

FINAL
Meeting Summary
WRIA 54 - Lower Spokane River Watershed
August 22, 2007

Location: Airway Heights Community Center, Airway Heights, WA.

Planning Unit members and guests recorded on the sign-in sheet were:

Mike Hermanson, Spokane County	Rob Lindsay, Spokane County
Jim DeGraffenreid, Lincoln County Planning	Dick Price, Stevens PUD #1
Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe	Albert Tripp, City of Airway Heights
Sara Hunt, WA State Dept. of Ecology	Charlie Peterson, Spokane County Conservation District
Hank Nelson, Avista Corporation	Craig Volosing, Landowner and Palisades Neighborhood
Stan Miller, Citizen	Jerry Warner, Palisades Neighborhood and Landowner
Cynthia Carlstad, TetraTech	Dave Jones, Spokane County Planning Commission
Bryony Stasney, Golder Associates Inc.	
Jeanne Barnes, Spokane Association of Realtors and Lake Spokane Park Homeowners Association	

Call to Order

Bryony opened the meeting at 10:00 am. Attendees introduced themselves. Bryony requested that each attendee complete the sign-in sheet.

Review and Approve June 2007 Meeting Summary

The draft June 27, 2007 WRIA 54 Planning Unit meeting summary was reviewed page by page with the following edits: 1) change “Natural flow” study to Hydropower operations study on page 5 (under Avista relicensing studies); and, 2) change the fourth bullet under Observations and questions from meeting participants, Hydropower Observations (page 8) to read, “Paul Gross said that Avista’s attorney had said that Avista has a 10,000 CFS water right for Little Falls Dam ...”. Those present accepted the suggested edits to the June 2007 meeting summary and approved the summary as final. The final meeting summary will be posted on Spokane County’s web site at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm>.

Public Comment

Dick Price noted that there is a discussion of water tanks in the WRIA 54 water storage assessment. Stevens County PUD is building a 1.8 million gallon storage tank for the Suncrest public water system (which is owned by the Stevens County PUD).

WRIA 54 Supplemental Water Quality Assessment. Presentation by Cynthia Carlstad, TetraTech

Cynthia gave a presentation supported by PowerPoint slides on the work completed for the WRIA 54 water quality assessment. A copy of the presentation slides will be posted on Spokane County’s web site at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm>.

Cynthia noted the scope of work in the WRIA 54 supplemental water quality grant includes:

1. Identify/document water quality concerns
2. Water body inventory (uses of the waterbodies as designated by WA state and the Spokane Tribe)
3. Prioritize water quality issues
4. Develop sampling and analysis plan (also called a quality assurance project plan (QAPP) by Ecology)
5. Conduct monitoring

Tasks 1, 2 and 3 will be discussed today.

Water Quality Standards

- Washington State Water Quality Standards
 - Based on designated waterbody uses
- Spokane Tribe Water Quality Standards
 - Based on a combination of EPA standards and Washington State standards
 - Limits for metals and PCBs lower because of higher fish consumption

Spokane River Mainstem Designated Uses

Cynthia showed a map illustrating WA state designated uses for the three reaches of the Spokane River in WRIA 54 (see presentation Spokane County's web site <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm> for details):

- Reach 1 – Columbia River to Long Lake Dam
- Reach 2 - Long Lake Dam to Ninemile Bridge
- Reach 3 - Ninemile Bridge to Idaho Border

Tributary Use Designation: Reservation and Non-Reservation

For all waterbodies that do not have specific designated uses, WA State applies default uses for surface water (see presentation Spokane County's web site <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm> for details). For the tributaries to Spokane River Reach 2, the designations for aquatic life and recreation are consistent with the Spokane River Reach 2 use designations (i.e., aquatic life – core summer salmonid habitat and recreation – extraordinary primary contact). The lack of specific designations for the tributaries can be viewed as a data gap and affects the way the tributaries are managed.

Uses and water quality standards for the tributaries to the Spokane River on the Spokane Reservation are established by the Spokane Tribe.

Water Quality Assessments

There is a formal mechanism for how water quality is evaluated. 305(b) and 303(d) refer to sections of the clean water act.

- State: federal government requires Ecology to prepare a 305(b) report based on water quality data submitted to Ecology and collected by Ecology. The data is classified into different categories (see below). The 303(d) list is the list of officially impaired waters that require a total maximum daily load (TMDL).
- Spokane Tribe: 305(b) report and Tribal staff establish water quality priorities and water quality monitoring programs.

State 305(b) and 303(d) Categories

These categories are designated by Ecology:

- Category 1: Meets tested standards. Meets the criteria it was tested for.
- Category 2: Waters of concern. Some evidence of a water quality problem, but not enough to require production of a TMDL.
- Category 3: No information submitted.
- Category 4a: Have an approved TMDL in place and are actively being implemented.
- Category 4c: Impaired by causes that cannot be addressed through a TMDL.
- Category 5: Polluted waters that require a TMDL. The "303(d) list".

The Data Behind the Labels

The data supporting the category designations is available on Ecology's website (<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/swqs/index.html>). Cynthia provided a handout of the data from Ecology's database.

Maps showing locations of Category 1, 2, 4A, 4C and 5 Waterbodies in WRIA 54

Cynthia showed a series of maps for WRIA 54 that illustrate the locations of Category 1, 2, 4A, 4C and 5 Waterbodies in WRIA 54 (see <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm>).

Q: Issues such as the missile site groundwater contamination are not included in this information.

A: Cynthia noted that the information presented is for surface water quality. The missile site is a groundwater contamination issue and therefore will not be included in this information unless the groundwater contamination extends to surface water.

Q: We are establishing a dissolved oxygen TMDL in the Spokane River. To implement this TMDL, there are limits on phosphorus discharge. There is already an approved TMDL for phosphorus in the Spokane River.

A: In the late 1970s / early 1980s, phosphorus from agricultural sources and wastewater discharge was identified as a concern for the Spokane River and Lake Spokane (caused algae blooms). Ecology set a target of 25 ug/L for phosphorus in the water column in Lake Spokane. This resulted in a ban on phosphorus laundry detergents and expenditure of about \$50 million for upgrades at the City of Spokane wastewater treatment plant. This was a voluntary TMDL. The new TMDL sets limits that are 100 times lower and, once approved, will supersede the earlier TMDL.

Q: How are the lengths of the category reaches defined in the maps?

A: Cynthia said that she was not sure. Others suggested that this is based on where the monitoring sites are and the resolution of the GIS map data.

Major Categories of Water Quality Issues

- Spokane River
 - TMDLs (dissolved oxygen, metals, PCBs)
 - Hydropower (total dissolved gas)
- Non-point Source
 - Septic systems
 - Riparian management / bank erosion
 - Stormwater management in developed areas
 - Land use / wetland preservation
- Discrete sites
 - Midnite and Sherwood mine (uranium mines near the Spokane Reservation)
 - West Plains Missile Site

How Are Known Water Quality Problems Currently Being Addressed?

- Formal water clean-up plans
- Modeling and other studies to support remedial efforts
- Conservation district and other efforts on non-point source/streamside restoration
- Wastewater treatment plant upgrades
- Stormwater planning projects (e.g., Spokane County on the West Plains)
- Superfund remediation (Midnite Mine, Missile site)
- Upcoming Spokane County non-point source study (focusing on the Spokane River drainage to Lake Spokane).

Formal Water Cleanup Plans (TMDL)

- Mainstem (dissolved oxygen, metals, PCBs)
- Little Spokane River (temperature, fecal coliform bacteria, pH)
- Latah Creek (temperature, fecal coliform, bacteria, pH, ammonia, dissolved oxygen, turbidity)

Water Quality Monitoring Sites

Cynthia presented a map of water quality monitoring in WRIA 54, including Spokane County wells, Ecology ambient monitoring sites and Spokane Tribe interior and fisheries sites (see <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm>). Brian noted that there are additional sites outside the reservation that the Tribe has monitored for fisheries. Stan noted that Ecology will be adding four new monitoring sites on the Spokane River, including one below the Ninemile Bridge. Rob noted that Spokane County will be monitoring water quality in the three springs area near the TJ Meenach Bridge. Cynthia asked the group to let her know about any additional monitoring that is not noted today.

CE-QUAL-W2 Modeling of the Spokane River

- Water quality and hydrodynamic model developed by Portland State University
- Can model temperature, nutrient-algae-dissolved oxygen-organic matter and sediment relationships
- Potential value for “what-if” scenarios

Chamokane Creek Watershed Plan

Cynthia presented a map showing the plan conclusions (see <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm>). This work was a cooperative effort between the Stevens County Conservation District and the Spokane Tribe.

Stormwater

- West Plains regional stormwater infiltration facility – considering using paleochannels for infiltration of treated stormwater.
- Combined Sewer Overflow – allows combination of stormwater and sewer during heavy rains so that wastewater treatment plant capacity is not overloaded. Stan and Rob noted that the City of Spokane has a plan to address combined sewer overflow over the next 15 years or so. Rob said that there was a discharge recently into the Spokane River near the TJ Meenach Bridge following a fire in the City of Spokane at a petrochemical facility. The fire suppression fluid mixed with oil got into the combined sewer overflow system and discharged from the system near the TJ Meenach Bridge. Rob said that combined sewer overflow is a problem in the City of Spokane.

Site Remediation Water Quality Impacts

- Midnite and Sherwood Mines. Decommissioned uranium mines that have released acid mine drainage. Mostly contained at this point
- West Plains Missile Site. Groundwater contamination that may impact Deep Creek. EPA is the lead.

What Are Your Priorities?

- Relationship to other ongoing programs/projects
- Monitoring, data needs
- Non-point source

Rob noted that there was a water quality group that met at Spokane County to develop the scope for the water quality grant. Rob said that there will be a need to convene a water quality workgroup to come up with key projects to allow TetraTech to develop relevant QAPPs for these key projects.

Cynthia said that she is planning to get a draft water quality inventory report out in about three weeks. Issues to be addressed in the Watershed Plan will be discussed at the next two planning unit meetings. It may be appropriate that the Phase III water quality work group also take on this next step (i.e. identification and prioritization of key projects). Hank noted that the committee that helped to scope the grant did identify some issues and projects. Hank asked if this information had been passed on by the County to Cynthia. Rob said that he will check his notes.

Phase III Kick-Off

Cynthia said that she would be giving the group an overview of the consultant team's proposed approach to developing the WRIA 54 Watershed Plan and would like to hear about lessons learned from the planning unit members based on their experiences with other watershed planning and implementation processes. Bryony made sure that everyone one had the Phase III handouts, including: example issue papers from the Chehalis Watershed Plan; preliminary WRIA 54 issue papers for instream flow, technical information, water management, water quality, land-use and education; the Phase II verbatim and consolidated issue lists.

Planning Processes

- Phase 1 – Organization (completed).
- Phase II – Data compilation and technical assessment, instream flow, storage, water quality (in process).
- Phase III – Recommend and identify alternative solutions for water resources management (scheduled for completion in 2009).

Recommended Process for Phase III (Watershed Plan Development)

- General vision for the scope, content, and appearance of the plan
- Decide on what issues, related plans and processes the plan will address
- Identify and evaluate alternatives
- Agree on recommendations for issues and for the plan overall
- Develop implementation framework
- Complete SEPA evaluation

Preliminary Table of Contents for WRIA 54 Watershed Plan

- Introduction/Background
- Technical Information Summary
 - Phase 2, Level 1
 - Level 2 – Supplemental storage and water quality studies
- **Issues and Recommended Actions**
 - Issue Paper 1, Issue Paper 2, Etc.
- Implementation Framework
- SEPA

Cynthia noted that the issues and recommendations are the core of the watershed plan and referred the group to the example issue papers from the Chehalis Watershed Plan. The consultant team is recommending that the WRIA 54 watershed plan comprise issue papers.

Benefits of Issue Paper-based Plan

- Promotes a concise and complete discussion/evaluation of each issue, including:
 - Background discussion, supporting data, unknowns
 - Alternatives considered (recommended and not recommended)
 - Action plan to implement
- Transitions to implementation since the information is contained in one location in the watershed plan.

Planning Through Work Groups

The consultant team recommends that the issue papers be developed through voluntary participation of planning unit members on work groups. Work groups will be led by Cynthia / Bryony and will provide:

- Control and guidance over which alternatives are evaluated and how
- Early engagement into the core of the plan
- Early discussion among eventual plan implementers
- Hand-in-hand working relationship with plan consultant promotes best outcome

More About Work Groups

- 5-6 work groups, 1-3 work groups active at any one time
- 1 additional monthly meeting for each group (teleconference possibilities)
- Once issue categories are confirmed, a schedule will be established for time management
- Some homework required!
- Work groups expected to be active between Nov 2007 – April 2008 (after the September and October 2007 issue workshops).
- After April 2008, all issue papers will be combined into a prelim watershed plan for review.
- Final watershed plan expected in February 2009.

Suggested Work Groups (and Issue Polling Categories)

Cynthia referred attendees to the six preliminary WRIA 54 issue papers for each suggested work group category and noted that all the information from the Phase II issue polling is included in the preliminary issue papers.

- Instream Flow (instream flow).
- Technical Information Base (surface water, hydrogeology)
- Water Management (groundwater supply, storage, water management)
- Water Quality (water quality, habitat)
- Land Use (habitat, growth and land use)
- Education (education)

Other Special Categories (that may warrant consideration)

- Spokane Reservation
- Chamokane Creek Watershed
- Exempt wells
- Agriculture
- WRIA to WRIA coordination
- State laws

WRIA 54 Mission Statement (revised 9-27-06) - The WRIA 54 Planning Unit will create a living watershed management plan providing implementation strategies to manage water resources while improving water quality. The plan will support economic well-being, and, protect and enhance the environment through collaborative citizen, business, and government partnerships.

Lessons Learned from Previous Watershed Planning

Bryony noted lessons learned from attendees that have been involved in other watershed planning processes:

- Keep the plan simple.
- Like the issue paper approach.
- Do not take on too many issues.
- Focus on specifics.
- Include an implementation schedule in the plan.
- Keep eyes on implementation (who is going to do what) during plan development.
- Consider reasonable limits and funding for plan recommendations and obligations.
- Plan recommendations should not be constrained by current agency policies and programs. Determine what needs to be done first and then let the implementing agencies determine if and how to implement.
- Law requires identification of obligations and recommendations in the watershed plan. A practical way to do this is to define all actions initially as recommendations and then work with entities to confirm recommendations that can be taken on by the entities as obligations.
- Think of the audience (community, political and personal) and eliminate “techno-speak” from the plan.

Storage and Instream Flow Updates

Mike Hermanson updated the group:

- The consultant team is revising the draft storage report based on comments received (handout of the response to comments provided). The final storage report is expected from the consultant team in mid September.
- Instream flow workshop is scheduled for Tuesday August 28 at 2 – 4 pm at WDFW building in the Spokane Valley. Drea Traumer (Ecology) will be presenting on the relationship between water quantity and water quality.

Public Comment

- Brian Walsh (Ecology) will be presenting on instream flow at the August 29 WRIA 55/57 meeting at the Spokane County Conservation District at 9 am.
- There is a pre-application workshop on Monday September 10 for the Columbia River Management Program (location tba and will be available on Ecology's website).
- Ecology's Spokane River pre-adjudication team is available in September, October and November 2007 to give a presentation to the WRIA 54 planning unit.
- Ecology has awarded:
 - WRIA 55/57 watershed council grant for instream flow facilitation
 - West Plains geophysics study grant
- Washington state exempt well meeting in Ellensburg on Thursday August 30.
- Airway Heights will be presenting on their water reclamation plan on Wednesday August 29, 7 – 9 pm.

General Schedule Announcements

The WRIA 54 Steering Committee was not scheduled for September.

Next Meeting Date and Adjourn

The next WRIA 54 Planning Unit meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2007, 6:00 – 8:00 pm at the Lakeside High School library. The library is located opposite the cafeteria.

Bryony adjourned the meeting at 12:10 pm.