

ABSTRACT

IMPLEMENTATION OF TMDLS ABOVE WINCHESTER LAKE

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Winchester Lake is located within the exterior boundaries of the Nez Perce Reservation, approximately 30 miles southeast of Lewiston, Idaho. The lake served as a millpond from 1910 to 1963. The 100-acre body of water is the central focus of a 218-acre State Park that surrounds the lake.

In the late 1980s, residents and visitors complaints of the lake's nuisance algae blooms and poor water clarity prompted the formation of a Local Clean Lakes Task Force and implementation of a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Lakes Program. In 1990, the program identified high levels of nutrients, and low dissolved oxygen as aggravations to water quality within the lake. Ironically, the 1991 Fishery Monitoring Summary stated that the lake represented the most successful stocking program of trout in the Clearwater Region lowland lakes.

Past implementation efforts of the Lewis Soil Conservation District utilizing the State Ag Water Quality Program and a Clean Lakes Project greatly improved water quality in the watershed and provided a dialog amongst land users in the area that actually set the backdrop for the total maximum daily load (TMDL) process.

ONGOING

Winchester Lake and Upper Lapwai TMDL

The 1996-303(d) list for the State of Idaho reported that state water quality standards were not met and a TMDL would be required. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and EPA provided direction and were instrumental in assisting the local working groups of what this new process should be like. In 1998, a Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) was formed. The WAG brought to the table local residents from all land use interests such as Ag/Grazing, Forestry, Nez Perce Tribe, County Road District, City government, and Recreation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a first of its kind, was prepared between the State of Idaho, Nez Perce Tribe, and EPA with the intent to work collectively on development of the TMDL. The WAG and agencies recognized past efforts, and identified areas where problems still exist. In February 1999, the TMDL was completed and approved.

TMDL Implementation

A TMDL implementation plan was then developed, utilizing the expertise of "designating agencies" and local entities for choosing and prioritizing the BMPs that best target the reductions needed. A 319 Grant was then prepared based upon recommendations of the implementation

plan. The Lewis Soil Conservation District received the funds and installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) began in 2001. BMPs were installed on the following land uses:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Road Improvements (Evergreen Highway District)
- Lake Side Improvements, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
- In Lake Improvements, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- City of Winchester
- Nez Perce Tribe

MONITORING

The WAG will continue to keep informed from the technical entities whether implementation reaches towards the goals of the TMDL. Monitoring efforts will reflect the successes, and may identify areas for improvement.

The Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts and the Nez Perce Tribe have been monitoring in the streams to document existing water quality status.

The Idaho Soil Conservation Commission is performing BMP effectiveness at the field level to determine adequacy of installation of selected BMPs, consistency of maintenance, and relative effectiveness in reducing water quality impacts.

The integration of all entities for implementation of BMPs in the watershed reflect the group's ambition and desire to seek solutions to resource related issues.