WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ADVISORY COUNCIL

10:00 A.M., January 27 ,2023

Room 111, DEQ Metcalf Building & Zoom Webinar

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT Panelist

Dennis Teske
Mike Koopal
Ron Pifer
Teri Polumsky
Eric Cambell
Adam Pummill
Rickey Schultz
Craig Caprara
Amanda Knuteson

Presenting:
Christopher Dorrington
Amy Steinmetz
Katie Makarowski
Rickey Schultz
Craig Caprara

Attendees
Eric Sivers
Eric Regensburger
Kyle Milke
Trevor Selch
Hannah New
Ed Colman
Brian Heaston
Joanna Mclaughlin
Phil-
Tonya Fish
Leea Anderson
Casey Lewis
Eric Campbell
Paul Yakawich
Dennis Teske
Margarite-
Lauren Sweeney
Mark Dihle
Mark Ockey
Amelia Flanery

Vicki Marquis
Rickey Schulz
Emilie Henry
Paul Yakawich

Attendees
Kelsey Wagner
Aaron Losing
Joshua Sales
Tamara Johnson
Lisa Anderson
Patrick DeArmey
Alan-

CALL TO ORDER
Amanda Knuteson called the meeting to order and roll call.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Amanda Knuteson moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Adam Pummil. Agenda Approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Amanda Knuteson moved to approve minutes from December 2, 2022, Edited Ron Pifer did attend. Minutes approved.

Action Items

1. 2023 Chair and Vice Chair Elections
2. 2023 Calendar

BRIEFING ITEMS

1. DEQ Legislative Update-Chris Dorrington
2. Legislative Issues-Open Forum Discussion-Amanda Knuteson/Chris Dorrington
3. Water Quality Standards Triennial Review-Kate Markarowski
4. Nutrient Workgroup Update-Amy Steinmetz
5. Flathead Regional Septage Treatment Facility-Rickey Schultz, Craig Caprara

Action Item: Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Presenter Amanda Knuteson:

Amanda Knuteson: I would like to begin the meeting by formally opening the floor to nominations. If anyone who would like to nominate someone, including oneself, that is acceptable. Please do so now. With that I open the floor to nominations, first for the Chair position.

Ron Pifer: I nominate Amanda Knuteson to continue as chair.

Amanda Knuteson: I accept that, but I want to add I would also like to invite any other nominations.

- Following no other nominations

Amanda Knuteson: I am happy to continue in this role, and we need someone to second the nomination made by Ron Pifer.

- Teri Polumsky seconded the nomination.

Amanda Knuteson: ok since I am running unopposed. All in favor.

- All in favor. None opposed.

Amanda Knuteson: the next position council needed to vote on is Vice Chair. I nominate Ron Pifer.

Ron Pifer: thankyou Amanda, I would be happy to do so, but if anyone else would be open to that position that is fine as well.

Adam Pummil: I second the nomination for Ron Pifer as Vice Chair.

Amanda Knuteson: seeing no other nominations, all in favor of Ron Pifer accepting another 1-year term to Vice Chair at WPCAC.

- All in Favor. None Opposed.

Legislative Update-Presenter Christopher Dorrington, Director of Department of Environmental Quality

Christopher Dorrington presenting: I would like to begin my presentation by saying the department had proposed a handful of bills. I just wanted to give a quick heads up on a few of them.

Christopher Dorrington presenting: Public water supply connection fees, we had proposed an increase to the connection fees, subsequently we have pulled that legislative concept. LC610 based on a couple things. One is overall political capital to push a fee increase through. Second was just a little bit of program work necessary to substantiate anything we would have had to work through with the committees. I feel we weren't quite ready for that. We'll be working in the interim on that and probably bring it to 2025. I don't think we have lost anything in terms of our ability to substantiate the program. Probably the biggest emerging challenge we see is on that side of things. The lead and copper rule handed down by the feds is very complicated rule, especially in a rural state with small communities. I think we have a little bit of risk there, making certain that the FTE to develop and implement and assist communities across Montana for implementation of lead and copper rule. We thought through whether connection fees could be used as part of that. I think it probably can, but because the rules are just emerging on that I didn't feel we were ready to substantiate all of that work with LC610 so we pulled it.

Christopher Dorrington presenting: Probably the bulk of what I will talk about is the very active and interactive part of session that started January 2nd. The executive across all agencies not just us, we had 168 efficiency bills, over half have already transmitted from one side to the other either house to senate or senate to house. We started week one introducing those bills by the legislature, we have done a lot of testifying and moved a lot of work forward to improve the efficiency of government. It's been good so far on that front. The bulk of what we're dealing with on the waterfront right now is subdivisions and then on public water and wastewater. There're a few emerging bills right now. Multiple Senators are all carrying legislation for either subdivisions or public water wastewater connections. The complexity of it is that everybody has a different concept about how to improve upon what didn't go well from essentially July 2020 through December 2022. We were at a peak back log at the agency into in July of 2022. Right at the end of June, I initiated an incident management team to solve the problem when we did, but we were at peak back log of almost 500 subdivision files that were delayed or late. Between July and December, we just took that number to zero and we're on time, and that's not because subdivision applications and public water supply permit applications went to zero. We are still seeing 20 to 25 a week, 2022 has a record of 1,287 in submittals. But when you have a problem while legislature is in

session, when they have heard from constituents that there is a problem, they want to work to solve that problem. There were probably 60 or more solutions, down to about 15 right now, that are very active and will be scheduled in the next week or two. We have 3 proposals from our own agency that we are working on getting introduced. The legislative concepts are all drafted but the bills don't have titles yet. I anticipate that they will be picked up today or Monday and hopefully scheduled as soon as possible. The first is essentially a pressure relief, that if the agency is more than 10% late for one quarter, it triggers a private option in which the developers/builders could choose a certified PE trained in subdivisions and PWS approvals. They could go to a PE and pick someone from a prequalified list to certify their subdivision. That is a concept that will be fully vetted in conversation, lots of opportunity for the public to have input. It's not without its pitfalls, but I do believe it's an option and provides us a few checks and balances, so we aren't simply allowing everyone to certify their own project, which I believe is a bad idea, right from the get-go. There are bills right now that do propose this and we're working with sponsors to try to educate, inform, and share our position. Consistency across the state is probably the most important thing, right behind environmental protections for our production of those permits. It's not without consequence, if you go fast alone it's not good, so you need, on time, defensible permitting and that's what we're trying to do. So, there are a handful of certify bills that would allow either locals or private entities to certify their own subdivisions and we're working with sponsors to try to determine what makes the most sense and remains protective, while still delivering on our ability to permit housing in the state.

Christopher Dorrington presenting: There's a handful of connection to PWS bills that are just now emerging. Senator Fitzpatrick has one that mandates if a subdivision comes within 1000 feet of a public water or wastewater system, the subdivision with that public water and wastewater system, must accept the new subdivision. Currently in statute it is allowed if there is capacity on both volume and treatment and that eliminates the catch. It's good to connect public water and wastewater systems because you're not reliant on drain fields or septic tanks, but without the catch to ensure there's capacity there's potential for harm. So, we're working with a sponsor on that, so we can answer questions and move that to a more protective state. Every single day there is a shift in the movement of these bills. I would encourage, if there is an interest, to stay active and involved. As an agency we are tracking over 600 bills. That's a quick update, if there are any questions, I will do my best to answer them.

Questions/ Discussion

Ron Pifer: I identified several bills on the legislative website and I was curious how you felt about them. One was revising timelines for water permits and the other was for revising judicial administration of water rights. I was also curious about what the descriptive narrative versus numeric situation was regarding the EPA.

Christopher Dorrington: I would need the bill number for the first one or two questions.

Ron Pifer: I will find the bill numbers and get back to you.

Christopher Dorrington: On the water rights, I don't have as much to say just because DNRC takes care of the water rights portion. While we have a role in water availability for subdivisions, we don't deal with the water rights permitting on the water timelines. The update on the narrative versus numeric is a good question. We have a rule package out and extensive rule package out on both subdivisions. It's a 54-page rule that's out, it's out for public comment right now that we worked on for 18 months trying to improve upon the way in which we do subdivision permitting. On the narrative, we've been working for 18 months since passage of Senate Bill 358 to try to gain some consistency and consensus from a

working group on implementing the narrative standard. Overall, the EPA is not a big fan of the narrative standard approach, since the state is currently under a numeric standard approach. Senate Bill 358 prioritized phosphorus over nitrogen. It didn't give a pass but prioritized phosphorous first. I believe we have a strong framework in place that would allow for that successful delivery of Senate Bill 358, but every time session is alive new ideas come to light. There are at least two proposals to readdress what Senate Bill 358 gave us. Bill concepts, that I have heard of, and I haven't seen language on either one, but I think both return to, or seek to propose some sort of numeric. We are currently under numeric string to implement a narrative. So, the bill concepts would put us back into numeric. I haven't seen the language so I can't speak to how it would happen, or who would be impacted at this time.

Ron Pifer Question: About House Bill 114 on revising timelines with water permits, does that extend them out or makes them shorter?

Christopher Dorrington: That's a DNRC bill and it cuts the timeline to 120 days or 90 days, but it cuts that timeline in half or better, maybe even a third. That was the objective for that bill, and it's been very robustly addressed in committee. That one has already seen some hearing and is moving.

Ron Pifer: The other is Senate Bill 72 that involves revising judicial administration of water rights. That sounds like it could be heavy duty.

Christopher Dorrington: That is a DNRC bill, also hotly contested. That one was heard up in senate natural resources week two. Essentially, that's the development of a water court, not everyone is on board with the notion of that and the adjudication of water rights. The objective really, as I understand it, since it's not my bill, is to put a water court together where people who understand the natural resource implications and demand for water, in a court that could answer those questions. Having the court who hears all sorts of cases adjugated the water rights case.

Ron Pifer Question: Would it be a subdivision of the current water court? Or would it change the make-up of it?

Christopher Dorrington: I don't know for certain.

Amanda Knuteson: Ron I don't know, I'm not an expert on that bill, but I've loosely tracked it, and I think that the short answer to that, is it would remove jurisdiction right now. There's some dual jurisdiction between the existing Court and District Court for certain kinds of water disputes. My understanding is one of the things this bill would accomplish is to restrict the jurisdiction of certain kinds of water disputes exclusively to the Water Court and not make the district courts available. It's a little bit contentious. It's a great bill to monitor, but probably not one DEQ has a formal stance on, is that right?

Christopher Dorrington: Yes, we don't. Unless its across state government, an agency won't generally come in on it as a supporter or not. Unless it affects them directly and this bill does not affect us directly.

Ron Pifer Question: One last thing on the creating a Western Montana Conservation Commission. What's that all about? Senate Bill 83.

Mike Koopal: It's calling for the Consolidation of the Flathead Basin Commission for Columbia Conservation Commission.

Dorrington, Christopher: This bill brought them together. We did speak as a proponent on this bill. I think there were 29 or 27 members. The two commissions combined in the same or similar watershed and the same, or similar issues. This was a red tape bill brought forth by DNRC. To create some efficiency and or relieve some of the board pressure. The requirement of many boards, I think there's over 1200

boards the Lieutenant Governor must try to maintain membership on, this is one of those bills to create some efficiency by combining two commissions.

Ron Pifer: Sounds good thank you.

Amanda Knuteson: Director Dorrington, you're saying there's going to be some further discussion on the issue of the expedited process for connections to public water and wastewater systems and having some independent analysis regarding capacity? I would just like to say right now that is an excellent idea, because I'm aware of several instances, here in the Bozeman area, where the same engineer that represents a private developer for all intents and purposes, asks the district, whether they have capacity, and then representing to DEQ that of course there's capacity. There's not an independent third-party verification of that. So, if you're late by 10%, you would have some engineers that you could have on call to take over some of that review. Maybe those same engineers could be called in, in that instance where you have an engineer that is, the district engineer, who is also representing a major subdivider in that district and have an independent review of that application. That would just be my two cents. You're talking hundreds and hundreds of lots being approved based on a confirmation of capacity by the one engineer. Do any other members of the council have questions or comments for Director Dorrington?

Public Comments/Questions:

Dennis Teske asked are there any bills that relate to septic systems? Specifically, there's a very large difference between Bozeman area Western Montana. I am from Prairie County, we are sparsely populated people, and it seems like sometimes we get one size fits all. We get into property rights, and a lot of these farms and ranches out here are 10,000 acres, or better, people sit in the middle of those. So, it is a different effect. I want to know if there's anything coming up that relates to that in legislation this year.

Christopher Dorrington Question: as to answer your question, do you mean is there anything that relates to rural county septic systems or just septic systems in general?

Dennis Teske Question: Septic systems in general. Is there any blanket legislation that could be looked at this year that you know of that would address sparsely populated people? It just comes back to the difference between Bozeman and Terry.

Christopher Dorrington: I would say that there are legislative concepts that 100% will address septic systems that will probably affect rural Montana. None of which are brought by DEQ, the legislature has many concepts and bills that will come up in the next two months that will address this. I can't point to one specifically right now other than we're going to run, it hasn't been picked up or scheduled yet, but we're going to run a bill a MEPA categorical exclusion for small subdivisions. That have a buffer zone for essentially far from surface water and have no impact on ground water. That's an important one for us, because I think we'll increase the amount and requirement on us and the developer for MEPA for subdivisions that do have closer proximity surface water or may have closer proximity to the groundwater. Also, just the impact of development within sensitive watersheds. So, what we're trying to do is be more efficient with our time.

Dennis Teske: In our county, just as an example. We're more interested in citizen participation. We have more interest in our customer, our citizens coming into us. At least showing them the 17 different designs. We're helping them through that process instead of just going out digging a hole and hoping for the best. Usually, we get a little more communication when we're when we're offering honey, then we do vinegar.

Ron Pifer: I just wanted to say what Dennis was saying is what he talked about the last meeting. About emphasizing the solution side of the formula, or at least giving some more weight to that. Versus just identifying and quantifying problems, which I have done professionally in the water quality field. I have done it for decades. So now I'd like to do more on the solution side, and I always liked that. So, that's just a thought for DEQ to going forward. It could be a paradigm shift for governments, but I think that's direction for the future and future generations we need to head in.

Amanda Knuteson Question: Do any more Council members or members of the public have questions or comments?

Christopher Dorrington: We have our rules package coming through, and we do have, for low growth counties, in which it would affect eastern Montana, we have a new exemption in the draft rule for lots over 20 acres. Which will again address the low impact of large subdivisions for single homes in low growth counties. That'll be a priority and preference to streamline that piece.

Mike Koopal Question/comment for Amanda Knuteson: Just to build off Dennis's comments about the septic bills that are progressing. We've talked about this here at WPCAC. Both Ron and Mike have presented on the topic. We have Ricky here today to talk about the bio solids facility potential in Flathead. The Flathead Basin Commission has done a tremendous volume of work on the topic, trying to navigate coming up with a GIS risk model on the topic, and exploring potential legislation to help solve the problem. It would be beneficial, he thinks to WPCAC and the Flathead Basin Commission, if we could get basically a consolidated version of the bills that are in progress on this topic. So that we can track them and learn from any lessons that might come about on this topic during this legislative session.

Mike Koopal repeated the question: I am requesting that Megan or DEQ staff consolidate those bills currently in the legislative session related to the septic issue. The Flathead Basin Commission would be interested in and understanding each bill and their successes or failures as they move through the session.

Christopher Dorrington: That's a tall order, only because each bill can radically change week by week. We can tell you what we're looking at right now just in a snapshot. I don't believe I can provide an update on status unless it were on some sort of fairly course frequency. There is over 4,500 LC's. There's probably about 800 water, related LC's. So, to try to provide a list and update at the close of session is Pass/fail on efforts, but that would be a substantial effort that we'd have to sign up for.

Amanda Knuteson: I already track a lot of those bills. But even I am having a hard time just day to day. I already missed a couple of the hearings that I wanted to be part of, but if at least we could have bill numbers. I will work with Meagan on that, on a rolling basis in between meetings, because they don't meet again until March. Mike, you probably are interested in having updates sooner. I have some of that work done already, I wouldn't mind sharing with council members any progress, and for the hearings that I have attended, a summary of positions. As to what DEQ specific positions are regarding septics and the water and wastewater connections on the larger scale, Director Dorrington if you could provide the bill numbers that you know right now. I can just zero in on those and with some regularity send updates to the council. Would that work, Mike?

Mike Koopal: Yes, just basically the bill numbers.

Amanda Knuteson: I have found the most helpful information is jotting down the names of the representatives that were bringing the most bills, and then going through and seeing where they were. They're in drafting stages, and so you must keep checking back again and again to see when there they

have the Pdf file that you can review, as opposed to just when it's in its conceptual stage being drafted. You know that there's something out there that says something about MDEQ rule changes, but there's no content to highlight what's going on so you do have to keep checking. Just knowing where to check, who to check under, whether it's the number or the person introducing it, or both is helpful. I will work with Meagan to get a more comprehensive list and have a database running with that. I would be happy to send a summary on a weekly basis of what I am following.

Christopher Dorrington: I know that the effort is substantial. I suggest going to {laws.mt.gov} and setting up your own preferences so that the laws site will prompt you for either bills or subjects that you have interest in. You can get an update on status of those bills on regular frequency. There's also some property, right type things that will come out, and this bifurcates very quickly on who is interested in what. So, there's disclosure bills that are coming out that affect us because we're tracking the implications on what data we would have to provide requesters to track properties. That loosely effects probably this group. This is just an example of how complicated it gets quickly.

Ron Pifer: I just checked the legislative bill website and tried to put in the word septic, and they don't have any word for septic. They just have water, so I guess you would have to either use Chris's approach through the laws that have already been passed, or Amanda's method of using representatives that are on new bills for water related matters.

Amanda Knuteson: That's true Ron. It's not a sensitive database, but you can look under the different committees and what they have going on. You can find information, if you're looking for septic and wastewater related bills generally, I think, the Natural Resources Committee has information.

Christopher Dorrington: The ones you want to watch are senate and house natural resources, and then local government, and most of the planning act. Natural Resources will handle the Sanitation, Subdivision Act.

Ron Pifer: That sounds perfect, and I will do that.

Amanda Knuteson: Ron, I would just add that to find out sooner, though, before it's at a stage where something's being heard, you'll need to take note of the representatives that are introducing those kinds of bills. So that you're aware of them before they're being heard at those committee levels.

Ron Pifer commented: Yeah, right? Otherwise, you miss out.

Amanda Knuteson: Yes, so, I would make one last call if members of the public or council members have anything further questions for Chris, especially any questions, so Director Dorrington, can resume his busy workday. Thank you so much Director Dorrington that was informative. I'll coordinate with Meagan on the best way to communicate the information that Mike had mentioned, and maybe you and Meagan coordinate as well, on what information you think would be helpful for us as a starting point for tracking.

Christopher Dorrington: I appreciate it very much, counsel. Let us know if you have questions. Like you said you don't meet again until April. If there's something we can help kind of square off on either information or updates. We are happy to help.

Amanda Knuteson: Thank you very much. We appreciate your time. I believe we have Water Quality Standards Triennial Review, with Katie Makarowski.

Montana Water Quality Standards Triennial Review-Presenter Katie Makarowski -Program Section Supervisor Water Quality Standards and Modeling Section

Katie Makarowski presenting: I'm just here today to give you a brief introductory overview of Montana's Water Quality Standards Triennial Review process. It is something that I think is a topic that will be continuing to arise, perhaps on future agendas throughout this calendar year. I just wanted to begin with an informational briefing at this point. If we're talking about Water Quality Standards Triennial Review. It seems we should first just spend a moment reviewing water quality standards themselves.

- **Montana Water Quality Standards Triennial Review**

Katie Makarowski presenting: Just to kind of looking at the big picture purpose of water quality standards. Of course, these really aim to describe the desired condition and water quality goals of our state waters. Water quality standards designate the uses of each water body, and then set criteria to protect those uses. Water quality standards form the foundation and legal basis for controlling pollutants entering our water bodies. *(Next Slide)*

- **Water Quality Standards**
    - Purpose
        - Describe the desired condition and water quality goals of state waters.
        - Designate the uses of the waterbody and set criteria to protect those uses.
        - Form the foundation and legal basis for controlling pollutants entering waters.

Katie Makarowski presenting: There's 3 main components of water quality standards. There are the criteria themselves. Montana's water quality standards may either be numeric or narrative. Numeric standards criteria are the maximum pollutant concentration levels that are permitted in a water body, and still allowing that water body to support the beneficial uses that are designated to those water bodies. Whereas narrative criteria describe more of the desired condition of water bodies. For example, you might see statements such as, the water body should be free from certain negative conditions that we wish to prevent. Second component of water quality standards are beneficial uses. These are goals and expectations for how waters are used by people, by aquatic life, by wildlife in our state, both in the present and future time. In Montana we really strive to protect a variety of beneficial uses of waters, for example, aquatic life and fisheries, recreation, drinking, water, agricultural and industrial uses. So those beneficial uses are a component of our water quality standards. The third component is the nondegradation policy, and this really lays out a framework for maintaining and protecting water quality that has already been achieved. It's protection for existing uses and for high quality and outstanding resource waters. *(Next Slide)*

- **Three Components**
    - Criteria
        - Numeric= maximum pollutant concentration levels permitted in a water body
        - Narrative= describes the desired condition of waterbodies (e.g. "free form" negative conditions)
    - Beneficial Uses
        - Goals and expectations for how waters are used by people, aquatic life, and wildlife (present and future)
    - Nondegradation policy
        - Framework for maintaining and protecting water quality that has already been achieved.
        - Protection for existing uses and high-quality and outstanding resource waters.

Katie Makarowski presenting: Often when people think of water quality standards, they may think first of the criteria component themselves. However, as I described, water quality standards are contained in

a few different places and have those multiple components. Our water quality standards in Montana are contained in the administrative rules of Montana, title 17 chapter 30 in part. There are a few different subchapters listed here where you can find different pieces of it. So mixing zones in Subchapter 5, Subchapter 6, surface water quality standards and beneficial use classifications for surface water bodies, Subchapter 7 contains our nondegradation rules, and Subchapter 10 is where groundwater protection and standards are contained. Then we also have several department circulars that also contain water quality standards or components of them DEQ- 7 is the first that probably comes to most folks' minds, as it contains many of our numeric standards. *(Next Slide)*

- **Where to Find Montana's Water Quality Standards**
    - Administrative Rules of Montana Title 17, Chapter 30
        - Subchapter 5(mixing zones)
        - Subchapter 6 (surface water quality standards and beneficial use classifications)
        - Subchapter 7 (nondegradation)
        - Subchapter 10(groundwater protection)
    - Department Circulars (e.g., DEQ-7)

Katie Makarowski presenting: So, jumping into a Triennial review, DEQ is required at least every 3 years to hold a public hearing for the purpose of reviewing our water quality standards. Then as appropriate to modify and adopt water quality standards. This requirement is laid out in both, the Montana Water Quality Act as well as the Federal Clean Water Act. This really is the process that we refer to as Triennial Review. *(Next Slide)*

- **DEQ is required, at least every three years, to hold a public hearing for the purpose of reviewing water quality standards and, as appropriate, to modify and adopt water quality standards**.
    - Montana Water Quality Act (75-5-301, MCA)
    - Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 131)

Katie Makarowski presenting: The real purpose of a triennial review is to solicit comments from interested persons regarding potential revision to any aspect of Montana water quality standards. We also are aiming, of course, to ensure consistency with State and Federal regulations, with our standards, and to ensure congruency with current research and technology as we periodically review our standards. *(Next Slide)*

- **Purpose of Triennial Review**
    - To solicit comments from interested person's regarding potential revision to any aspect of Montana's water quality standards.
    - To ensure consistency with state and federal regulations
    - To ensure congruency with current research and technology.

Katie Makarowski presenting: In preparation for activities in the coming year, I just wanted to walk through briefly an overview of our Triennial Review process. The first stage of Triennial Review is a public participation period where we open Montana's water quality standards for public comment. That would kick off with a presentation of information to The Water Pollution Control Advisor Council. We would release a public notice and publish that. Open a public comment period where people can provide written comment and then hold a public hearing to also allow folks to provide comment orally. At the close of that hearing, we would then have a period of time upon which our staff here at the department will review all the comments and information that we receive from interested persons during that public participation period. Then start developing responses to those. Really that's the stage

at which we'll look at the whole body of information, requests, and comments that come into us, and determine whether any of those will precipitate water quality, standard changes. If there's any changes that seem appropriate, and then also identify which of those water quality standards changes will be pursued during the current Triennial Review cycle. If there are no water quality standards, changes that will result from public comments. Then we would, write those responses to comments, finalize those, and then that, along with other information, gets shared outwardly and submitted to EPA. However, if there are water, quality standards, changes that will result, we would then initiate rule making which kicks off kind of another round of public participation in the process. The council is a key component of initiating our rule making process. Next, we would have another public notice, another public comment period, hold another public hearing to review proposed water quality standards changes. Then through that process work through rule making, to adopt, file, publish any subsequent new or modified standards. Finally, a whole package of information, including those new standards or modified standards would also be submitted to EPA as a kind of conclusion of the Triennial Review process. (*Next Slide*)

- **Overview of Triennial Review Process**
    - Open Montana water quality standards for public comment
        - WPCAC presentation
        - Public notice
        - Public comment hearing
    - Review comments and develop responses.
        - Determine whether WQS changes are appropriate.
        - Identify which WQS changes will be pursued during current Triennial review.
    - If no WQS changes, finalize responses.
        - Submit to EPA
    - If WQS changes, initiate rulemaking.
        - WPCAC presentation
        - Public notice
        - Public comment period
        - Adopt, file, publish.
    - Submit to EPA
        - Within 30 days of completion of review (no changes)
        - Within 30 days of adoption/certification (changes)

Katie Makarowski presenting: I just want to stress that there is a core component of Triennial Review is really that public participation. There is these couple of different opportunities depending on how triennial review results in water quality standards, changes or not. But that first public notice to solicit comments on water quality standards really provides an opportunity for anybody any interested persons to submit comments, but also, along with their comments, submit any data, views or arguments concerning water quality standards as they see fit. Again, they'll have an opportunity to submit those comments orally during a public hearing or in writing during a public comment period, and we wish those comments to identify water quality standards at issue, any suggested revisions, any basis for their suggestions, including any technical information that would allow the Department to evaluate the information that they provided. And then again, if there is rule making that will follow, there'll be another round of public participation available. (*Next Slide*)

- **Public Participation**
    - Public notice to solicit comments on water quality standards.
        - Interested persons may submit data, views, or arguments concerning water quality standards.

        - Comments can be submitted orally during public hearing.
        - Comments can be submitted in writing during public comment period.
        - Comments should identify the water quality standard at issue, any suggested revision to the standard, and the basis for the suggested revision, including technical information.
    - Public notice of proposed rulemaking.
        - Public comment period
        - Public hearing

Katie Makarowski presenting: Again, I just was hoping to come today to just kind of share the overview of what Triennial Review is, as I know that you're going to be seeing this arise on the agenda again going forward. We at the DEQ and in my program are working together to finalize our proposed plan and timeline for initiating the 2023 triennial review period. We will know soon, a little bit more, how that will shake out as far as dates are concerned, and we will share that with you all, and look forward to being on a future agenda to initiate that process more formally. Thanks very much for your time today.

Questions/Comments:

Amanda Knuteson: Thank you so much, Katie. I was just going to request, that we have this presentation, if possible, attached to our minutes when they're posted or posted some other way on MDEQ's website, because I think it's helpful. not just for Council members, but for members of the public to have that visual to step through for questions like, how do we participate? I think that most of us who've been in Montana for any length of time understand that we have a broad right to, but we don't always know how do we do it? And that was clear, and I think it it'd be great if we could have that posted. I was just thinking as an attachment to our meeting minutes when they're available because you always have those on the website as well. With that does anyone have questions for Katie? Council members or members of the public?

Amanda Knuteson: The next agenda item is our nutrient work group update with Amy Steinmetz.

Nutrient Workgroup Update-Presenter Amy Steinmetz, Waste Management and Remediation Division Administrator

Amy Steinmetz presenting: Chair Knuteson and members of the council. My name is Amy Steinmetz, and I'm the Waste management and Remediation Division Administrator at DEQ. As one of my holdovers from the Water Quality Division Administrator, I am still involved with the nutrient work group and the work that DEQ has been doing with the nutrient work group, so I'll just give you a quick update today. I think I talked to you in November and gave you a little bit of an update then and mentioned that we were planning on releasing another draft of our rule package, and we have done that. On December 5th ,2022 we sent out a full rule package. It includes the rule itself. A Circular DEQ 15. Just to let you know what that is, circulars are adopted in rule, so they do carry the weight of law, but they contain the technical information that's just too much to put into a rule itself. Then we also had a guidance document that went along with that. In addition to those documents, we've also released templates for the AMP monitoring, and then also AMP, the implementation of the of a plan. We've put out a lot of documents, and we have asked that all our nutrient work group members read through those documents before our next meeting. We do have another meeting coming up in February, and it is on the Nutrient Work group website. We just wanted to provide that for members and give them the chance couple of months to read through it so that we can have a robust discussion here coming up in February. We were meeting every couple of weeks over the past several months. We did decide that during session, because so many of our nutrient work group members are busy with session. We've cut

that down to one meeting per month. So, until May, we'll just have one meeting per month. The package that we released protects beneficial uses of our water bodies. It meets the requirements that we're set forth in Senate Bill 358, and it fits within the bounds of the Montana Water Quality Act and the Federal Clean Water Act.

Amy Steinmetz presenting: We had these requirements as we went into this process and have stayed true to those requirements. We need to protect beneficial uses, and we need to stay within the bounds of the law, and that is what we have done with this rule package. We'll continue discussions with our nutrient work group members. We know that there are still some questions and some issues that haven't been fully resolved, and we'll continue working through those. Just a quick summary of our January meeting, when we met in January, DEQ went through some of the areas where there's still some disagreement. We identified 5 areas, and I'm sorry I don't have them listed in front of me. I could tell you a couple of them, and maybe with some folks in the room we could come up with all 5. What we did with those 5 areas where the entire group isn't in complete agreement. We talked about the various viewpoints, and then where DEQ landed in our proposed rule package, and why we landed there. We thought that that would be hopefully helpful for the nutrient work group to understand that we really did try to hear and understand everybody's concerns and try to come to a point where we were meeting as many people's needs as or as many groups needs as possible. Again, being protective of beneficial uses, and staying within the bounds of the law. We'll continue to work through some of the confusion that remains. This is there's a lot to this program, and we know that there will still be questions. I think, during our last meeting there was a question about potential legislation coming up for nutrients. We do know that some folks are throwing around some ideas. We haven't seen any rule draft or sorry any bill drafts for legislation. Again, we do know that some concepts are being discussed, and obviously DEQ will be working with anybody who does have those bill drafts because we are the implementing agency. We need to make sure that it is something that we can implement moving forward. Any questions I just wanted to give a brief update on where we are, and I will, because you're probably wondering, try to think of some of the issues that we don't have 100% agreement yet.

Amy Steinmetz presenting: Katie and Eric, I'm going to ask for your help on this, but one of them is where people enter the adaptive management program. For a long time, we had said phosphorus probably didn't fit very well within the adaptive management program itself. We have heard the concerns from the group on that. Now we have said that in in some cases that may be appropriate, so we will weigh that and so the phosphorus may be included in the adaptive management program. There's still some prioritization which was required through Senate Bill 358. Senate bill 358 did set a requirement that DEQ had to consider prioritization of phosphorus where we're applicable. We have done that through the rule package as required in law. Another one is narrative versus numeric.

Katie Makarowski added: We've had a lot of ongoing discussions about how a protective limit will be selected to go into permits. For example, how a number may be selected from a range of values thought to be protective of an area where the water body is located, or an eco-region. Then how that would be implemented into a permit limit, for example.

Amy Steinmetz presenting: Ensuring that it's a watershed approach.

Amanda Knuteson: Thank you, Amy, Katie, and Eric. I would just ask, if maybe, I don't know if you overheard the discussion, we had about potentially my working with Megan to update the council on legislative happenings between now and our next meeting, since that's not until mid-March. Maybe if you three could coordinate with Megan as well, so that we can capture all the topics of interest. If you think anything's happening, we should be aware of and track.

Amy Steinmetz Yes, as we see nutrient legislation pop up, we can certainly let Meagan know. That way she can pass that on to all of you, because I do know that it's something that you're really interested in. So absolutely.

Amanda Knuteson: Just one last call, do any council members, or any members of the public have any questions for Amy, Katie, or Eric while we have them.

Questions/Comments

Mike Koopal Question: Thank you, Amy, and Katie. I guess this is more of a process question. You know the nutrient work group has been working long and hard on this issue. As we go into the Triennial Review should WPCAC expect that we will be moving on the nutrient standard as well? Do you know what the timeline is for it?

Amy Steinmetz: It's the own process outside of the Triangle review. So, I'll just start there, as far as knowing what our timeline is going to look like. No, we really don't know currently. DEQ feels like the rule package that we have come up with is solid. It is protective. It meets what was required in senate bill 358. That said, we're waiting for results of a study to come back. That will help inform some of the specific numbers that we would look at for macro and vertebrates. We're expecting that the spring. If everybody agreed and nothing changed with legislation, we could be ready to go to rule making soon. Probably right after session we could go in in May. At this point, not knowing what's going to come out with legislation, it's just not possible to say, because we may, depending on what comes out, there could be some significant changes that may need to be made on what we've done so far.

Katie Makarowski: As far as the link to Triennial Review, I guess I can just say that I think there's a couple of different approaches that we can take when we open Triennial Review. I think we can opt to either, open all standards, and that would, of course, include nutrients at this time. Knowing that we have these ongoing efforts with the nutrient work group and an evolving picture. Just build that into our responses to any nutrient-related comments that may come. Or we could open Triennial Review and opt to exclude nutrients specifically from this triennial review cycle because of the ongoing nature of that topic. We have a little bit of time to decide which approach, will make the most sense. Given that we have kind of two processes likely to be happening at the same time, and timing will factor into that. To ensure that there's adequate stakeholder and public participation in those processes on all topics.

Amy Steinmetz: I think, as you were talking, I thought about one more thing I should probably mention. I did say, if everybody agreed. I do want to be clear that we are not expecting to get consensus on this that would be nearly impossible. We do want to come up with something that doesn't have unintended consequences for one group or another. There is just a lot of conversation that still needs to happen to make sure that we're not missing anything, and that there can be some level of agreement on what we move forward with, even though we're not expecting consensus.

Amanda Knuteson: Thank you. Any other questions, especially from the public. Thank you very much, Amy and Katie and Eric. We know how busy you are, and we appreciate your time very much. And hopefully we'll see you at our next meeting in March as well.

I will be there, and I would also thank all of you. I think I've said this before, but this is an important group. It's important that we have a stakeholder group that we can run ideas by that can help weigh in on just the work that we do. So, we really appreciate you as well. Thank you.

Amanda Knuteson: Next item, is the Flathead Regional septage treatment facility. presentation with Ricky Schultz and Craig Caprara, from HDR.

Flathead Regional Septage Treatment Facility-Rickey Schultz,Project Manager, Craig Caprara,HDR Engineer

Craig Caprara presenting: So, we're going to talk to you today about an interesting project that we're working with Flathead County on it's the Regional Septic Treatment and Biosolids Composting Facility.

- **Agenda**
  - Introductions
  - Need for Project
    - Septic Challenges
    - Biosolids Challenges
  - Septic Treatment Plant and Biosolids Composting Facility
  - Next Steps and Schedule

Craig Caprara presenting: With me today I've got Ricky Schultz. He's a project manager with us here in our Missoula office as well. He, too, has been involved in work in the Flathead for a for a long time. We're going to talk about the need for this project. The Flathead valley has some unique challenges. both regarding septic and to biosolids. We'll give you an overview of what a septic treatment plant and biosolid composting facility looks like. Then talk about next steps and schedule (*Next Slide*)

- **A Problem Years in the Making**
  - Problems with Land Availability Date back to 2008
    - Septage haulers have been raising this issue with the Health Department for over a decade. Funding has always been an issue with respect to the implementation.
    - In 2020 Glacier Gold reached its capacity for taking biosolids creating severe biosolids disposal limitation,
    - In the summer of 2022, the Health Department received calls almost daily related to this problem. Numerous pumpers had to stop pumping because there were no disposal sites.

Craig Caprara presenting: The problem with septage and bio in the Flathead valley dates back a long time, at least to 2008. We were doing a work for the city of Kalispell at their wastewater treatment facility back about that timeframe and the Health Department, Flathead County County Health Department had approached the city of Kalispell about taking septage at their treatment plant. If you know anything about the Flathead valley in the early nineties, all the treatment facilities in the Flathead valley started doing nutrient removal to preserve the water quality in Flathead Lake. All the communities up there now Columbia Falls, Kalispell, Big fork, and White Fish all have biological nutrient removal facilities that are quite sensitive. The other thing is, they're small. Kalispell being the biggest one about a 3 MGD facility. Accepting septage is not something that they want to do, because it can upset their treatment process and cause violations in their nutrient discharge. None of them really want to do that. The other thing that's unique to the Flathead is, there are a lot of septic tanks. Missoula Billings, Helena, Great Falls, all accept septage. Their large facilities and there's not as many septic tanks as there are in the Flathead. Now, in addition to the issues with septage a discharge to the municipalities in the Flathead: we're running out of land. So, most of the septage now is applied to land and with the growth in the Flathead valley, most the septic haulers are losing their leases on the land that they dispose of septage on right now. On the biosolid side, traditionally, Kalispell took all their biosolids to Glacier Gold by a composting facility, and only about 30 miles north. Columbia Falls used to land apply all their biosolids, but they've lost the ability to do that. For the same reason the septage haulers are losing out, they're losing the land that they apply on. All of Columbia Falls biosolids go to the

landfill. Glacier Gold is at capacity. The city of Kalispell also hauls some of their biosolids to the landfill. Health Department gets calls on this daily, and, as I said, several of the pumpers are starting to lose their disposal sites. (*Next Slide*)

- **What is an onsite WWTS**
    - Commonly referred to as a 'drain field' or 'septic system'.
    - Comprised of a septic tank and drain field.
    - The septic tank removes solids and provides 'primary' treatment.
    - Sometimes advanced treatment is required to avoid degradation of the groundwater.

Craig Caprara presenting: I'm going to give you a little overview on the septic side of it. And then Ricky is going to talk about biosolids. I think most of you know what a what septic system is. It's a septic tank where everything you put down, the drain or flush down the toilet goes into the solid settle out, the gray water to goes to a leash field and absorbs into the ground. It's considered primary treatment to removed solids. Sometimes we have advanced treatment. If there are issues with the vicinity of ground water, surface water. Some systems we call a Level 2 system, will remove some nutrients. (*Next Slide*)

- **What is septage?**
    - The liquid and solid material pumped from a septic tank.
    - Includes water, grease, scum, sludge, garbage, and high concentrations of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Septage also included porta-potty waste.
    - Septage is roughly 10-35 times stronger than normal municipal waste. Does not include commercial or industrial waste.

Craig Caprara presenting: So, what is septage. It's the liquid and solid material in the tank. I t includes everything from grease, scam, sludge, and garbage. Also, high concentrations of nutrients like nitrogen phosphorus. There is a large quantity of porta-potty waste that we also include in that category. It's probably 10 to 35 times stronger than municipal waste, which makes it difficult to deal with from a treatment standpoint. (*Next Slide*)

- **WWTS Maintenance**
    - Septic tanks should be pumped every 3-5 years to avoid solids from flowing out of the tank and plugging the drain field.
    - The cost of a replacement drain field is about $12,000 to $15,000.
    - Do you know how many septic tanks are in Flathead County?

Craig Caprara presenting: It's recommended that septic tanks be pumped every 3 to 5 years, that doesn't always happen. But if you're not pumping your septic tank on a regular basis, you can plug up your drain field. A drain field replacement if you've got room for it, anywhere from $12,000 to $15,000 to do that. So rhetorical question, but do you know how many septic tanks there are in the Flathead Valley. (*Next Slide*)

- **Flathead County Septage**
    - The Health Department estimates there are 30,000 septic tanks in Flathead County.
    - Approximately 700 new onsite WWTS permits were issued in2022.
    - On average 20,000-40,000 gallons of septage is pumped every day.

Craig Caprara presenting: This is just a GIS picture of the number of septic tanks in the Flathead Valley, so the red for all the septic tanks, as you can see, there are a lot of them (*See Slide Presentation*). approximately 30,000 septic tanks in the Flathead County. That's just the ones that we know of. Everybody suspects that there are quite a few more, because a lot of them went in before we did

permitting, and really started keeping track of it. In 2022 alone there were 700 new septic permits issued. It's a growing issue. On the average there's 20,000 to 40,000 gallons of septage pumped and land applied every day in the Flathead Valley. (*Next Slide*)

- **Challenges with Septage Disposal…**
    - Today septage is the primarily disposed of via land application, but there is a problem…
        - And is becoming less and less available for septage disposal due to growth.
        - Difficult finding new application sites due to soils, setbacks, etc.
        - Porta potties at construction sites and at special events cannot be emptied.
        - In 2022 the Health Department received calls almost daily related to this problem.

Craig Caprara presenting: As I said, disposal of septage is becoming a problem. Our land is becoming limited. The picture on the right, and it shows one method of land applying it where it's injected into the ground, that doesn't always happen. Sometimes it's just spread on the ground. Septic haulers are having a difficult time finding new sites due to the soils, setbacks, and just the number of homes that are that are being built in in rural areas. The porta-potty guys, pump about 400,000 gallons of porta-potty waste a year. Traditionally, that's gone to the city of Columbia Falls facility. City of Columbia Falls is scaling that back with the intent of eliminating all discharge of port a-potty waste to their facility. I think, within about 10 years or less. Just because of the impacts on their capacity. So, they're running out of places to put it. As I said, lack of septic tank maintenance will lead to drain field failure, which means you're no longer getting primary treatment. You're sending all that waste into the ground. (*Next Slide*)

- **Challenges with Septage Disposal…**
    - Municipal WWTPs (e.g., Kalispell, Bigfork, Lakeside, Columbia Falls, and Whitefish) can't take it due to stringent nutrient limits and sensitive treatment processes.
    - Full septic tanks mean primary treatment is not occurring. Affecting the quality of the water being discharged to the ground and septic tanks are not being maintained.

Craig Caprara presenting: Municipalities can't take septage in the Flathead Valley due to the stringent, nutrient limits and sensitive treatment processes that they have. Septic tank failure leads to groundwater pollution.

Craig Caprara presenting: I am going to turn it over to Ricky and let him talk about Biosolids.

Amanda Knuteson: Okay, we're ready for your portion of the presentation. We just weren't getting audio from you.

Craig Caprara presenting: Maybe I'll jump in and keep us moving here. We'll see if Ricky can get his audio working (*Next Slide*)

- **Where do biosolids come from?**
    - Residential wastewater and Commercial wastewater
        - Trash Removal
        - Settling
            - Microbes and gravity remove solids from water.
        - Digestion
            - Just like your stomach, microbes, and heat "digest" the solids.
        - Dewatering
            - Water is removed, just like in the spin cycle of a washing machine.
        - Transportation

- Biosolids are transported to farms, forests, and composters.

Craig Caprara presenting: Biosolids are a product of the wastewater treatment plant process, or the wastewater treatment process. Residential and commercial wastewater goes into a treatment plant. Trash is removed. the solids are settled out. Most of the time they're digested, dewatered. Biosolids are then taken to disposal. Disposal can be land applied. It can be applied to forests. It can go to composting facilities like Glacier Gold, and the Flathead Valley, or it can be landfilled. In the Flathead there's about 700 wet tons of biosolids that are buried in the landfill every year. We'd like to improve on that. (*Next Slide*)

- **Challenges with Biosolids Disposal…**
  - Similar to septage application, we are running out of areas to dispose of biosolids.
  - Land application is limited for the same reason as septage disposal.
  - Glacier Gold is at capacity.
  - Landfill limits biosolids disposal due to capacity issues.

Craig Caprara presenting: Similar to septage application sites are not readily available, and we're running out of areas to dispose of biosolids. Glacier Gold is at its capacity and the landfill limits the amount of biosolids that can be disposed. In summary, septage and biosolids are a byproduct of wastewater that's got to be addressed. It's a major issue in the Flathead Valley. (*Next Slide*)

- **A Regional Facility solves these problems.**
  - Driver 1: Impacts of Growth and Tourism.
  - Driver 2: Available Funding Minimizes $ Impact on Citizens
  - Driver 3: Problems w/ Land Availability and Capacity Limits at Landfill and Glacier Gold
  - Driver 4: Solves a County-Wide Issue

Craig Caprara presenting: A regional facility, and this concept has been considered for a long time. The funding was never available to do it. Flathead County received a significant amount of AR of funding. They didn't have a lot of need except for this project. A good deal of their funding, not all of it, is going to this project which has made it possible. Our funding issue has been solved in essence through the ARPA program. Some of the other problems that this solves is the growth and the impact of growth in tourism on wastewater facilities, on septage facilities, and porta-potty haulers in the Flathead Valley. It solves the problem of a land availability for disposal of septage and the limitations at the Glacier Gold Compost Facility in the Flathead. It solves a county wide issue. (*Next Slide*)

- **Septage Treatment Plant and Biosolids Composting Facility**
  - What exactly is a septage treatment plant and biosolids composting facility?
    - Septage Treatment
      - Receiving and Screening
      - Septage Treatment
      - Effluent Discharge to Municipal Facility
      - Solids Composting
      - Odor Control

Craig Caprara presenting: What is a septage treatment plant biosolids composting facility? There's really 2 parts to it. The first I'll talk about is the septage treatment side of it. The concept is construction of a septage receiving facility where we would bring pumpers in. They'd be able to dispose of their septage through a screen. The trash would be removed. Then the septage would be treated through a mechanical treatment process like what some of the wastewater treatment facilities in the Flathead do

now. We would treat that septage waste to domestic strength waste, and then dispose of it to a municipal system. We reduce the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen, DOD in the affluent from the septage and discharge it to municipality. The solids would be separated, and we take the solids to a compost facility or to the composting part of this. Then, we included in this, and we'll show some pictures of it later would be over control. We'd want to make sure that we didn't affect the neighbors in the vicinity of where this might be located. (*Next Slide*)

- **Septage Treatment Plant and Biosolids Composting Facility**
    - What exactly is a septage treatment plant and biosolids composting facility?
    - Biosolids Composting
        - Biosolids Receiving
        - Woody Waste Receiving
        - Mixing
        - Aeration
        - Curing
        - Screening
        - Beneficial Reuse

Craig Caprara presenting: The Biosolid is part of this, would it include biosolids receiving. We would receive biosolids from the municipalities in the valley that want to bring it here. Initially, we're thinking that all the biosolids that Kalispell and Columbia Falls take the landfill right now would come to this facility day one. So, we'd get all that biosolids out of the landfill and put it to beneficial use. We'd receive woody waste. The landfill in Flathead County right now receives a significant amount of woody waste. It goes into the landfill. We're going to pull that out of the landfill and reuse it in the composting process. So, we'd mix the biosolid with the woody waste and make what we call a compost pile. In this case, we're thinking it'll be an aerated static pile system. It cooks for a time, and then we cool it off. We screen out the overs, or t woody product that we don't want to dispose of because it's a difficult to get expensive to get. We recycled that bulking agent. Then the screened compost goes to storage and then disposal. Hopefully beneficial means. (*Next Slide*)

- **What a Septage Treatment and Biosolids Composting Facility is NOT…**
    - Discharge of sludge of septage onto the ground.
    - A wastewater plant with outside basins.
    - A large industrial complex.

Craig Caprara presenting: I just want to point out a few things that this facility will not be. We're not going to be land applying septage anymore and allowing it to go into the ground pictured on the left (*See slide*). That kind of gives you an idea of how septage is disposed of in a lot of places. It's not going to be a big outdoor mechanical wastewater treatment facility like you see in the center picture there like Kalispell, Columbia Falls, and Whitefish. It's not going to be a large industrial complex. The picture on the right is the City of Missoula's wastewater treatment plant and compost facility. This will be a lot smaller than that. We're intending to put all the facilities indoors. (*Next Slide*)

- **Existing WWTPs…what could this look like?**
    - *Slide with 3 images of WWTP.*

Craig Caprara presenting: This is several pictures of existing wastewater treatment facilities. These just all happen to be in Idaho, but Cascade, Idaho, Kuna, Idaho, and Shelley, Idaho, all have mechanical wastewater treatment facilities that are completely enclosed in buildings. As soon as you can see from

the architecture, you would never know that any of those facilities are a wastewater treatment plant. It's our intention to do the same thing with this project. (*Next Slide*)

- **Existing Bigfork, MT WWTP**
    - *Slide shows image of an aerial view of WWTP.*

Craig Caprara presenting: We know we can be successful even near homes. This is the existing Big Fork wastewater treatment plant. It's tucked right in there amongst a lot of expensive homes and businesses right along Flathead Lake. You would never know it was there. (*Next Slide*)

- **Existing Hamilton, MT Biosolids Composting Facility**
    - Aerated static pile biosolids composting.
    - Located about 350 feet from a neighborhood and adjacent to the Bitterroot River.
    - An enclosed building was planned for Phase 2 but deemed not necessary since odors were not a problem.

Craig Caprara presenting: The Hamilton wastewater treatment facility also operates a compost operation. It's narrated static pile system similar to what we're talking about. It's located about 350 feet to the nearest development and Bitterroot River. It's not enclosed in the building. It is covered, as you can see, on the picture on the right. We didn't in close it at the time they didn't have the money to do it. They've never had to do it because their odors are never a problem. Even in the proximity to the homes that are there. (*Next Slide*)

- **Existing Hamilton, MT WWTP**
    - *Aerial image of Hamilton WWTP*

Craig Caprara presenting: The Hamilton Wastewater Treatment plan, as you see, is very close to existing homes in the area. This also points out where they're odor control is (*Next Slide*)

- **Odor control includes forcing smelly air through a biological odor control system made of …compost!**
- *Image of biofilters in compost*

Craig Caprara presenting: We pull the air through the compost pile and discharge it through a biofilter. A biofilter odor control system is just a compost pile with a bark or wood chips mixed in, and the bacteria that grow in that in that material feed on the odor, constituents in the air like a hydrogen sulfide and other things and reduce that down. the Hamilton facility very seldom experience odor problems. (*Next Slide*)

- **Existing Coeur d' Alene, ID Biosolids Composting Facility**
    - *Aerial image of Cour d' Alene Biosolids Composting Treatment Facility*

Craig Caprara presenting: Cord d' Alene, wastewater treatment facility. They discharge all their bios to a compost operation that they own. It's also located kind of right in the middle of town. It's very close proximity to lots of homes. They, too, do a compost filter bed, biofilter odor control system like Hamilton (*Next Slide*)

- **Existing Coeur d' Alene, ID Biosolids Composting Facility**
    - Left: North side of composting facility (*image of facility*)
    - Right: High density residential (*image of facility)*

Craig Caprara presenting: This is the view of the street right along the compost facilities. Residences on the right the compost facilities on the left. There's a nice buffer of trees and shrubs, and there's also a berm around it. It's not visible to the community around it. (*Next Slide*)

- **Next steps and Schedule**
    - What happens next?
        - Purchase property
        - Final design of the facility…2023.
        - Bidding and contractor procurement…2024
        - Construction…2024-2025.

Craig Caprara presenting: What happens next? We're evaluating properties for the county to purchase, to locate the facility. We're hoping to be in the final design of the facility in 2023 Going out to bid in contract to procurement in 2024. Then construction 2024, 2025, Lots of challenges and things to figure out to get to that point. That's the plan. Any questions?

Amanda Knuteson: Any questions from Council members or members of the public?

Questions/Comments:

Amanda Knuteson: I have one comment, which is just that I love, that this is going to be in a fully enclosed building. I have experienced firsthand, some issues and places where they declined to have a building, and the facilities, in our climate, there are so many conditions that can occur that negatively impact treatment that can be accounted for and controlled so efficiently in a building. It's so worth the extra investment to have it in a building.

Craig Caprara: We really want to go the extra mile on this. We've got the funding to do it. We would be lying to people if we told them there would never be an odor issue. You know it is wastewater. It is a biological treatment system it can get upset. We want to have belts and suspenders on it. I think we've got a couple of questions.

Ron Pifer: yes, just quickly. Thank you very much, Craig.

Ron Pifer Question: I'm a friend of the chairman of the Pumpers Association that reports to the DEQ. And he's the one that told me about the stellar project that you have on the books, and working with Mike on, and your team up there in the Flathead and his concern is the same thing that you elucidated in the beginning of your report. Running out of land to put the that the pumped a fluent on getting a deep watering system in. Regarding the Flathead, it's too far for our pumpers in the Bitterroot to come up there: once it's put in place. But regarding the Flathead, since Columbia Falls is going to be scaling down. Is this going to be a close call, getting the system in on time before Columbia Falls closes?

Craig Caprara: Yes, Columbia Falls is ratcheting back already. I have heard that the City of Whitefish is accepting some of that porta-potty waste at their facility. I don't think it's something that they want to do. I shouldn't speak for them. But I'm guessing it's not something they want to do long term. Hopefully we can keep everybody in business until we can get this thing operational.

Ron Pifer: Gotcha sounds good.

Craig Caprara: It will be close. I know City Columbia Falls told me that there are a couple of the of the porta-potty haulers up there, considering, temporarily shut down. It's a huge impact, we have music festivals, ski races, fun runs, and all sorts of things that require that. When you don't have any place to take, it shuts all that down.

Ron Pifer: Well, there's another factor, too, and that is, from the business standpoint, as my friend has pointed out. When he doesn't have a place to dump it on the land in the Bitterroot Valley alley. He has to go all the way to the Missoula, just like people up in the Flathead would have to travel distance, and that's expensive. When they're getting 5 or 6 miles the gallon, and then you add the cost of dumping it at the regional wastewater treatment plant, they can't even compete with their fellow pumpers who are dumping it on land, which, of course, is diminishing as we speak. It's kind of a train wreck that we're heading for. From what I can tell.

Craig Caprara: One of the bigger challenges is making this affordable for everybody, and certainly having the capital costs covered by grants is a huge deal. It's kind of a non-starter without that and always has been. Even the operational costs that's the next challenge, and we're working through that. We've got to develop a market for the compost material to be able to sell it and make this thing viable. The septage treatment and handling is expensive. It's got to make it affordable for everybody. I think Adam had a question.

Adam Pummill Question: Yes, thank you for your presentation. It seems like a good project. You did a good job of overview and kind of laying this out, and you've mostly spoke to my question. But I was just kind of curious as to the scale and capacity of this thing? are you guys proposing, or is at least part of the preliminary to design, to have capacity to be able to handle essentially all the Flathead Valley and surrounding, you know, minor surrounding outliers in in a project like this?

Craig Caprara: Yes. There, there's like 20 to 40,000 gallons of septage pump to you a day in the Flathead We're we are planning on growth and being able to take all of that, and then some. I think, right now we're planning on 60,000 gallons a day of septage. Then on the biosolid side, we are planning on being able to take all the biosolids that Columbia falls, Kalispell, and Whitefish would produce. Even though Whitefish has their own solution. So, I know they're not planning on bringing it to this facility right now, but it definitely would give them an option if in the future they ever needed something. We should be able to handle everything in the Flathead for quite some time.

Adam Pummill: That's great. Thank you very much.

Amanda Knuteson: Are there any other questions or comments from council or members of the public? It's like we still have 29 participants. Okay. Thank you so much, Craig and Ricky. I'm sorry for technical difficulties with Ricky, but we appreciate you both taking time to present this. It is an interesting project, and something that you direly need in that region for sure.

Craig Caprara: Yes, we appreciate the chance to be able to talk about it. It is an important project in the Flathead for sure.

Amanda Knuteson: It'd be great if you could give us an update when you make some headway on moving along with it, especially once you get to that point where you're determining operation and maintenance budget. Let us know how things are going.

Craig Caprara: We'd be more than happy to do that. Thanks so much.

Action Item

Amanda Knuteson: Okay, everyone. I was just running through the agenda, and I realized that I jumped past one item that we need a quick vote on which was our calendar for the coming year. That was part of the agenda packet that Meagan forwarded to us on the 18th of January. We are postponing the meeting in November by a week so that we meet on Friday, December 1st.

Amanda Knuteson: I move that we approved the calendar as Meagan Gilmore proposed for 2023. With our next meeting occurring on Friday March 17th.

Seconded by Dennis Teske.

All in favor.

None opposed.

Additional Public Comment/Questions:

No additional questions/comments.

Future Agenda Items/ Discussion

- Amanda Knuteson added another Legislative update to the agenda.
- Amanda Knuteson added Nutrient Work Group Update from Amy Steinmetz to the agenda.
- Meagan Gilmore added that Katie Makarowski may have another update at that point for more solid dates for standards.
- Amanda Knuteson added a possible Adam Pummil presentation on how things are working on the ground as an engineer. How working as an engineer in the private sector and how navigating the rules is working and interfacing with DEQ on applications. Presentation is tentative for next meeting. Adam Pummil agreed to develop a presentation.

  Adam Pummil comment: Right now, I don't have a whole lot to add. There is still some backlog and some new specialty nuances of DEQ and approval, but their doing very well addressing that backlog. Their still in the process of implementing a new submittal and tracking system for applications and submissions through DEQ. So that will help with some transparency to see where you're at in the que. Adding some of the efficiencies of technology and being able to respond to questions and requests back and forth instead of waiting 60 days.

- Tenative presentation from Dennis Teske on perspectives and concerns from rural Montana communities.

  Ron Pifer comment: I thought that the Health Departments provided some interesting input. Maybe have one or more of them present to the group, and I think from a county commissioner's perspective. Dennis Teske, I believe, is a is a current or past county commissioner, he also mentioned in a rural Montana county what their perspectives are and what their paradigm is for getting citizen input coming up with solutions. I don't know if Dennis would want to do that. I would respect his Input.

  Dennis Teske comment: Yes, Ron I would like to discuss that, because there is a mentality in rural about rules and how they apply and just getting everybody on board. We are all trying to accomplish the same thing. So yes Ron I would work with you and we could talk about that.

  Ron Pifer comment: that sounds good. That's something you would take the lead on. We could work with Amanda Knuteson and Meagan Gilmore on that and come up with something for one of our meetings going forward.

Amanda Knuteson qustion: I really like that idea; I would really be interested in hearing a rural Montana perspective. Maybe for the next meeting in March Dennis Teske, would that be ok to add you or a panel discussion surrounding rural Montana concerns to the agenda?

Dennis Teske comment: We can tentatively put that on there and Amanda I will keep you updated on that. Yes, I did get reelected as commissioner again.

- Amanda Knuteson: Congratulations Dennis, any more agenda items to add from the group?
- No further agenda items.

Final Public Questions/Comments:

Amanda Knuteson: Any further questions or comments from the public?

There were none.

Next meeting: March 17th,2023

Meeting was adjourned by Amanda Knuteson.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Godfre7