

Update: Elk River Watershed Association TMDLs

Shortly after the stakeholder meeting last March, the snow began to melt and the streams began to flow! It was those spring flows that kicked off **Phase II** of the TMDL process.

Phase II consists of the collection of a robust set of data, calculation of the assimilative capacities of the impaired waters, and the construction of water quality models that will be used in the final load allocation (to complete the TMDL document and Implementation Plan).

Thus far in Phase II: 20 stream sites were monitored for a gamut of chemical parameters such as total phosphorus, chlorophyll-a and E.coli bacteria as well as stream flow. Monitoring was also conducted on Big Elk and Mayhew Lakes. The water sample collection portion of Phase II came to a close on October 31st, 2009.

In addition to the collection of water samples, a bank erosion survey was completed on the Elk River for the portions listed as impaired for turbidity. To complete the survey we floated the Elk River by canoe from Big Elk Lake to County Road 5 near the confluence of the Elk with the St. Francis River. Along the float, areas of bank erosion were identified and measurements of the erosion were recorded. This information will help to determine whether or not sediment plays a role in the turbidity impairment on the Elk River.



Stream flow gauging on Lilly Creek.



Bank Erosion survey on the Elk River.

So what will we do with all of the data that was collected over the summer?

Good question! The data has been sent off to Wenck Associates Inc. the project consultants. Over the winter of 2009/2010 Wenck will review, analyze and interpret the flow and water quality data. Should additional information be warranted, sample collection will resume as recommended by Wenck Inc.

What's Next?

Once data analysis is complete you will have another opportunity to hear about and comment on the results of data analysis as well as to discuss the development of the TMDL Implementation Plan. At this

point we can project that the 2nd TMDL Stakeholder meeting will be held sometime in the spring of 2010; rest assured that if you are receiving this update you will also receive an invitation to the public meeting. REMEMBER, your opinion matters, we want to listen to what you have to say as much as we want you to listen to what we have to say!

Best Regards,

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P.S. I would like to thank those who lent a helping hand with monitoring this summer including: Dan Stang (volunteer on Lilly Creek), Francine Larson (Sherburne SWCD), Annie Felix (Benton SWCD) and Gerry Maciej (Benton SWCD).