STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor
John H. Tippets, Director

February 3, 2017

Mr. Michael Lidgard
US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
1200 6th Avenue, OW-130
Seattle, WA 98101

RE: Final §401 Water Quality Certification for the Final NPDES Permit No. ID-0020842 for the City of Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant

Dear Mr. Lidgard:

The State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received a request for final certification on January 19, 2017 for the Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant to discharge from their existing facility. After review of the proposed final permit, DEQ submits the enclosed final §401 water quality certification.

Please direct any questions to June Bergquist at 208.666.4605 or june.bergquist@deq.idaho.gov .

Sincerely,

Daniel Redline
Regional Administrator
Coeur d'Alene Regional Office

Enclosure

C: Nicole Deinarowicz, DEQ Boise
Brian Nickel, EPA Region 10, Seattle
Ryan Luttmann, Public Works Director, City of Sandpoint

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Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Final §401 Water Quality Certification

February 3, 2017

NPDES Permit Number(s): ID0020842 City of Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant

Receiving Water Body: Pend Oreille River

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 401(a)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), as amended; 33 U.S.C. Section 1341(a)(1); and Idaho Code §§ 39-101 et seq. and 39-3601 et seq., the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has authority to review National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits and issue water quality certification decisions.

Based upon its review of the above-referenced permit and associated fact sheet, DEQ certifies that if the permittee complies with the terms and conditions imposed by the permit along with the conditions set forth in this water quality certification, then there is reasonable assurance the discharge will comply with the applicable requirements of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act, the Idaho Water Quality Standards (WQS) (IDAPA 58.01.02), and other appropriate water quality requirements of state law.

This certification does not constitute authorization of the permitted activities by any other state or federal agency or private person or entity. This certification does not excuse the permit holder from the obligation to obtain any other necessary approvals, authorizations, or permits.

Antidegradation Review

The WQS contain an antidegradation policy providing three levels of protection to water bodies in Idaho (IDAPA 58.01.02.051).

- Tier 1 Protection. The first level of protection applies to all water bodies subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction and ensures that existing uses of a water body and the level of water quality necessary to protect those existing uses will be maintained and protected (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01; 58.01.02.052.01). Additionally, a Tier 1 review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.07).
- Tier 2 Protection. The second level of protection applies to those water bodies considered high quality and ensures that no lowering of water quality will be allowed unless deemed necessary to accommodate important economic or social development (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02; 58.01.02.052.08).
- Tier 3 Protection. The third level of protection applies to water bodies that have been designated outstanding resource waters and requires that activities not cause a lowering of water quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03; 58.01.02.052.09).

DEQ is employing a water body by water body approach to implementing Idaho's antidegradation policy. This approach means that any water body fully supporting its beneficial uses will be considered high quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.a). Any water body not fully supporting its beneficial uses will be provided Tier 1 protection for that use, unless specific circumstances warranting Tier 2 protection are met (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.c). The most recent federally approved Integrated Report and supporting data are used to determine support status and the tier of protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05).

Pollutants of Concern

The Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges the following pollutants of concern: BOD_5, TSS, *E. coli*, chlorine, mercury, temperature, pH, phosphorus, ammonia, nitrate + nitrite, Kjeldahl nitrogen, arsenic, cadmium, total chromium, chromium VI, copper, cyanide, lead, nickel, silver, zinc and whole effluent toxicity (WET). Effluent limits have been developed for BOD_5, TSS, pH, *E. coli*, chlorine, mercury and phosphorus. No effluent limits are proposed for temperature, ammonia[1], nitrate + nitrite, Kjeldahl nitrogen, arsenic, cadmium, total chromium, chromium VI, copper, cyanide, lead, silver, zinc and WET. Although these pollutants are present in detectable amounts, none of the pollutants have a reasonable potential to exceed WQS. The Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant intends to increase their design flow. Limits for their current permit were calculated using a 3.0 mgd (million gallons per day) design flow and the draft permit uses a 5.0 mgd design flow.

Receiving Water Body Level of Protection

The Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges to the Pend Oreille River within the Pend Oreille Lake Subbasin assessment unit (AU) 17010214PN002_08 (Pend Oreille Lake to Priest River). This AU has the following designated beneficial uses: cold water aquatic life, domestic water supply, and primary contact recreation. In addition to these uses, all waters of the state are protected for agricultural and industrial water supply, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics (IDAPA 58.01.02.100).

According to DEQ's 2012 Integrated Report, this AU is not fully supporting one or more of its assessed uses. The cold water aquatic life use is not fully supported. Causes of impairment include total dissolved nitrogen gas (gas supersaturation) and temperature. As such, DEQ will provide Tier 1 protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01) for the aquatic life use. The contact recreation beneficial use is unassessed. DEQ must provide an appropriate level of protection for the contact recreation use using information available at this time (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.c). Fecal coliform and *E. coli* monitoring from a USGS monitoring station near Newport, WA and the Sandpoint Water Treatment Plant indicate this use is fully supported (see Appendix A of this certification); therefore, DEQ will provide Tier 2 protection in addition to Tier 1, for the recreation beneficial use (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01; 58.01.02.051.02).

[1] After the collection of additional monitoring data, it was determined that the effluent limits for ammonia shown in the draft permit were not necessary. Analysis by EPA using the new data indicated that there was no reasonable potential for ammonia to exceed criteria and therefore, unnecessary to require effluent limits.

Protection and Maintenance of Existing Uses (Tier 1 Protection)

As noted above, a Tier 1 review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses, applies to all waters subject to the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, and requires demonstration that existing uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect existing uses shall be maintained and protected. In order to protect and maintain designated and existing beneficial uses, a permitted discharge must comply with narrative and numeric criteria of the Idaho WQS, as well as other provisions of the WQS such as Section 055, which addresses water quality limited waters. The numeric and narrative criteria in the WQS are set at levels that ensure protection of designated beneficial uses. The effluent limitations and associated requirements contained in the Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant permit are set at levels that ensure compliance with the narrative and numeric criteria in the WQS.

Water bodies not supporting existing or designated beneficial uses must be identified as water quality limited, and a total maximum daily load (TMDL) must be prepared for those pollutants causing impairment. A central purpose of TMDLs is to establish wasteload allocations for point source discharges, which are set at levels designed to help restore the water body to a condition that supports existing and designated beneficial uses. Discharge permits must contain limitations that are consistent with wasteload allocations in the approved TMDL. The Pend Oreille River does not yet have an approved TMDL for temperature or total dissolved nitrogen gas.

Prior to the development of the TMDL, the WQS require the application of the antidegradation policy and implementation provisions to maintain and protect uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.04). As previously stated, the cold water aquatic life use in this Pend Oreille River AU is not fully supported due to excess total dissolved nitrogen gas and temperature. The City's discharge was found to have no reasonable potential to exceed WQS for total dissolved nitrogen gas and temperature (2012 Fact Sheet page 11). Because of the low temperature of the effluent and the fact that total dissolved gas is not a pollutant found in municipal discharges, the City's discharge complies with IDAPA 58.01.02.054.04. The other pollutants of concern either have effluent limits that ensure compliance with WQS or there is no reasonable potential to exceed WQS.

In summary, the effluent limitations and associated requirements contained in the Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant permit are set at levels that ensure compliance with the narrative and numeric criteria in the WQS. Therefore, DEQ has determined the permit will protect and maintain existing and designated beneficial uses in the Pend Oreille River in compliance with the Tier 1 provisions of Idaho's WQS (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01 and 58.01.02.052.07).

High-Quality Waters (Tier 2 Protection)

The Pend Oreille River is considered high quality for recreational uses. As such, the water quality relevant to recreational uses of the Pend Oreille River must be maintained and protected, unless a lowering of water quality is deemed necessary to accommodate important social or economic development.

To determine whether degradation will occur, DEQ must evaluate how the permit issuance will affect water quality for each pollutant that is relevant to recreational uses of the Pend Oreille River (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05). These include the following: mercury, *E. coli*, zinc, nickel, cyanide, arsenic and nutrients. Effluent limits are set in the proposed and existing permit for E.coli; new limits are set in the proposed permit for mercury and phosphorus (discussion below).

For a reissued permit or license, the effect on water quality is determined by looking at the difference in water quality that would result from the activity or discharge as authorized in the current permit and the water quality that would result from the activity or discharge as proposed in the reissued permit or license (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06.a). For a new permit or license, the effect on water quality is determined by reviewing the difference between the existing receiving water quality and the water quality that would result from the activity or discharge as proposed in the new permit or license (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06.a).

If degradation will occur, DEQ must then determine whether the degradation is significant. A Tier 2 analysis is not required for insignificant degradation. If the discharge will cause a cumulative decrease in assimilative capacity that is equal to or less than 10% from conditions in the Pend Oreille River as of July 1, 2011, then DEQ may determine the degradation is insignificant, taking into consideration the size and character of the discharge and the magnitude of its effect on the receiving water (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.08.a).

Pollutants with Limits in the Current and Proposed Permit: *E. coli*

For pollutants that are currently limited and will have limits under the reissued permit, the current discharge quality is based on the limits in the current permit or license (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06.a.i), and the future discharge quality is based on the proposed permit limits (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06.a.ii). For the Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant permit, this means determining the permit's effect on water quality based upon the limits for *E. coli* in the current and proposed permits. Table 1 provides a summary of the current permit limits and the proposed or reissued permit limits.

Effluent limits for *E. coli* in the proposed permit are the same as the previous permit and are protective of beneficial uses. However, the proposed increased design flow (3.0 mgd to 5.0 mgd) will theoretically increase the concentration of *E. coli* bacteria at the edge of a mixing zone. A Tier 2 analysis, however, is only required if the degradation is determined to be significant and significant degradation occurs when the discharge of the pollutant will cumulatively decrease the remaining assimilative capacity by more than 10% percent or, if less than 10%, when determined by the Department to be significant (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.08.a). Sandpoint's new design flow will reduce the assimilative capacity of *E. coli* by <1%. Since this value is less than 10% of the remaining assimilative capacity and determined by the Department to be an insignificant increase, no alternatives analysis or socioeconomic justification are required for the increase of *E. coli* in the Pend Oreille River (see Appendix A of this certification for the analysis).

New Permit Limits for Pollutants Currently Discharged: Mercury, Phosphorus

When new limits are proposed in a reissued permit for pollutants in the existing discharge, the effect on water quality is based upon the current discharge quality and the proposed discharge quality resulting from the new limits. Current discharge quality for pollutants that are not currently limited is based upon available discharge quality data (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06.a.i). Future discharge quality is based upon proposed permit limits (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06.a.ii).

The proposed permit for Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant includes new limits for mercury and phosphorus (Table 1). Since the current permit does not contain effluent limits for mercury or phosphorus, the proposed limits are based on discharge monitoring report (DMR) data, the WQS and the existing ambient water quality in the Pend Oreille River. The new limits will

maintain the existing water quality for mercury and phosphorus. To ensure that there is no loss of assimilative capacity in the Pend Oreille River for mercury, the loading effluent limits in the new permit are based on the currently permitted design flow of 3mgd and the maximum daily mercury limit is equal to the maximum measured concentration of mercury, which is 1.1µg/L. These limits will also ensure that the numeric water column criteria for mercury[2] will be met at the edges of the chronic and acute mixing zones (Table 4).

Due to the limited amount of phosphorus data and its variability, the entire data record to date was used to develop the new effluent limits. (Details of how the effluent limits were calculated can be found in Appendices E and F of the Revised Fact Sheet.) New permit limits for phosphorus during the summer recreation season are what is currently discharged to ensure no degradation during the time of year when the effects of phosphorus are relevant to recreational uses. Modeling was also done to ensure that this amount of phosphorus would not cause degradation from current conditions in the river as a whole (see Appendix B). Modeling reports are available upon request by calling the contact shown at the end of this certification.

In conclusion, by limiting phosphorus loads with new effluent limits and modeling to verify effects of these new limits; restricting mercury discharges to those currently discharged; and requiring the execution of a mercury minimization plan (permit part I.E.); there should be no degradation of water quality with respect to these pollutants as it relates to recreational beneficial uses.

Pollutants with No Limits: Arsenic, Zinc, Cyanide and Nickel

There are several pollutants of concern (arsenic, zinc, cyanide and nickel) relevant to Tier 2 protection of recreation that currently are not limited and for which the proposed permit also contains no limit (Table 1). For such pollutants, a change in water quality is determined by reviewing whether changes in production, treatment, or operation that will increase the discharge of these pollutants are likely (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06.a.ii). The Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant has proposed a design flow increase of 2.0 mgd. There have been no changes in the industrial sector of Sandpoint that might increase their discharge concentration of these pollutants. However, the proposed increased design flow (3.0 mgd to 5.0 mgd) will theoretically increase the concentration of these pollutants at the edge of a mixing zone. A Tier 2 analysis, however, is only required if the degradation is determined to be significant and significant degradation occurs when the discharge of the pollutant will cumulatively decrease the remaining assimilative capacity by more than 10% percent or, if less than 10%, when determined by the Department to be significant (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.08.a). As shown in Appendix C of this certification, the increase in the design flow will not decrease the remaining assimilative capacity for these pollutants by more than 10%. Therefore, DEQ has determined there will be no significant degradation. Continued monitoring of new or increased discharges to the treatment system and their pollutants is required by part III. J. of the new permit to detect any changes as future flow increases. As such, the proposed permit should maintain the existing high water quality in the Pend Oreille River.

In summary, DEQ concludes that this discharge permit complies with the Tier 2 provisions of Idaho's WQS (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02 and IDAPA 58.01.02.052.06).

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[2] The water column criteria for mercury remain in effect for Clean Water Act purposes even though it is not listed in Idaho's WQS. See EPA letter to DEQ dated December 12, 2008 at this link: http://www.deq.idaho.gov/epa-actions-on-proposed-standards for details.

Table 1. Comparison of current and proposed permit limits for pollutants of concern relevant to uses receiving Tier 2 protection.

Pollutant	Units	Current Permit			Proposed Permit			Change[a]
		Average Monthly Limit	Average Weekly Limit	Max Daily Limit	Average Monthly Limit	Average Weekly Limit	Max Daily Limit	
Pollutants with limits in both the current and proposed permit								
Five-Day BOD	mg/L	30	45	—	30	45	—	I[b]
	lb/day	750	1100	—	1251	1877	—	
	% removal	85%	—	—	85%	—	—	
TSS	mg/L	30	45	—	30	45	—	I[b]
	lb/day	750	1100	—	1251	1877	—	
	% removal	85%	—	—	85%	—	—	
pH	standard units	6.5–9.0 all times			6.5–9.0 all times			NC
E. coli	no./100 mL	126	—	406	126	—	406	NC
Total Residual Chlorine	mg/L	0.45	1.1	—	0.348	—	0.912	D
	lb/day	—	—	—	14.5	—	38.0	
Pollutants with new limits in the proposed permit								
Total Phosphorus (June-Sept)	µg/L	1/qtr	—	Report	2/wk	—	—	
	lb/day	—	—	—	61	79	—	NC
Total Phosphorus (Oct-May)	µg/L	—	—	—	—	—	—	
	lb/day	—	—	—	96	125	—	I[c]
Mercury	µg/L	2/yr	—	Report	0.56	—	1.1	NC
	lb/day	—	—	—	0.014	—	0.028	
Ammonia	mg/L	—	—	—		—		NC
	lb/day	—	—	—		—		NC
Pollutants with no limits in both the current and proposed permit								
Temperature	°C	1/day	—	Report	—	continuous		NC
Total Ammonia	mg/L	1/mo	—	Report	—	1/mo	Report	NC
Nitrate + Nitrite	mg/L	1/qtr	—	Report	—	1/qtr	Report	NC
Kjeldahl Nitrogen	mg/L	1/qtr	—	Report	—	1/qtr	Report	NC
Arsenic	µg/L	2/yr	—	Report	—	2/yr	Report	NC
Cadmium	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Total Chromium	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Chromium VI	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Copper	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Cyanide	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Lead	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Nickel	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Silver	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC
Zinc	µg/L	"	—	Report	—	"	Report	NC

[a] NC = no change in effluent limit from current permit; I = increase of pollutants from current permit; D = decrease of pollutants from current permit.

[b] EPA determined that the current water quality based effluent limits for TSS and BOD were unnecessary and that technology based effluent limits for these pollutants would not violate the dissolved oxygen WQS (Revised Fact Sheet Appendix D). Since the Pend Oreille River only receives Tier 1 protection for cold water aquatic life, pollutants significant to this use can be increased up to the WQS criteria (IDAPA58.01.02.052.07).

[c] Increase is during the year when effects of phosphorus are not significant to beneficial uses.

Conditions Necessary to Ensure Compliance with Water Quality Standards or Other Appropriate Water Quality Requirements of State Law

Compliance Schedules

Pursuant to IDAPA 58.01.02.400.03, DEQ may authorize compliance schedules for water quality-based effluent limits issued in a permit for the first time. Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant cannot reliably achieve compliance with effluent limits for phosphorus for the season of June - September; therefore, DEQ authorizes a compliance schedule and interim requirements as set forth below. This compliance schedule provides the permittee a reasonable amount of time to achieve the final effluent limits as specified in the permit. At the same time, the schedule ensures that compliance with the final effluent limits is accomplished as soon as possible. At the request of the City of Sandpoint, this schedule includes two options, one that utilizes their existing treatment plant and the other which allows time for the construction of a new treatment plant.

Requirements for Compliance Schedules Option 1 and 2

1. The permittee must comply with all effluent limitations and monitoring requirements in Part I.B., I.C. and I.D. of their permit beginning on the effective date of the permit, except those for which a compliance schedule is specified in Part II.F of the final permit.

2. The permittee must achieve compliance with the phosphorus final effluent limitations as set forth in Part I.B. (Table 1) of the permit no later than:

    a. Five (5) years after the effective date of the final permit for Option 1, or
    b. Ten (10) years after the effective date of the final permit for Option 2.

3. While the schedules of compliance specified in Part II.F of the permit are in effect, the permittee must complete interim requirements and meet interim effluent limits and monitoring requirements as specified in Parts I.B, I.C, I.D and I.E of the permit.

4. By two (2) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must notify EPA and DEQ in writing that a preferred compliance schedule option has been selected and demonstrate that funding for the preferred option is secured for Option 1 or has a City of Sandpoint approved strategy for obtaining funding for Option 2.

Option 1 Existing Plant Upgrade – 5 Year Schedule

This option applies if the City of Sandpoint decides to upgrade their existing treatment plant to meet final effluent limits.

1. By three (3) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must provide for DEQ approval, a preliminary engineering report (PER) that examines how to improve

effluent quality and meet effluent limits associated with phosphorus. This report must include details on how the proposed improvements will meet final effluent limits. The report shall include materials, costs, and a schedule for completion of the work.

2. By four (4) years after the effective date of the final permit, final plans and specifications for the modifications proposed in the PER shall be submitted to DEQ for approval.

3. By five (5) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must have completed the plant upgrade and achieved compliance with final effluent limits and WQS as shown in Table 3.

Option 2 New Treatment Plant – 10 Year Schedule

This option applies if the City of Sandpoint decides to construct a new treatment plant that will meet final effluent limits.

1. By three (3) years after the effective date of the final permit a facility plan shall be submitted to DEQ for review and approval. The facility plan shall include outlining estimated costs and schedules for construction of a new wastewater treatment plant and implementation of technologies to achieve final effluent limitations. This schedule must include a timeline for pilot testing.

2. By four (4) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must provide EPA and DEQ with a progress report on funding for the new facility. Copy of notice of bond approval or notice of judicial confirmation is acceptable.

3. By five (5) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must provide EPA and DEQ with written notice that design has been completed and approved by DEQ.

4. By six (6) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must provide EPA and DEQ with a notice that bids for construction have been awarded to achieve final effluent limitations.

5. By seven (7) and eight (8) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must provide EPA and DEQ with brief progress reports of construction as they relate to meeting the compliance schedule timeline and final effluent limits.

6. By nine (9) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must provide EPA and DEQ with written notice that construction has been substantively completed on the facilities to achieve final effluent limitations.

7. By ten (10) years after the effective date of the final permit, the permittee must provide EPA and DEQ with a written report providing details of a completed start up and optimization phase of the new treatment system and must achieve compliance with the final effluent limitations of Part I.B.

Table 2. Interim Limits for Both Options			
Parameter	Units	Average Monthly Limit	Average Weekly Limit
Phosphorus (June-September)	lb/day	96	125

Table 3. Final Limits for Both Options				
Parameter	Units	Average Monthly Limit	Average Weekly Limit	Percent Mixing Zone
Phosphorus (June-September)	lb/day	61	79	47% of the 30Q10 flow (6,640 cfs)
Phosphorus (October-May)	lb/day	96	125	60% of the 30Q10 flow (8,260 cfs)

Mixing Zones

Due to Sandpoint's desire for a design flow increase, EPA modeled various scenarios related to downstream conditions for the phosphorus in the Pend Oreille River. EPA did additional modeling to examine the mixing zones for pollutants of concern which have acute and chronic aquatic life criteria, including ammonia, chlorine and mercury. These modeling efforts resulted in more stringent limits for phosphorus and chlorine. The mixing zones for these pollutants and the rationale behind their use are described in detail in the modeling documentation and reports available from DEQ upon request. Pursuant to IDAPA 58.01.02.060, DEQ authorizes the mixing zones summarized in Table 4 for the current outfall location.

Table 4: Mixing Zones

Pollutant	Mixing Zone (% of critical flow volumes of the Pend Oreille River)
arsenic	acute 15.1 chronic and human health 25
chlorine	acute 15.1 chronic 25
chromium III	acute 15.1 chronic 25
chromium IV	acute 15.1 chronic 25
copper	acute 15.1 chronic 25
cyanide	acute 15.1 chronic 25
lead	acute 15.1 chronic 25
mercury	acute 15.1 chronic 25
nickel	acute 15.1 chronic 25
nitrate + nitrite	25
zinc	acute 15.1 chronic 25
Phosphorus, June-September final limit	47
Phosphorus, October-May	60

Other Conditions

This certification is conditioned upon the requirement that any material modification of the permit or the permitted activities—including without limitation, any modifications of the permit to reflect new or modified TMDLs, wasteload allocations, site-specific criteria, variances, or other new information—shall first be provided to DEQ for review to determine compliance with Idaho WQS and to provide additional certification pursuant to Section 401.

Right to Appeal Final Certification

The final Section 401 Water Quality Certification may be appealed by submitting a petition to initiate a contested case, pursuant to Idaho Code § 39-107(5) and the "Rules of Administrative Procedure before the Board of Environmental Quality" (IDAPA 58.01.23), within 35 days of the date of the final certification.

Questions or comments regarding the actions taken in this certification should be directed to June Bergquist, Coeur d'Alene Regional Office at 208.666.4605 or via email at june.bergquist@deq.idaho.gov.

Daniel Redline
Regional Administrator
Coeur d'Alene Regional Office

Appendix A

E. coli Significance Test

Background

The Pend Oreille River is considered high quality for recreational uses. To prevent the lowering of water quality with respect to *E. coli*, DEQ must ensure that the design flow increase proposed by the Sandpoint WWTP draft permit does not cumulatively decrease the remaining assimilative capacity of the river by more than ten percent taking into account the size and character of the discharge and the magnitude of its effect on the receiving water (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.08.a).

Assimilative capacity is determined by comparing the background (ambient) concentration of a pollutant with the Water Quality Standard (WQS). The difference between these two numbers is the remaining assimilative capacity.

Only two data sets were found to use for the establishment of a background level of *E. coli* concentration in the river above the WWTP discharge. There were 18 fecal coliform samples collected by the USGS at their monitoring station near Newport, WA from 1990 through 1995. The maximum value was 17 cfu/100ml and the average was 4 cfu/100ml. The other data set were 26 samples taken by the Sandpoint Water Treatment Plant in 2008-2009; however, those samples were drawn from a 14-25 foot depth depending on season, and may not be representative of bacteria levels closer to the surface where most recreational use occurs. The maximum value of this data set was 3 cfu/100ml. A background value of 4 cfu/100ml was selected for this analysis.

Analysis

- Background concentration upstream of Sandpoint discharge: 4 cfu/100ml
- *E. coli* effluent limit that must be met at the "end of the pipe" i.e. no mixing zone authorized: 126 cfu/100ml
- Remaining assimilative capacity: $126 - 4 = 122$ cfu/100ml
- Ten percent of 122 cfu/100ml is: $12.2 \approx 12$ cfu/100ml. This is the amount of *E. coli* that can be added to the river before the amount becomes significant.
- Sandpoint proposes to increase their current design flow from 3.0 mgd (4.64 cfs) to 5.0 mgd (7.7 cfs).
- Effluent concentration (from draft permit average monthly limit): 126 cfu/100ml
- In-river 30Q5 flow (critical low flow for non-carcinogenic human health criteria; see Revised Fact Sheet Appendix C) = 7,360 cfs

Results
Current Mixed Concentration = 4.08 cfu/100ml
Proposed Mixed Concentration = 4.13 cfu/100ml

4.13 – 4.08 = 0.05 cfu/100ml (or 0.05/122 = 0.04%) is the reduction in assimilative capacity from the current design flow to the proposed design flow. This proposed increase of *E. coli* does not exceed 10% of the remaining assimilative capacity and considering the character of the discharge and magnitude of its effect on the Pend Oreille River, the Department has determined that this decrease is not a significant degradation of river water quality.

Formula used to calculate mixed concentrations:

Mixed Concentration = Cm = [(Ce * Qe) +(Cu * Qu)] / (Qe+Qu)

Where:

Cm = Mixed Concentration (µg/L)
Ce = Effluent Concentration (µg/L)
Qe = Effluent Volume (liters, calculated as flow rate in cfs * constant 28.316)
Cu = Upstream concentration (µg/L)
Qu = Upstream Volume (liters, calculated as flow rate in cfs * constant 28.316)

Appendix B

CE-QUAL-W2 Phosphorus Modeling for Sandpoint WWTP

Background

In the 2008 Integrated Report, total phosphorus was added as a cause of impairment to the Pend Oreille River (the 31.8 mile long segment from Pend Oreille Lake to Priest River). After collection of data throughout this river length in 2009, DEQ concluded that the river was not impaired due to this nutrient and phosphorus was removed as a pollutant in the 2010 Integrated Report. DEQ also concluded at that time that the Pend Oreille River has little or no remaining assimilative capacity for phosphorus (2.7µg/L before considering any of the three municipal discharges into the Pend Oreille River.). Ten percent of 2.7ug/L is only a 0.027ug/L of phosphorus that can be increased without an approved alternatives analysis and socioeconomic justification.

DEQ also recognizes that effluent limits for phosphorus in the proposed permit are based on very little effluent data. The current permit only requires quarterly monitoring. The quarters are based on the calendar year and the phosphorus monitoring data is reported on the last day of each quarter. The discharge monitoring reports (DMRs) do not indicate the day the actual samples were collected or the effluent flow associated with that timeframe. These factors can create a wide margin of error.

Additional examination of the phosphorus monitoring data show that it is widely distributed (effluent flow 1 to 6.7mgd and concentrations from 0.8 to 5.33mg/L). Reasons for this spread are not clear since there are not enough data to determine correlations. Determining exactly what amount of phosphorus is currently being discharged to ensure no further loss of assimilative capacity is problematic given this data. For this and the above reasons, DEQ and EPA have approached the new effluent limits for phosphorus cautiously using the CE-QUAL-WE modeling scenarios to look at effects downriver of the proposed phosphorus effluent limits. Although the DMR data is limited, there were some seasonal differences which allowed development of seasonal limits that reflect discharge amounts as reported on DMRs. These seasonal limits were used for the CE-QUAL-W-2 modeling scenarios.

Modeling Approach

Fortunately, a CE-QUAL-W-2 model that examines far field effects of a proposed discharge had been developed by the Army Corps of Engineers to examine temperature changes due to the Albeni Falls dam on the Pend Oreille River. This model was revised in 2011by Portland State University to investigate various phosphorus scenarios in the river. In 2015 it was used by EPA to investigate the consequences of the proposed phosphorus permit limits for Sandpoint.

The initial modeling scenario examined the consequence of a 5mgd phosphorus discharge during the July-September timeframe of 61 lbs/day (1.46 average monthly concentrations) contrasted with baseline conditions determined in 2009. Results of the model run were largely satisfactory except for periphyton biomass during the month of June. During this timeframe, periphyton biomass significantly departed from the existing condition. To improve the outcome of this timeframe, the month of June was included in the summertime seasonal timeframe with a limit of

61 lbs/day. This reduced the load of phosphorus in June from 96 lbs/day to 61 lbs/day. The model was re-run and the outcome was satisfactory and the effluent limits revised to reflect this change.

Conclusion

The amount of phosphorus coming from Sandpoint's discharge is approximately 25% of the phosphorus load upstream of this discharge. Thus Sandpoint's discharge can have significant water quality effects for the entire river. As we have stated, current amounts of phosphorus discharged from the facility are an approximation due to lack of a robust dataset. The proposed permit requires the collection of an adequate number of phosphorus samples to correct this problem. To compensate for the lack of data, modeling was completed and compared to a baseline of river water quality data collected in 2009. As a result of the modeling, effluent limits and critical flows were adjusted to provide an acceptable outcome.

Appendix C

Arsenic, Zinc, Cyanide, Nickel Significance Test

Background

The Pend Oreille River is considered high quality for recreational uses. To prevent the lowering of water quality with respect to arsenic, zinc, cyanide and nickel, DEQ must ensure that the design flow increase proposed by the Sandpoint WWTP draft permit does not decrease the remaining assimilative capacity of the river for each of these pollutants by more than ten percent, taking into account the size and character of the discharge and the magnitude of its effect on the receiving water (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.08.a).

Assimilative capacity is determined by comparing the background (ambient) concentration of a pollutant with the Water Quality Standard (WQS or criteria). The difference between these two numbers is the remaining assimilative capacity. Arsenic, zinc, cyanide and nickel have criteria related to human health (IDAPA 58.01.02.210.01) and thus are considered significant to recreational uses. However, zinc cyanide and nickel also have cold water aquatic life criteria that are much lower values than their human health criteria. Because cold water aquatic life in this waterbody receives Tier 1 protection, the more restrictive criteria must be used for this analysis. Arsenic's most restrictive criteria are for the protection of human health.

Upstream data for these pollutants was extremely limited to absent. Therefore, several conservative assumptions had to be made to complete this analysis. Upstream monitoring of these pollutants has been included in the draft permit.

Analysis

- Background concentrations upstream of the Sandpoint discharge for cyanide and nickel is assumed to be zero due to lack of data. Arsenic and zinc were measured in the Clark Fork River below the Cabinet Gorge dam. Results were arsenic $\leq$ 1 µg/L and zinc ranged from no detection to 80µg/L with an average of 4µg/L. For this analysis zinc will be assumed to be the average value of the Clark Fork data due to the distance from the discharge and arsenic will be one half the detection limit or 0.5µg/L. To summarize background concentrations are:

  Zinc 4µg/L Arsenic 0.5µg/L Cyanide 0µg/L Nickel 0µg/L

- Remaining assimilative capacity and 10% of remaining assimilative capacity:

  Zinc 72µg/L- 4µg/L = 68µg/L X .10 = 6.8µg/L

  Arsenic 10µg/L – 0.5µg/L = 9.5µg/L X .10 = 0.95µg/L

  Cyanide 5.2µg/L – 0 = 5.2µg/L X .10 = 0.5µg/L

  Nickel 52µg/L – 0 = 52µg/L X .10 = 5µg/L

  These values are the amount of each pollutant that can be added to the river before the amount becomes significant.

- Sandpoint proposes to increase their current design flow from 3 mgd (4.64 cfs) to 5.0 mgd (7.7 cfs).

- Effluent concentration 92nd percentile (from DMR data):
  Zinc 141µg/L
  Arsenic 7µg/L
  Cyanide 0.6µg/L
  Nickel 0µg/L (no detection in DMR data 2001-2011)
- In-river 7Q10 flow (critical low flow for chronic aquatic life criteria; see Revised Fact Sheet Appendix C) = 3,880 cfs

Results

Zinc Current Mixed Concentration = 4.16µg/L	Proposed Concentration=4.27µg/L
Arsenic Current Mixed Concentration = 0.508 µg/L	Proposed Concentration=0.512µg/L
Cyanide Current Mixed Concentration = 0.0007µg/L	Proposed Concentration=0.0012µg/L
Nickel Current Mixed Concentration = 0µg/L	Proposed Concentration = 0µg/L

The additional load of zinc will decrease the remaining assimilative capacity by 0.11µg/L or 0.16% of the remaining assimilative capacity of 68µg/L.

The additional load of arsenic will decrease the remaining assimilative capacity by 0.004µg/L or 0.042% or 0.04% of the remaining assimilative capacity of 9.5µg/L.

The additional load of cyanide will decrease the remaining assimilative capacity by 0.0005µg/L or 0.001% of the remaining assimilative capacity of 5.2µg/L.

There will be no additional load of nickel.

The additional load of zinc, arsenic, cyanide and nickel resulting from the design flow increase, will not exceed 10% of the remaining assimilative capacity for any of these pollutants, and considering the size and character of the discharge and the magnitude of its effect, these increases of pollutants are not a significant degradation of river water quality.

Formula used to calculate mixed concentrations:

Mixed Concentration = Cm = [(Ce * Qe) +(Cu * Qu)] / (Qe+Qu)

Where:

Cm = Mixed Concentration (µg/L)
Ce = Effluent Concentration (µg/L)
Qe = Effluent Volume (liters, calculated as flow rate in cfs * constant 28.316)
Cu = Upstream concentration (µg/L)
Qu = Upstream Volume (liters, calculated as flow rate in cfs * constant 28.316)