Meeting Summary
Planning Unit
Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan
November 17, 2004

Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

Lloyd Brewer and Harry McLean, *City of Spokane*
Dave Jensen, *Pend Oreille County*
Ty Wick, *Spokane Aquifer Joint Board*
Susan McGeorge, *Whitworth Water*
Jane Cunningham, *The Lands Council*
Dave Jones, *Water Quality Advisory Committee*
Keith Holliday, *State Caucus, Department of Ecology*
Reanette Boese & Rob Lindsay, *Spokane County*

Consultants that attended the meeting were: Donna DeFrancesco, Sara Marxen and Chris Pitre, Golder Associates.

Guests that attended the meeting were: Bruce Rawls, Spokane County and Jeanne Dammarell.

Introductions: Rob called the meeting to order at 9:10 am. Committee members and guests introduced themselves. Reanette requested comments and/or corrections to the meeting summaries of the two prior meetings. Keith Holliday provided a change to the 10/26/2004 meeting summary after the meeting summary was mailed out. The corrected version was available next to the sign in sheet.

Storage Assessment Report: Chris Pitre and Sara Marxen of Golder Associates presented findings on the three specific options for storage selected by the Planning Unit. The first option of aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) involves pumping water from wells in the SVRP south of the Little Spokane River to wells of the same water district just north of the Little Spokane River. This project could be used to allow full exercise of existing water rights in an environmentally friendly way. The wells and pipes already exist, though pumps may need changes. No new water rights for annual quantity would be necessary, but a storage permit, which requires a pilot test of the aquifer's ability to store water, would be needed at a cost of $120k-$300k.

The second storage option was a new dam in the upper part of the Little Spokane Watershed. Golder studied one site on Beaver Creek and one on Buck Creek. Both sites are reported by WDFW to have fish passage barriers downstream. The Beaver Creek site has a smaller drainage, but is suitable for a dam though organic soils at the dam site may require excavation. The Buck Creek site has a bigger drainage area and therefore, more potential for water storage. Costs could range from $4M to $24M depending on the size and site chosen. It's predicted that the Buck Creek site would result in lower costs per acre-foot of water stored. Dam design could include creation of new wetlands and releases of cold water from the lower part of the reservoir. In addition nutrients may not be high in the reservoir because there is little development near these sites, and there may be little sedimentation behind the dams because the inundated areas are mostly rock and high in the watershed.

The third option was restoring Saltese Flats as a wetland. The outlet from Saltese Flats was lowered approximately 15 feet 100 years ago. The Flats drain to Shelley Lake and overflow from Shelley Lake goes to a Spokane County owned gravel pit. In a wet year the natural flow would fill Saltese Flats to within 2055 ft amsl, estimated to be within the original natural condition. This amount of water could provide flow of 11 to 35 cfs for 90 days to recharge the aquifer and augment streamflows. The amount of water remaining in storage into the summer could be less because it is not known how much of the water would leak out of the

bottom of the wetland to recharge groundwater, but that leakage would also augment Spokane River flow. Golder looked at three potential configurations for restoring the Flats. If reclaimed water were used to fill the Flats there would be regulatory requirements to protect the wetlands, groundwater quality and human health. Using reclaimed water would require inflow management of natural and reclaimed water inflows to maximize benefits and meet objectives. There are a wide range of restoration options with a wide range of costs, benefits, and constraints. Limited habitat restoration would cost about $4.5M. Restoration with storage using natural inflow could cost of $7M to $13M. Costs using reclaimed water range from $36.5M to $44M. Costs estimated for reclaimed water inflow included conveyance from proposed Spokane County Regional Treatment Plant (~ $30 M), these costs would vary depending on the location from which water was conveyed.

Review of new and changed Recommendations:

II.B.01.a Support a consensus-based agreement within the Avista Recreation, Land Use, and Aesthetics Work Group of at least 300 cfs in the north channel of the Spokane River through Riverfront Park as the basis for aesthetic flows. (Staff 3/26/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04, confirmed 6/2/2004, re-worded and approved 11/8/2004, confirmed 11/17/2004)

Issue *III.B.05. Would a better understanding of flow in the West Branch of the Little Spokane River help water resource management in the watershed? (From public comment, approved 11/8/2004, confirmed 11/17/2004)*

Recommendation III.B.05.a. Determine the feasibility of installing a gage(s) on the West Branch of the Little Spokane River. (From public comment, approved 11/8/2004, confirmed 11/17/2004)

The following recommendations are very similar and need to be combined:
VI.A.01 c. Support forest management and harvest practices that preserve vegetative ground cover to enhance moisture infiltration. (Public Workshop 7/1/03; approved 5/13/2004, confirmed 6/2/2004, "management" added 10/26/2004 in response to public comment.) VI.A.01.f. Encourage sustainable forestry practices that reduce runoff and increase infiltration in keeping with the forest practices act. (From public comment. Approved 10/26/2004, reworded and confirmed 11/8/2004)

VI.A.01.g. ~~Support~~ Consider land use ~~regulations~~ policies that preserve ~~trees~~ natural vegetation in natural drainages and other areas in new subdivisions, short subdivisions, or binding site plans in order to reduce runoff and increase infiltration. (Planning Unit 11/8/2004, reworded and confirmed 11/17/2004)

~~VI.A.02.d – Encourage the enforcement of existing laws protecting beaver dams~~. (From public comment, approved 11/8/2004, removed 11/17/2004)

VI.A.02.~~e~~ d – ~~Educate the~~ Consider a public education program on the benefits and problems of beaver dams. (From public comment, concept approved 11/8/2004, reworded and confirmed 11/17/2004)

The Watershed Plan introduction should say that the studies done for the Planning Unit were used to make the recommendations of the plan.

Discussion of Comments from the WRIA 55 / 57 Watershed Plan: The focus turned to the comments from the public to incorporate them into the plan. The comments were divided into several categories.

Conservation Comments (pg 3):

Potential Response changes: Change "the best way" to "one way" and "the first step" to "an important step" in the first paragraph. Remove the second paragraph. Replace the last sentence with "Individual water purveyor's will implement the water conservation strategies that will work for them in accordance with state law".

Limit pumping Comments (pg 3):

Potential Response: The watershed plan cannot impact valid water rights granted before this plan was approved. We do not see any mining of the SVRP Aquifer, in fact, some water purveyor are pumping less water now than they did when the water was used for irrigation rather than municipal uses.

Over-Allocation Comments (pg 3):

Potential Response: This is true. The over allocation problem is in part due to water rights that are actually invalid, but are still listed because they have not been challenged. Recommendation V.A.01.a addresses this issue. The watershed plan cannot impact valid water rights granted before this plan was approved.

Reclamation and Reuse Comments:

These concepts need to be added to the Potential Response: After 20 years of telling people that wastewater should not recharge the Aquifer we need to educate people about reclamation and reuse before it will be accepted. If the treated wastewater can't go into the river, why would we want to put it into the drinking water? The multi-purpose water storage study included a reuse and reclamation component as a strategy for use of wastewater.

Growth Comments:

Potential Response changes: Find the comment on "finite amount of water in our watersheds". Add "efficiencies" after "consumption patterns". Add reusing water several times as a way to increase useable water in the watershed. Include "ran a model scenario" as the way inchoate water rights were analyzed. Quantify increases in water used in the 20-year and inchoate scenarios.

Water Quality Comments: No changes.

Logging/Reforestation Comments:

Potential Response changes: Add new wording from the changes to the recommendations.

Instream Flow on Spokane River Comments:

Potential Response changes: Add that by law only future upstream and upgradient water rights can be controlled by an instream flow rule. Add at the end "Large amounts of other data need to be collected and analyzed before an instream flow can be set at the Spokane gage".

Barker Road Flow Comments:

Potential Response changes: Simplify the last sentence to read, "The request came from the Washington and Idaho fisheries agencies".

Instream Flow for Water Quality Comments: No changes.

Aesthetic Instream Flow Comments:

Potential Response changes: Change the wording about the economic issue of water flowing in the north channel or over Monroe Street dam.

Recharge and Base flow Augmentation (Storage) Comments:

Potential Response changes: Change the references in the first paragraph to "all possibilities" to "many possibilities" and "did not want to limit their possibilities". Add "a different location where aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) may work has been identified" to the first paragraph of the section on the ASR studies. Keith Holliday pointed out that additional funding for storage studies is available. Stevens County PUD has received a grant to study an ASR type project near Loon Lake.

Eloika Lake / West Branch of the LSR Comments:

Potential Response changes: Change the response about the beaver dam recommendations to reflect the changes made earlier in this meeting.

Trust Water rights Comments: No changes. Add the name of the commenter.

CEQUALW2 Model Comments: No changes.

Global warming impacts Comments:

Potential Response changes: Change Recommendation 1.A.02.g. by removing "agricultural" from in front of "irrigators" so that golf courses are also covered by this recommendation.

Education Comments: No changes.

Separate rivers from aquifers Comments: No changes.

Restore rivers Comments: No changes.

No strategies to restore instream flows Comments:

Potential Response changes: We still need more information on what the stream flows should be. We didn't spell out the strategies but did establish the steps needed to get there including recommendation II.C.01.b.

Integrating instream flow needs Comments: Correct spelling.

Exempt well restrictions are appropriate Comments: Add "would".

Wrap Up: The next meeting will be held November 30, 2004 (Tuesday), from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm, at the Spokane County Conservation District upstairs conference room. The implementation matrix and discussion of the public comments will be continued.