potable water may be a concern in the future.

Riggs attended the Columbia Basin Development Leagues presentation and learned about the Odessa Aquifer Replacement Program. This will be a topic of interest for the MLWC and to continue to keep updated on the progress.

Grant County Health District – No representative to give a report.

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Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District – Overland reported staff collaborated on the Senator Patty Murray’s requests for more information on the infrastructure for the Odessa Aquifer Replacement Project proposal for lake improvement ideas. They have also asked USBR for tentative feed schedule for Moses Lake from Rocky Coulee Wasteway, they are waiting for a response. The meeting in December there was discussions on the company Eutrophix – presenting a filtering agent for Rocky Ford Creek – they are currently working with Dan Newhouse to fund that project, should know more soon. The MLIRD is working for 2021 treatments – plan continues for peroxide treatments, sampling of toxins on Connelly Park again, more phosphorus research with Gene Welch and Tetra Tech for potential future alum treatments, working on exploring a higher winter elevation similar to the old dam using stop logs at the dam site, and the May carp tournament needs proof of insurance and Aqua Tech may donate for the cost of the insurance. DeVito asked what the plan was for the alum treatment? Overland stated to add peroxide on the north end of the lake. There was no peroxide added to the north end of the lake last year but they plan to experiment with application this year. Department of Health has also warned them not to treat active blooms which a consideration they will take while moving forward with the project.

Grant County Conservation District – No report, updates on the agenda.

Department of Ecology – Nobody present for an update.

US Bureau of Reclamation – Hoff reported that the CWMP or the WaterSMART grant for the MLWC is now in Arc Review, once Arc Review is complete, they go to an internal review then they are forwarded to Washington DC and then they are awarded. The announcement who was awarded the grants should happen within a few months. Currently USBR has open the Applied Sciences grant.

Swartout had a question about the Fish Hatchery pipeline project – what is the amount of phosphorus coming into the springs and will there be a negative impact by bringing more water through Rock Ford Creek and through the pipeline with there be more phosphorus at the north end of the lake? Hoff is looking into the phosphorus concentrations at Irby and Rock Ford that they have for 2015-16, as opposed to other years they were not getting feedwater, so that she can better understand how this will all work out and working with Llyn Dormuse (DOE) and Steve Cox (US Geological Survey). Selmann asked Overland if there is any northland data that may help her. Overland will look into it and send to Hoff and Hoff will keep Overland in the loop of discussions.

Overland asked if USBR would be getting the Rocky Ford flow meter working again? She is not sure but Overland will send an email asking and she will send it to the correct staff to answer that question.

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Other Reports:

Citizen - Swartout reported that they are sponsors on board, the carp tournament is scheduled for May 22nd. The last piece they need to do is the insurance certification. They are hoping to exceed the 22 boats for the tournament a few years ago.

Grant County Tourism - Sawyer reported about an idea to tax some of the long-term investment level to take care of itself rather than add peroxide one year and an alum treatment. Doing a lot of research and would involve all the agencies. Sawyer is looking at the following plans they would help the lake to naturally treat itself – reduce carp population, get off the ground some of the City projects for remediation – lake level, building soil back up on the shorelines, reducing erosion – taking on a long-term comprehensive approach for the lake restoration so it can take care of itself naturally. He went on to mention that building up the banks and putting in natural plantings along the different shorelines along the lake which is outlined in the Cities Shoreline Master Plan. He is offering for his business (The Marina) be the location to house the plantings to be planted, facilitate the removal of the carp. He has a 501(c)3 that he could fund these projects with if the MLWC doesn't bring him on to do as part of the Council. Sawyer got his information from the TMDL report which states the lake as no ability to remove phosphorus on its own because of the removal of the macrophytes (mussels) and shoreline vegetation which would help with reducing the phosphorus in the lake. Overland said with lake level, with the new dam they can get down much faster than they use to be able to, once they open the gates in November. Some conversations were what would it look like if they went back to the old level, which is a foot to 18 inches higher on the lake during winter time than what they are currently doing. This could be a conversation for another meeting.

Swartout voiced his concerns of the carp to Schmuck. He pointed out there was netting done last year but was wondering how netting could be a yearly event? Schmuck said Anton Reutuv, who harvested the carp last year, is the only person with a permit to collect carp but he does it for the eggs, not for carp control. Anton did return one day this year. Swartout asked how we could get Anton to come more often because the number of carp he removed on the project a few years ago if done yearly would make an impact. Swartout went on to say Anton was paid for the removal the first time, maybe we could continue this reimbursement some way. He went on to say that the first project he removed the males, while this is not his normal practice, perhaps if we reached out to the crawdad fisherman perhaps, they can use the males for bait to help Anton get rid of the males. DeLong talked with Anton in the past, since he is the only carp netter for the area one issue is, he is based out of Spokane and nets in various areas. He is interested in netting in Moses Lake but his primary focus is females only. The first project he did for GCCD the requirement was for him to net and dispose of both male and females which doubled his workload. Selmann asked if we provided him a dumpster would he be willing to dispose of the males? DeLong said one concern for him is if his permit allows him to net and get rid of males, he does not want to jeopardize his permit. Anton did mention if he had approval to get rid of males under his permit, he may be willing to remove them also. Anton did also mention to DeLong that his catch ratio versus workload on Moses Lake was well worth the trip. DeLong said if he continues to come back to Moses Lake getting rid of the female population should help reduce the numbers over time. Overland asked what is the market for

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the eggs? DeLong said he cures and salts them and sells them across the nation to certain communities back east and Midwest.

He also asked how to work on fish habitat projects within the lake for predators on the juveniles especially during low water during the winter. Schmuck reported the mergansers population on Moses Lake during the winter time is directly related to the abundance of juvenile yellow perch population. He mentioned yellow perch multiply quickly so keeping the population at a minimum is helpful for a lake like Moses Lake.

Grant County – Hooper let the group know they too will be working on updating their shoreline plan in the next couple of months which is to be completed by next June.

Infrastructure Response:

Cröse reported the deadline to submit the infrastructure package to Senator Patty Murray's office at her requests in preparation for what is happening at the national level. Cröse thanked Overland and Bill Bailey for their addition on behalf of the MLWC for submitting the ask. The package is for structural components primarily. They are looking at how it will benefit the community – jobs, welfare, economics – for the short and long term. Cröse went on to say while preparing the responses they looked at all the project activities discussed the last couple of years such as projects for Rocky Ford Creek to Connelly - alum injection system, and flock settling basin. They are looking into the early stages of automated data system to monitor lake water quality – technology has come a long way such as temperature, nitrate levels, turbidity, settlement – phosphorus is at the early stages such as spectrometry. This could help the MLWC for future treatments with real time monitoring systems in place. Also put in things for around the lake – shoreline restoration, erosion control, wildlife plantings, wetland habitat development infiltration systems. Looking beyond the lake the creek systems – small landowners for fencing and off-site watering systems, help treat anything that may enter the lake like nutrient/nitrogen/phosphorus. Further up the watershed looking at – agricultural land treatments such as sediment control, confined feeding operations such as streambank restorations and wildlife habitat plantings. Also left room for continuing studies for engineering and other things for additional water into Rocky Ford Creek particularly Round Lake to continue studies for an 80 million dollar ask and have a place holder in the package to cover some of the work needed to be done. Cröse said it was very vague how long we had to spend the funding if awarded – indication by staffers is under 100 million is 5 years. Also, in the ask is if more water is run through the lake could the City of Moses Lake tap into the water for their uses. They also added part of the automated monitoring system to look at the septic systems within the watershed and close proximity to the lake – use of well monitoring systems to track nitrogen movement. It was a very comprehensive package and for the budget ask was for the “low hanging fruit” excluding Round Lake for \$4.7-6.8 million. Overland added to their sampling they prefer to use their hatch or Van Dorn bottle to do sampling on the lake via a boat. Cröse offered to the group he is willing to do a presentation about the ask if interested. Selmann asked if alum was considered in the ask? Cröse said it was added for 1 complete treatment Rock Ford Arm to Connelly enough to do the stripping of the water column and encapsulate the column. Should know this summer if awarded the package.

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MLWC Outreach:

Ribellia said last month her and DeLong shared an outline for an Information and Outreach Plan. Started moving forward with developing the plan. She shared the Information Table which will help create the narrative plan. The table headlines are – Audience, Methods of Education and Outreach, Core Messages, Programs and Focus Areas, Calls to Action, Desired Outcomes, Implementation Leads and Staff, Current Priority, and Timeline. Items in pink are action items to start now, green are in place currently and blue are things that need to be developed. She went on to say they will be asking for the MLWC feedback and input. This plan will be updated and added to over time. In addition to developing the table and starting the narrative, she has reached out to Bill Burke with the Tourism Commission. She is working with him to see if the logo created for “Healthy Lakes” makes sense to incorporate into the MLWC. Ribellia also reached out to Stephanie Shopbell with the Grant County Health District coordinate messaging and protocols for getting advisories out to the public. She also reached out to Aukett with the City of Moses Lake to work with him on the stormwater program.

One of the top priorities is a Spring Newsletter which her and DeLong has started to create the template. They would like to include any upcoming events – carp derby, other important information. DeLong is working on a utility bill insert hoping to add to the Cities monthly billings. DeLong is working on getting out the Carp brochure created earlier in the year along with the carp derby brochure to the local businesses as a handout.

Ribellia showed the draft website created for the MLWC. GCCD staff came up with the following statements for the website: “Clean lake, health community, strong economy.” “Together improving, protecting, and preserving the water quality in Moses Lake and our greater watershed for present and future generations.” Added to the top of the web page is an “Advisory notice” on current lake conditions. A “Report Algal Bloom” which would go direct to the Health Department and others who are interested in receiving a notice.

After reviewing the Main Page items – The Problem, Our Mission, Get Involved, Latest News, the Moses Lake Use and Perspective survey results, Upcoming Events, join our Email List, A Community Effort with MLWC logos – Ribellia ask that we come up with the website URL that the community would be able to find the MLWC. The one idea was “moseslakewatershed.org”. Overland suggested “MLWC.org”.

Ribellia opened it up for suggestions, changes or URL idea. Crose added GCCD discussed having a more robust outreach program to keep the community updated. This is a start and will continue to increase as time goes on.

Foster stated he was concerned that the MLWC website having “advisories” on the lake. He is concerned that if we have wrong information which wasn’t updated, we could be held liable. Ribellia asked where can people go to understand what the signs mean when the Grant County Health puts them up around the lake? Sawyer responded when the signs go up on the lake, they are predicated on someone reporting a algae bloom. It does not have to be verified; the Health

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department uses their discretion – if they see an alga bloom, they post the sign then they follow-up with a test which last year they were correct the microcystin was above the allowable level. He went on to say the sign is telling people not to swim and not to eat the fish. The sign stays in place until they have 2 clean weeks of testing and if clear the sign is taken down. At the end of the year, usually September, they run out of funds for testing thus leaving the signs up. The signs typically go up July 4th the last couple of years. Sawyer said it would be nice to have updated signs with a QR code so people can get the most updated information about the lakes condition and would be nice if our website could have that updated information. DeVito asked if there would be any year-round MLWC signage giving our website and QR code to get the latest information about the lake? Ribellia stated that in the Outreach template addresses signage and is important to do if the MLWC agrees and if there are funds. Sawyer said we have \$15,000 appropriated through the Grant County Tourism to do the signage we are talking about. He went on to say a meeting with himself, Bill Burke and Ribellia to get a final draft of what the signs are going to look like and a brochure for all the hotel/motels and for the City Park to send out. Once we agree what the signs will look like then we need final approval from Grant County Health. Overland added that Connelly does not have a lifeguard or attendants on duty – what was safe in the morning might not be in the afternoon due to winds blowing in blooms. He went on to say, is it safe to swim in the water – without real time monitoring, on shift lifeguards or attendant to direct the public if it is safe or not. Ribellia said that is a good point and that is the message the community needs to understand – conditions can change within hours. It is good to have these conversations to work on the messaging for the public to understand the complexity of the lake water quality. Foster said his reasoning for not having an advisory banner on the conditions of the lake is because this is the Department of Health’s responsibility not the MLWC. He believes that more research needs to be done – where the information should come from because it can change momentarily and would like more discussions if this is the responsibility of the MLWC or keep that with the Department of Health responsibility. Selmann agrees we should not be the ones but perhaps we could consolidate all the agencies testing – MLIRD, DOE, Department of Health – and a picture of the blue green algae notifying them if they see this to avoid going in the water. Gives the public the status of the different areas of the lake that has been tested currently to give the public more information to make their own decisions. He went on to say he agrees we should not say this area is ok but this area is not. Sawyer said the purpose of the signs is to give the public direction how to find out the latest information on lake conditions – directing them to Grant County Health. Crose said with real time monitoring there could be cameras that use spectrometry placed strategically along the lake to show current conditions. We need to look into this for the future. Sawyer mentioned there is an Cyano App you can download to see real time the picture of the lake – tells you roughly which areas of the lake have cyanobacteria or not. Foster asked where the App is getting their information? Sawyer was not sure if it is satellite and not sure if it is within 5 minutes of what the data is. Ribellia said for the website where we show Advisory Conditions what if we put “for current advisories visit Grant County Health District website” with their link. The group agreed and decided to make it a link to the Grant County Department of Health advisory. Sawyer said Department of Health tests on Tuesday’s and posting on Friday’s – has been their schedule last 3 years.

Ribellia went on to ask what should the URL for the website be for the public to find us. The two options given was Moseslakewatershedcouncil.org, Moseslakewatershed.org or MLWC.org. Lotz will send out a survey to the MLWC on

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which URL they prefer and will email everyone which one is the winner. Email Ribellia what information you want added to the website or for the Spring newsletter.

DOE Grant Update:

DeLong did receive back from DOE, Seebacher, edits on the QAPP for the Fresh Algae Control grant. A meeting is scheduled next week to review the edits and they have indicated they would like to see a professional limnologist hired. DeLong will reach out to Gene Welch on the edits and to get his opinion. Currently in final stages of getting the grant set to begin. We also provided out of this grant funding to USGS for sampling. Crose said we also have an opportunity to use WSU Grad students to help with some of the work on the lake – may not have to hire a limnologist and just use the Grad students.

Carp Update:

Swartout updated the group earlier on the agenda. Lotz asked if he would be willing to do a write-up for the newsletter. Swartwout said he can do that and has a flyer he is finalizing.

Current Lake Conditions:

Crose said this is a placeholder to see if there are any additional information, we should know from MLIRD or Grant County Health. Swartout was out on the lake the north end, Rocky Ford Arm 53 degrees, last 2 miles of the lake still a lot of floating materials on the lake. Lower end of the lake 50 degrees, by golf course and bridge. At Cascade bay was 52 degrees.

Crose asked when water comes on. Overland said last of March early April. Hoff reported should go on next week – South District is on so means Potholes East canal is on and the main canal at Billy Clapp will come on Tuesday/Thursday next week.

Adjournment:

DeVito mentioned her team, HydroFLOW, scheduled a informational interaction virtual meeting that had to be cancelled due to illness. It is rescheduled for Wednesday, March 24th at 1:30 pm for those who would like to attend – bring your questions.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:41 am.

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