

**Nampa Wastewater Advisory Group
Meeting #1 (August 2011)
Questions & Answers**

- 1. Why has Nampa not addressed the phosphorus issue before now?**
Nampa has been actively working on addressing the phosphorus issue since 2008. However, the City decided it would best to delay upgrades to the City’s wastewater treatment plant until there is a better understanding of what the future permit limits will be.
- 2. Given that all the options cost approximately the same, are there substantial differences in effectiveness?**
The final costs associated with each option have not been fully evaluated so we are not certain that each option costs the same. Each of the options is equally effective in that it will reduce the amount of phosphorus in the Boise River. However, each option addresses the problem in a different manner. The different types and level of treatment will be addressed in future meetings when each option is thoroughly reviewed.
- 3. Is there a state code requiring that funds for this come from wastewater fees?**
No, there is no state code requiring that the funds come from wastewater fees.
- 4. Can you provide more graphics and tables? (Costs, projected costs, gallons per day projected, etc.) This would be very helpful.**
More graphics and details will be provided when we start discussing each option. The purpose of the first meeting was to give a high-level overview and background on the City’s upcoming decision. The next meeting will present an overview of options. Starting with the third meeting, we will be providing detailed information on each option.
- 5. Is the plan to bump sewer rates now to establish a fund for the project to minimize the need for a bond issue in 3-5 years?**
Yes. By increasing the sewer rates in the near future, the City will minimize the need for a bond issue in 3-5 years. This is currently the preferred funding option for the City. The City is performing studies which will identify multiple funding options. This information will be presented at future meetings.
- 6. Can more details (i.e. technical evaluations and reports) be provided for review?**
Yes, technical evaluations and reports are available for review once they are finalized.

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7. What about trading in the sense of putting in BMPs for 500 farms?

Implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for hundreds of farms would potentially improve the water quality in the Boise River. However, since EPA Region 10 implements the NPDES program in Idaho, significant work would be required to get EPA comfortable with the idea of trading pollutant credits between farms and cities. One of the key issues would be verifying that the farms with BMPs were collectively offsetting a sufficient amount of phosphorus to meet the City's permit requirements. The farm BMPs typically recommended are passive systems with highly variable performance so providing verifiable evidence that BMPs are removing the requisite TP would be challenging. In addition, attempting to coordinate with hundreds of farms and requesting access to return flows for treatment would be a significant task.

As far as trading is concerned, the City is looking at the Treat and Offset option. This would use an enhanced wetland as a method to remove phosphorus associated with agricultural return flows. Treat and offset would remove phosphorus associated with agricultural return flows through an active treatment system. The treat and offset option would not require coordination with hundreds of agricultural operations. This option would provide verifiable phosphorus removal efficiencies required by regulatory agencies and keep the project completely under the control of the City.

8. How difficult (if at all) will it be to meet potential temperature TMDL impacts?

The temperature limit is unknown at this point. The state is currently working with the EPA to set temperature limits in NPDES permits. Meeting a potential temperature TMDL depends on the discharge option selected. The temperature TMDL will only apply if the City continues to discharge to Indian Creek. If the City selects either of the land application (infiltration) options, a temperature TMDL would no longer be relevant.

The City is using a business case evaluation process to quantify the risks and benefits of all decisions. A potential temperature TMDL and required treatment processes are considered risks for the "Treat to EPA Levels" and the "Treat and Offset" options.

9. Can you provide us with a flow chart of the treatment plant and how it works?

Yes, this will be part of the NWAG Meeting #2. You will take a tour of Nampa's wastewater treatment plant and receive a handout explaining how the current treatment and discharge processes work.

10. Is the treatment process exploration closed?

No, the City is continuing to study treatment options and how best to phase the upgrades to meet regulatory requirements. The City has four options currently being considered.

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11. Are we limited only to the process currently identified by the engineers?

The professional management team began its evaluation last year with over 40 possible options. The range of options has been narrowed down to four: 1) Direct Infiltration 2) Rapid Infiltration 3) Treat and Offset 4) Only Upgrade the Treatment Plant. These options are generally agreed upon by the engineering team as the best options for Nampa. However, if a new option were presented that met the needs of the City and was deemed feasible by the team; the City would certainly give it consideration.

12. What does “high treatment” consist of?

Nampa’s wastewater treatment plant is currently a secondary treatment plant, which is generally considered a high level of treatment as it removes more than 90% of the influent organic matter and suspended solids. Treatment at a wastewater treatment plant generally falls into three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment. Primary treatment consists of removing all large particles from the wastewater, and removing organic matter that settles easily. Secondary treatment removes the majority of the biodegradable organic matter, suspended solids, and with some treatment processes, reduces nutrients. Tertiary treatment is aimed at removing the residual suspended matter left after secondary treatment.

13. Can’t the TMDL be determined by what is in the water originally and naturally?

The TMDL targets are based on designated “beneficial uses,” which are the benefits the river is expected to provide. The beneficial uses are determined by the public and regulatory agencies during the TMDL process. The current beneficial uses, such as primary contact recreation, may not have been a concern for the original or natural conditions of the river. Therefore, TMDLs are typically based on the current beneficial uses for the water body.

14. What is Kuna’s typical sewer bill since they have 0.07 mg/l total phosphorus limit?

Kuna’s typical sewer bill per equivalent service unit is \$24.65. It should be noted that the circumstances around Kuna’s permit varies from Nampa’s in several key ways:

- Kuna *applied* for a new permit because it had not been discharging to Indian Creek previously. Nampa’s permit is being *updated* because it has been discharging to Indian Creek for years.
- Kuna was looking to receive a permit quickly. Therefore, there was little room to negotiate.
- It is our understanding that Kuna actually requested a 0.07 mg/l limit from EPA to expedite the permitting process.