

MINUTES OF THE
BIG BEAR LAKE TMDL TASK FORCE MEETING

December 9, 2008

Agency

Regional Water Quality Control Board
Big Bear Municipal Water District
Brown and Caldwell
California Department of Transportation
California Department of Transportation
City of Big Bear Lake
Risk Sciences
San Bernardino National Forest
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

Participant

Hope Smythe
Scott Heule
Nancy Gardiner
Cathy Jochai
Gian Villareal (RBF)
David Lawrence
Tim Moore
Robert Taylor
Rick Whetsel
Marie Jauregui

Call to Order & Introductions

Big Bear Lake TMDL Task Force meeting was called to order at the Big Bear Municipal Water District's office, 40524 Lakeview Drive, Big Bear Lake, California.

Approval of November 18, 2008 Minutes

The November 18, 2008, Big Bear Lake TMDL Task Force minutes were unanimously approved.

Update: Task Force Agreement Approval

The signature page from Big Bear Mountain Resorts has been received. The City of Big Bear Lake and BBMWD will take the Agreement to their Boards on December 12 and December 18, respectively. SAWPA is taking the Agreement to its Board for approval today. Caltrans estimates that the Agreement will be approved in the next ten to 14 days. The Regional Board is taking the Agreement to their Board for approval in January.

Status Update: Watershed and Lake Monitoring Program

Nancy Gardiner/Brown and Caldwell reported that the contract issue with CDM has been resolved, and she is ready to begin monitoring. The Monitoring Plan is underway. Currently, she is reviewing each of the sites and is preparing for field training in the spring. She also is working on contracting with a courier to transport the samples from the mountain to the lab.

The Sampling Plan is estimated to be complete by December 19. The QAPP is in process. Hope Smythe suggested that Brown and Caldwell anticipate sampling in March or April for the snowmelt. It was suggested to schedule the training for early March.

The Watershed Plan will be taken to the Regional Board in January for approval. For that to happen, Ms. Smythe needs to have the Draft Plan by January 5 for staff review and inclusion on the agenda. It was noted that the QAPP does not need to be included with the Watershed Plan.

Scott Heule said that David Jones and Rosie Martinez from the U.S. Forest Service are billing BBMWD through the end of October for FedEx shipping charges for the atmospheric deposition samples. Thus, a few months worth of shipping will be included on the invoices that will be sent out to the Task Force. Robert Taylor expects that the FedEx shipping charges to BBMWD will only go through the end of October.

Tim Moore discussed the Lake Management Plan, noting that it is a conceptual structure and not a CEQA required document. The philosophy of the Plan is that virtually anything that can be done is currently being

done and included in this Plan. He distributed a draft copy of the Plan. The Task Force has an obligation to describe how to comply with the dry weather TMDL. The Regional Board concluded when the TMDL was adopted that the external phosphorus discharges from surrounding watershed were trivial, so there is no requirement to further reduce those loads. The entire focus of the Big Bear Lake TMDL is on the reduction of in-lake nutrient loads in dry weather conditions. Mr. Moore described the background of the lake, the TMDL targets, and the source of the nutrient loads during dry weather. He also described the beneficial use protection strategy, which is broken into four parts – prevention programs, mitigation measures, remediation projects, and offset programs.

Mr. Moore discussed the prevention programs, noting that the two largest programs are the Municipal Stormwater Management Plan and the San Bernardino Forest Management Plan. He noted that he treated the Resorts as the MOU states that they should be treated – as a general business that falls under the City of Big Bear Lake’s permit. The Resorts will be inspected and advised just like any other business. Cathy Jochai suggested referencing Caltrans’ permit. Mr. Moore will add it to the document.

Mr. Moore then discussed mitigation measures, which are efforts that reduce the effect of phosphorus once it is in the Lake. The mitigation measures described in this section include dredging and alum treatments. This section of the Plan also describes the first commitment by the Task Force – update the TMDL models during the next 12-18 months as a means to determine whether any residual responsibility remains. Discussion briefly ensued regarding dredging.

The next section, remediation projects, discusses projects that counteract the negative effects of phosphorus. Mr. Moore described the remediation projects as projects that work to treat the symptoms (e.g., weed control program and aeration program). As part of the weed control program effort, BBMWD has trained and certified personnel to identify and handle this issue. They also routinely perform an annual vegetation survey to track progress. The long-term goal is to eliminate the invasive plants and re-establish native vegetation. Discussion briefly ensued regarding water temperature and zooplankton. Ms. Smythe requested that the BBMWD permit be referenced with regards to the weed control program. Both the weed control program and aeration project result in significantly more habitat. However, how much habitat recovered needs to be calculated. To do this, there needs to be a monitoring and modeling program. He will add retention basins/ponds to this section.

The last section of the beneficial use protection strategy is the offset program, which provides environmental benefits that compensate for the adverse impacts of poor water quality. Examples of this are the fishery management effort (e.g., fish stocking, fish removal) and the lake stabilization program (ongoing since 1977). These efforts create and sustain habitat. The offset program stresses the cost-benefit relationship.

Mr. Moore discussed the 3D map, which defines two baseline conditions of the lake – during TMDL listing and before human development. The data is intended to endorse what is currently being done. The idea is to work on an adaptive management basis. He also discussed the implementation schedule.

Comments on the Plan are due to Tim Moore by January 9.

Schedule Next Meeting

The next TMDL Task Force meeting has been scheduled for Friday, January 9 at 9:30 a.m. at San Bernardino County Public Works.

Adjournment

There being no further business for review, the meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m.