

Bear Creek Watershed Association

Approved: August 14, 2013

Policy 14 Draft Data Collection in the Bear Creek Watershed



Statement of Basis and Purpose

The Bear Creek Watershed Association (Association) oversees implementation of the Bear Creek Watershed State Control Regulation (Regulation #74, 5 CCR 1002-74) (Control Regulation). The Association is the local water quality management agency responsible for implementation of monitoring and tracking of water quality in the Bear Creek Watershed. The Association membership monitors point sources and tracks nonpoint source practices, programs and loadings within the watershed. The Association management and implementation programs are at a watershed level.

The control regulation states:

Jefferson County, Clear Creek County, Park County, municipalities, districts, and other agencies responsible for point and nonpoint sources in the Bear Creek Watershed shall conduct water quality monitoring in the watershed, in accordance with the monitoring procedures described in an annually reviewed quality assurance project plan approved by the Division. The Association shall ensure that water quality monitoring is conducted on Turkey Creek, Bear Creek, and in Bear Creek Reservoir to measure the phosphorus loadings reaching the reservoir and other factors which affect the watershed water quality, as well as the attainment of beneficial uses for the reservoir and watershed.

The Association monitoring plan details reservoir and watershed monitoring programs as approved by the Association Board and accepted by the Water Quality Control Division staff. This annual monitoring plan serves as a supplement to the adopted Association Quality Assurance Project Plan (Bear Creek Watershed Association, 2006). The annual monitoring program details the overall monitoring program, including changes, updates, and major continuation studies and monitoring analysis elements. The Association is the primary organization tasked under state regulation to monitor water quality within the Bear Creek Watershed

Over the years, the Bear Creek Watershed tributaries have been popular waters for outside agency/organization studies, training exercises and specialty monitoring/ data collection efforts or programs. Some of this data has been used to suggest there are water quality concerns primarily within portions of Bear Creek. Much of this data has not been shared with the Association. Data has been collected using different methods to address different types of questions. Ultimately, data is treated as if it is completely compatible or comparable. This is not always the case. While some of the data has shown areas of localized concern that required further evaluations, much of the data has conflicted with data collected by the Association. This creates confusion, mistrust and generally requires un-necessary data collection and analysis. Often this wastes limited monitoring resources and funds.

A generally continuous collection of surface quality data began in 1990 for the Bear Creek Watershed. Data collection includes specific chemical, physical and biological parameters. Data is collected monthly and bi-monthly at Bear Creek Reservoir and along Turkey Creek and Bear Creek, and at selected months in the watershed. The Association meets water quality data sampling and analyses objectives established in the Bear Creek Reservoir Control Regulation # 74.

The BCWA monitoring program is contained in an annually updated Sample Analyses Plan (Association, February 2012; ***Surface Water Monitoring Program and Sample Analyses Plan Version 2012.01***). This monitoring plan has a clearly defined quality control and quality assurance program.

The Association takes pride in their data collection program and strives to maintain quality data. The Association shares all collected data when requested. The Association provides multiple reporting documents designed to meet the multiple functions of various groups. The Association produces an annual report to the Water Quality Control Commission that specifically addresses program elements identified in the control regulation. The Association produces a series of technical memorandum designed to summarize the site-specific studies and an annual data report summarizing data collection efforts.

The Association is not opposed to outside agencies or organizations collecting and analyzing water quality or environmental data. The Association does contend that any outside data collection effort, whether for water quality or environmental purposes, be coordinated with the Association and all collected data be made available for inclusion into the Association data record.

Data Collection in Bear Creek Watershed Policy

The Bear Creek Watershed Association is the primary water quality monitoring organization for the Bear Creek Water. The Association will cooperate with outside organizations and agencies related to water quality and environmental monitoring. The Association prefers to be a cooperative partner in all monitoring efforts and, as such, is willing to incorporate outside monitoring needs into the Association monitoring program at cost.

The Association's policy position:

1. Any outside organization or agency collecting and analyzing water quality and environmental data within the Bear Creek Watershed notify and coordinate their efforts monitoring and collection efforts with the Association.
2. Any outside organization or agency should share their quality assurance and quality controlled water quality and environmental data obtained from the watershed.
3. Any outside organization or agency that collects and/or analyses data in the Bear Creek Watershed should report their findings, conclusions or recommendations to the Association Board at a regular meeting of the Association.
4. Allow the Association to audit field collection efforts and training programs.
5. The Association may request split water quality samples be collected so the Association can make an independent analysis of the sample using the designated Association laboratory and state approved minimum detection levels.