



Communicating with the public via BAGs and WAGs

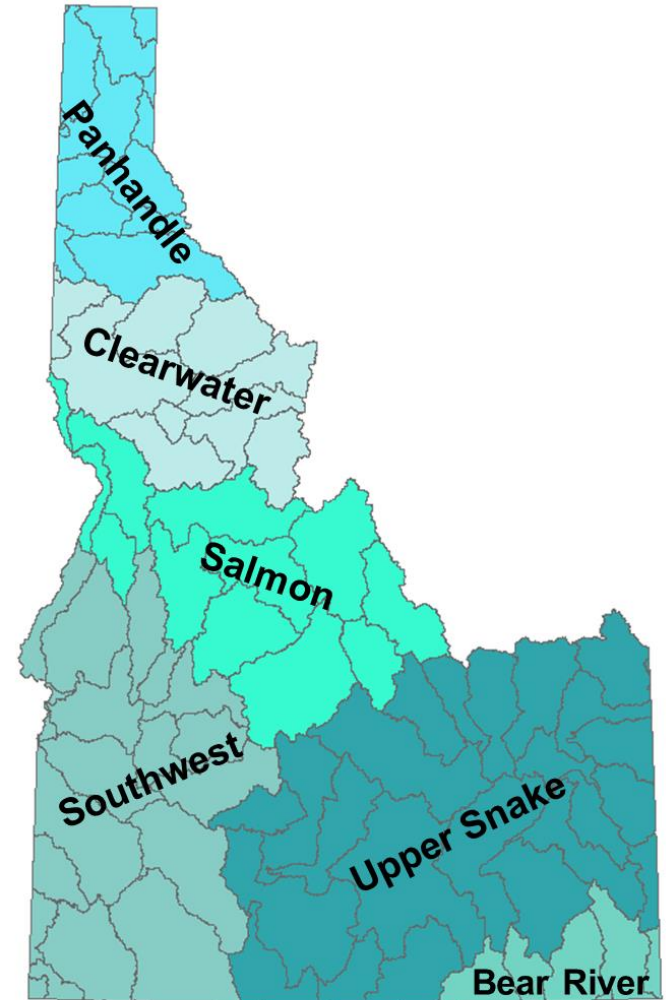
Amy Steimke & Graham Freeman



What are BAGs/WAGs?

- BAG = Basin Advisory Group
 - Created for each of Idaho's 6 major river basins
 - Roughly aligns with regional office boundaries, with each region managing a BAG
- WAG = Watershed Advisory Group
 - Created on a HUC8 watershed scale
 - Not all watersheds are active, but are required for all TMDLs (unless representatives cannot be identified)

Established in 1995 in Idaho Code to assist in implementing state water quality protection programs (although some groups have been active longer)



Duties of the BAGs/WAGs

BAGs

- Recommend priorities for stream monitoring.
- Recommend revisions to beneficial uses and water quality standards.
- Assign water body priorities for TMDLs.
- Review TMDLs.
- Recommend Watershed Advisory Groups to the DEQ Administrator.
- Recommend priorities for water quality programs based on economics.

WAGs

- Advise DEQ on implementation of Total Maximum Daily Loads.
- Recommend specific actions needed to control point and nonpoint source pollution in a watershed.
- Work with DEQ to provide for needed public involvement.

What interests are represented?

Members should represent the following (where applicable):

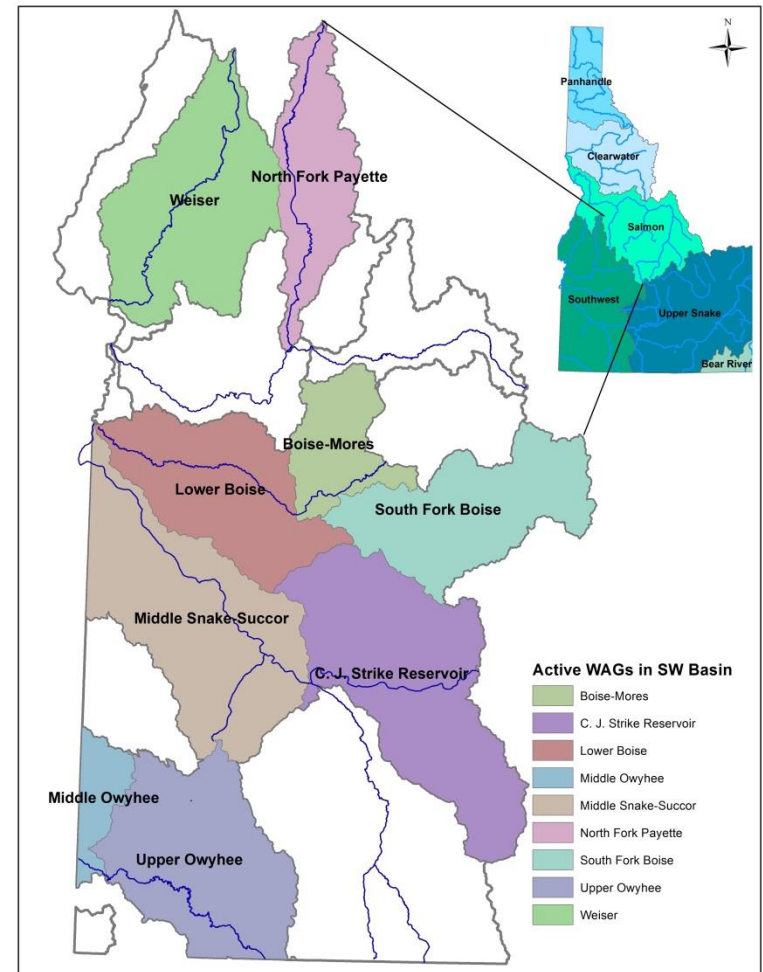
- Agriculture
- Mining
- Non-municipal NPDES
- Forestry
- Local government
- Livestock
- Indian tribes
- Water-based recreation
- Environmental interests
- Public at large



The activity level of a group is often dependent on local population size, competing interests, degree of environmental problems, etc.

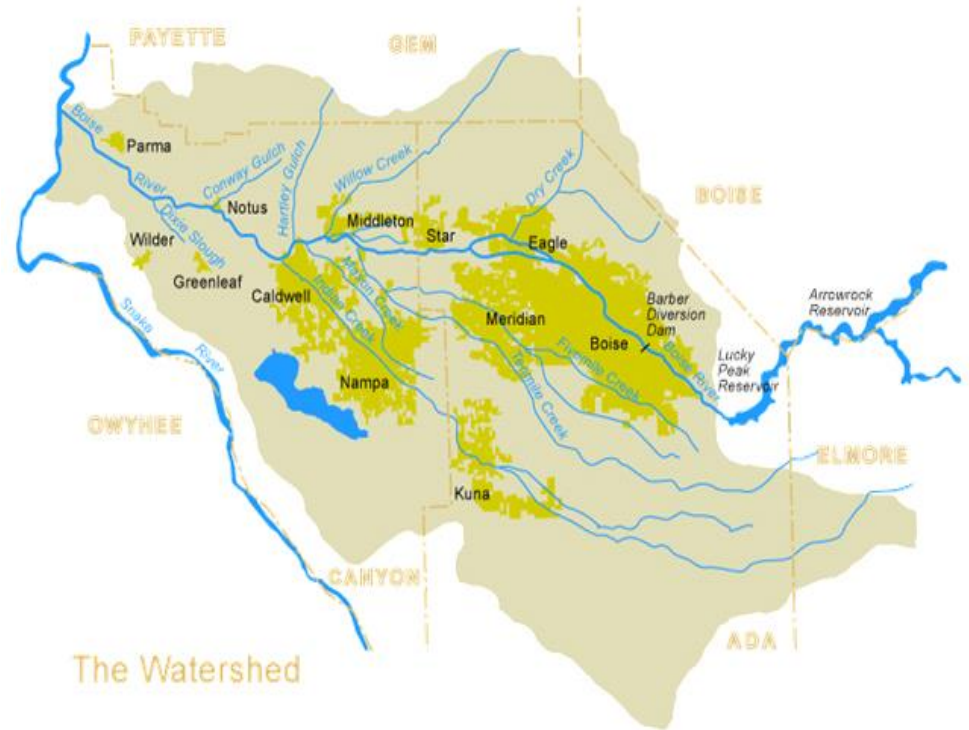
Basins Advisory Groups (in Practice)

- Quarterly Meetings
- Review DEQ's Regional Recommendations
 - TMDLs, Reviews, Monitoring
- Provide Input
 - Rulemaking and Integrated Report
- Double Duty for WAGs
- **Establishing Priorities for Water Quality Programs – 319 and State Implementation Dollars**

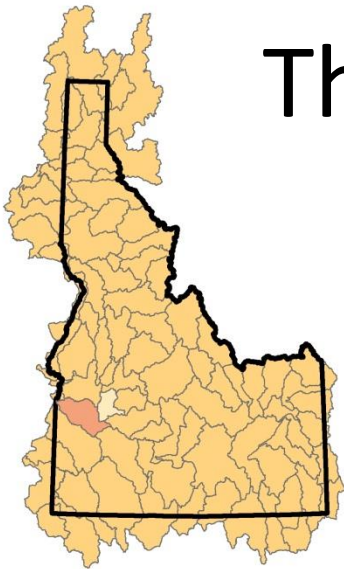


Watershed Advisory Groups (in practice)

- Suggest TMDL direction
- 5 year Reviews of TMDLs
- Technical Advisory Groups (TACs)
 - Model Development
 - Implementation Plans
 - Water Quality Trading Framework
 - BMP implementation



The Tale of Two WAGs

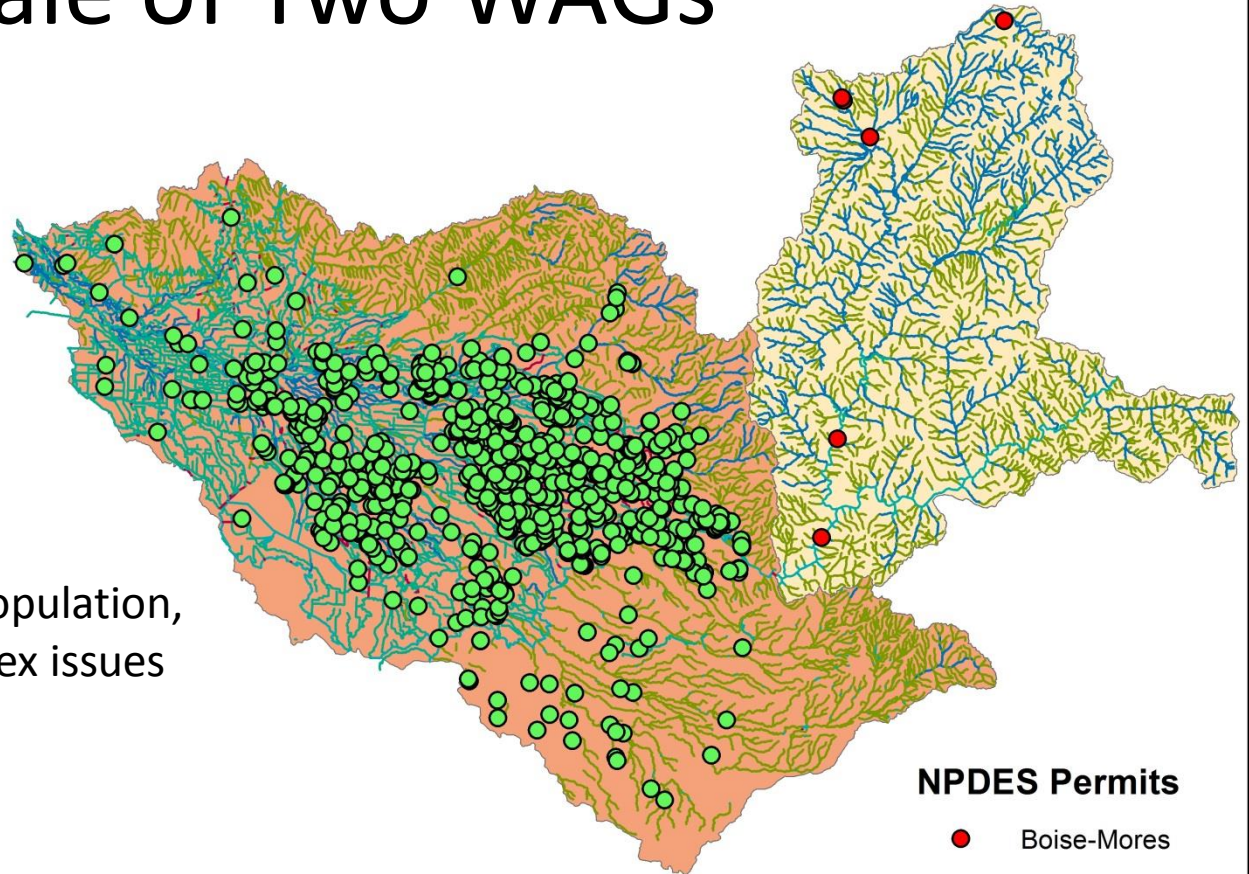


Lower Boise

- Point sources, large population, mixed land use, complex issues

Boise Mores

- The exact opposite

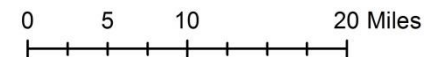


NPDES Permits

- Boise-Mores
- Lower Boise

Watershed

- Boise-Mores
- Lower Boise



What makes the Lower Boise WAG Successful

- Diverse Representation
- Regular Meetings
- Variety of Technical Subcommittees
- Open Communication

Outcomes from WAG Consultation

- Transparency
- No Surprises
- Ownership of Final Products

Lower Boise River TMDL

2015 Total Phosphorus Addendum

Hydrologic Unit Code 17050114



Final



State of Idaho
Department of Environmental Quality

August 2015

Summary

- Involvement level of groups across the state is highly variable
- However, good way to bring varied interests together and develop partnerships that ideally improve local water quality.
 - e.g. implementation plans may have more success if stakeholders take part in developing

