

Meeting Summary
WRIA 54 - Lower Spokane River Watershed
June 23, 2010

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

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

Mike Hermanson, Spokane County
Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe
Rob Lindsay, Spokane County
Bob Derkey, Retired Geologist
Craig Volosing, Palisades Neighborhood
Jeff Cochran, City of Airway Heights
Linda McCollum, Eastern Washington University
Dick Price, Stevens County P.U.D
Larry Guenther, Stevens County
Bill Rickard, City of Spokane Water Department
Rusty Post, Department of Ecology
Charlie Peterson, Spokane Conservation District
Linda Kiefer, Avista
Cynthia Carlstad, Tetra Tech

CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Cynthia Carlstad opened the meeting at 10:00 am. Participants introduced themselves. There were a number of handouts available for everyone in attendance, including the WRIA 54 Watershed Plan Recommendation Prioritization Addendum that describes the prioritization exercise that the group completed last fall. Cynthia explained that the focus of today's meeting is to discuss high priority projects timelines, milestones, the worksheet that Mike Hermanson sent out, and identifying project leads. The basis for this discussion is input from the worksheets sent to all members by Mike following the May Planning Unit meeting, which builds from the Prioritization Addendum.

REVIEW OF MAY 2010 MEETING SUMMARY

Cynthia asked for corrections and edits needed on the draft May 26 meeting summary. No edits were voiced; the draft summary will be considered final and posted to the County's WRIA 54 Watershed Planning website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charlie Peterson apologized for not being at the last meeting and not returning the high priority project timelines and milestones worksheet, but stated that the Conservation District would like to participate in implementation. Charlie is prepared to provide that input at today's meeting.

Mike Hermanson stated that the Water Demand Forecast project is wrapping up, and the final advisory committee meeting will be on June 29th from 1:30 to 4:30 pm at the Spokane County Health District. The final model will be presented. The next day, June 30th, from 9 a.m. to noon at the same location, there will be a hands-on workshop opportunity to utilize the model.

REVIEW APPROACH AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION OF DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Cynthia reviewed the schedule and approach for completing the Detailed Implementation Plan:

- Recommendation prioritization was completed and documented in the fall and winter.
- Identification of project leads and more project specifics was initiated through homework worksheets distributed by Mike Hermanson following the May 26 Planning Unit meeting
- Input received on these worksheets will be discussed at today's meeting; there will be opportunity for others to join in, and shape the project details. The meeting handout *Summary of WRIA 54 "Timelines and Milestones" Worksheet input (with Planning Unit Discussion Prompts)* will be the basis for this discussion.
- Following today's meeting, Cynthia will write up the discussion, and distribute a draft to Planning Unit members prior to the July 28 Planning Unit meeting
- Project plans will be further developed, and a first draft Detailed Implementation Plan will be presented at the August Planning Unit meeting
- A comment period will be established, and the draft final Detailed Implementation Plan will be available by the end of September.
- The grant deadline for completing the DIP is October 22, which will allow for minor refinements following the September Planning Unit meeting.

Cynthia directed attention to the handout *WRIA 54 Detailed Implementation Plan Preliminary Table of Contents* and remarked that no changes have been made to this proposed document structure.

Cynthia projected a copy of the *Summary of WRIA 54 "Timelines and Milestones" Worksheet input (with Planning Unit Discussion Prompts)* on the screen for the group to work from during the meeting. She commented that input was received from six different participants: City of Airway Heights, Stevens County Conservation District, Spokane Tribes, Spokane County, Stevens County PUD, and Craig Volosing. Additional participation is desired as this represents your interest and intent to participate in implementing the WRIA 54 Watershed Plan. Craig Volosing commented that although his name is listed, he represents most of the Palisades Neighborhood Organization. He has more details that will come out at the next couple of meetings.

The group discussed each high priority project listed in the handout, and further developed project details and participant roles. The following is a summary of approach and action items for each recommendation.

Early Action Implementation Projects (completed or ongoing)

Recommendation WRA 4—Conservancy Boards in Stevens, Spokane, and Lincoln Counties should develop and maintain a public database of willing water rights buyers and sellers within their respective Counties. The Conservancy Boards will need to make statements that the extent and validity of water rights in order of application date, but can do so within a sub basin or watershed.

Project team: Spokane County (lead), Stevens County (participant)

Approach and Action Items: Stevens County Conservancy Board has an established program that could be a model for the Spokane County Conservancy Board. Spokane County will provide information about the program to the Spokane County Conservancy Board, including the water rights trust program.

Recommendation WFN-7—the state Legislature should amend current law to allow water banking throughout the state.

Project team: Spokane County, Stevens County P.U.D. (participants)

Approach and Action Items: This was completed during the 2010 legislative session.

Recommendation TI-3—Develop Water Supply and Demand Forecast for Prioritized Areas

- Utilize growth projections, zoning, building/permit activity
- Relate to parcel data, water service areas
- Identify existing water sources and capacity
- Determine unit water needs and conservation/infrastructure assumptions

Project team: Spokane County (lead), Stevens County P.U.D. (participate)

Approach and Action Items: This is an ongoing project for the Spokane County region, with demand forecast model and baseline forecast completed on June 30, 2010. In addition to those listed above, many Spokane County water purveyors are participating through an advisory committee.

Immediate-Term Implementation Projects (will be initiated within 1-2 years)

Recommendation WFN 1—Consider a regional management and coordination organization for water supply on the West Plains. The West Plains bridges WRIAs 54, 43, 56 and 34, Spokane and Lincoln Counties, and several cities, making a planning/management area specific to the West Plains necessary. This organization should encourage improvement of connectivity between water systems, as allowed by cost and water right constraints.

Project team: City of Airway Heights (lead), Spokane County, Craig Volosing, City of Spokane, Ecology (participants)

Approach and Action Items: Jeff Cochran indicated that the City of Airway Heights is interested in providing a lead role in this effort, but with the transition to a new public works director, there will be some delay in the City's ability to actively engage it. He envisions convening a forum similar to when Ecology gathered water purveyors together to discuss a cooperative effort to provide water for West Plains water needs. This forum could potentially play an advisory role to elected leaders who have the authority to enter into agreements and commitments regarding water supply. This effort would include WRIAs 34, 56, and 43. At this time there is significant uncertainty about what coordination role a WRIA 54 group would have that is different than the coordination provided under the Coordinated Water System Plan. There are currently no incentives to participate in this forum; this would have to be further explored and developed.

Recommendation TI-1—Basalt Aquifer Groundwater Study—The Columbia River Basalt Group (CRBG) aquifers that underlie the West Plains area are used for water supply. Groundwater levels have declined in some areas, indicating the groundwater resource is potentially strained. These aquifers (there are at least three distinct aquifers within this) are not well understood. Elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, basalt aquifers are used extensively for water supply, indicating that a better understanding of the CRBG aquifers in the West Plains area would be beneficial to understand how this resource can be used in a sustainable way.

Project team: Airway Heights, Spokane County (leads); Palisades Neighborhood Organization, Spokane County Conservation District, Bob Derkey, EWU (participants)

Approach and Action Items: Rob Lindsay indicated that Spokane County envisions building upon on previous and ongoing hydrogeologic studies which includes the exempt well study, geophysics study, and mapping work (EWU and Bob Derkey). The City of Airway Heights is currently pursuing grant funding for a larger basalt aquifer study; details on this project were not available. Spokane County will convene a subgroup to begin development of a project scope, plan and budget. They envision targeting watershed planning phase IV and supplemental grants for project funding.

Recommendation WQ-1—Implement the monitoring described in the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for the Nine Mile Area Non-Point Source Monitoring Study (Tetra Tech, 2009) and proceed with a study to monitor and assess non-point sources from the surface water and groundwater that drain directly to Lake Spokane.

Project team (all participants): Spokane County, Spokane Tribe (boat, equipment, and staff), Stevens County CD currently working in Chamokane Creek, Stevens County P.U.D., Ecology, Avista.

Approach and Action Items: Discussion centered on the idea that the way this recommendation is worded may no longer be appropriate given the subsequent progress on establishing and implementing a dissolved oxygen TMDL for the Spokane River. The monitoring need has shifted to more broadly addressing nonpoint sources. Given that, no one present voiced an opinion that a coordinated WRIA 54 effort was needed. Rather, individual monitoring efforts, focused on nonpoint source characterization and reduction is preferable. The Stevens County Conservation District has applied for grant funding for nonpoint source work in the Suncrest area; no one present knew the status of that request. Avista has initiated a monitoring program on Lake Spokane in coordination with Ecology.

To ensure information exchange, and facilitate coordination, the Planning Unit will plan for a “Lake Spokane”-centered Planning Unit meeting within the next year, to provide an opportunity for all entities working in the region, or interested to convene and present/discuss ongoing projects and monitoring efforts.

Regarding implementation of the dissolved oxygen TMDL, if an implementation group forms in the future (the former group has not been active recently), phase-out of this recommendation should be considered by WRIA 54 to avoid duplicative efforts.

The following two recommendations related to water use efficiency will be implemented as a group:

Recommendation WUE-2— Recommend that local governments work toward improved water use efficiency in landscaping and other outdoor water uses

Recommendation WUE-3—Recommend that counties, cities and water purveyors develop and implement indoor and outdoor water conservation incentives.

Project team (all participants): City of Airway Heights, Spokane County, Stevens County P.U.D.

Approach and Action Items: Implementation of Recommendations WUE-2 and WUE-3 should be grouped. Actions are most likely to be implemented by individual entities, i.e. the City of Airway Heights will have water use efficiency programs associated with the new water reclamation facility. Regional Water Conservation Council (RWCC) is preferred forum to coordinate these efforts, and share information among WRIA 54 and other participating entities.

Recommendation LU-12—Recommend Spokane County add the following condition for the approval of a final plat: “Prior to filing the final plat, the applicant will demonstrate provision of adequate potable water supply by providing one of the following:

- A letter from a water purveyor stating they will serve the proposed subdivision. If a plat is not developed for a specified amount of time, this commitment may need to be reconfirmed.
- A copy of a water right permit from the Department of Ecology with adequate quantity to serve the proposed subdivision;

- A plan to supply the proposed subdivision within the groundwater exemption specified in RCW 90.54.050 that complies with the 1997 Attorney General Opinion, Washington State Supreme Court Decision Department of Ecology vs. Campbell and Gwinn, LLC and Washington State Department of Health guidelines for residential water use.”

Project team: Spokane County (lead); Palisades Neighborhood Organization (participant)

Approach and Action Items: Internal Spokane County action

The following four recommendations pertain to methodologies and administration for water availability determinations for comprehensive plan amendments, zoning changes, and proposed development projects, and will be implemented as a group:

Recommendation LU-6—Recommend that counties, purveyors and Ecology collaborate to develop flexible local guidelines for demonstration of water supply availability and sustainability. Methods may include but are not limited to hydrogeologic investigation and characterization reports.

Recommendation LU-7—Recommend that Ecology provide technical assistance and funding for ongoing support in the implementation of guidelines developed in Recommendation LU-6 to demonstrate sufficient water availability and sustainability for proposed and existing uses for comprehensive plan amendments and associated zoning changes.

Recommendation LU-8—Recommend that Spokane County require applicants to demonstrate sufficient water availability and sustainability for proposed and existing uses for comprehensive plan amendments and associated zoning changes.

Recommendation LU-11—The Planning Unit recommends an evaluation of methodologies and the review process used to determine water availability for proposed development projects, in order to better determine that permitted projects have a viable water supply.

Project team: Spokane County (lead); Palisades Neighborhood Organization, Stevens County, Stevens P.U.D., Ecology (participants)

Approach and Action Items: Spokane County intends to develop a work plan and seek funding, possibly through a Watershed Plan Supplemental Grant. While the recommendation specifies that this work be done for the Spokane County region, others voiced interest in including all counties if they want to participate. Stevens County is currently developing overlay zones for water availability. If there is interest from others, Spokane County will convene a work group to participate in the project. Topics to be addressed include hydrogeologic study guidelines, what constitutes acceptable methodologies, and ordinance language.

The following two recommendations pertain to evaluating carrying capacity of water sources and will be implemented together:

Recommendation TI-2—Identification of Areas of Strained Water Resources—Identifying potential and existing areas of strained water resources, where water supply is not currently available to meet growing water demand for out-of-stream water needs, is a major data need for WRIA 54. Stevens, Lincoln and Spokane Counties all have begun developing more proactive methodologies to identifying these areas within their jurisdictions, and enacting programs to address the challenges associated with these areas. The Planning Unit supports development of methodologies to accurately identify areas of strained water resources, and development of tools to manage land use needs associated with these areas.

Recommendation WFN-5—Establish a program to collect data and evaluate where permit-exempt wells are a concern. Develop management options for problem areas. Affected local governments and Ecology should provide technical support and funding; counties, purveyors, Ecology and Regional Health District should coordinate.

Project team: Spokane County (lead), Spokane Tribe (lead for on-reservation)

Approach and Action Items: Not determined

Recommendation WS-3—Promote and support water storage projects initiated by individual entities throughout the watershed to meet instream flows and to provide water for residents, business and projected growth in Spokane, Lincoln and Stevens Counties and the Spokane Indian Reservation.

Project team: Spokane Tribe (lead for on-reservation), Stevens County CD (participant, already working in Chamokane Creek and desire to expand to Suncrest area in 3-5 year timeframe), Stevens County P.U.D. (participant for 6-10 year timeframe)

Approach and Action Items: Project ideas may be submitted by individual entities. Stevens County Conservation District may play a coordinating, vetting and technical assistance role, particularly in the Chamokane watershed. Some interest expressed in submitting grant applications for specific projects in the Chamokane watershed.

Recommendation WRA-6—Planning Unit will review, discuss, and recommend improvements to the relinquishment law.

Project team: Stevens County P.U.D. (lead); Spokane County, Avista

Approach and Action Items: Dick Price will coordinate development of an issue paper regarding this topic.

Recommendation WRA-5—Recommend that the Spokane Tribe develop a water code for the Spokane Tribe and Reservation, including fee lands.

Project team: Spokane Tribe (lead)

Approach and Action Items: Independent Spokane Tribe project

Recommendation WRA-1: Recommend that the State legislature provide more staff and funding to the Washington Department of Ecology to process water rights and for compliance activities. The Planning Unit particularly encourages consideration of establishing a regional water master.

Project team: Stevens County P.U.D.(lead); Linda Kiefer, Ecology (participant)

Approach and Action Items: This project was added to the high priority project list when Dick Price expressed interest in exploring establishment of a WRIA 54 water master. Funding for this position would need to be requested and authorized in Ecology's 2011-2013 general budget.

Medium-Term Implementation Projects (will be initiated within 3-5 years)

Recommendation EDU-2—Conduct a water resources education needs assessment in WRIA 54.

Project team: Spokane County (participant), Stevens County Conservation District (participant for Stevens County); Spokane County Conservation District

Approach and Action Items: This recommendation was suggested by Brook Bealer of Ecology and will be considered for implementation in the 3-5 year time horizon.

Long-Term Implementation Projects (will be initiated within 6-10 years)

Recommendation WFN-4—Local governments, the Spokane Tribe, and water purveyors should assess subarea water supply needs, identify appropriate measures from a range of options, and facilitate options that are economically viable and provide long-term sustainability.

Project team: Spokane Tribe (lead in 3-5 year time horizon); Stevens County P.U.D. (participant in 6-10 year time horizon)

Approach and Action Items: No immediate action item as it is planned for the later implementation.

UPDATE ON MOA

Mike Hermanson provided an update that the MOA is complete and ready to be signed by all participating governments.

LOOK-AHEAD TO JULY PLANNING UNIT MEETING

Cynthia announced that Sue Kahle of the USGS would present an update on the Chamokane Creek groundwater study. The Planning Unit meeting will be scheduled for 9:00 to noon on July 28.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Hermanson announced that he is collecting candidate projects for the Ecology Supplemental Projects List. The deadline for submitting the projects to Mike is Friday, July 9 to allow time for potential prioritization if prior to sending to Ecology is July 16. Currently Mike has received two projects. He will be contacting Charlie Kessler regarding projects that Charlie indicated he would be submitting. Mike will also communicate out to the Planning Unit mailing list regarding this opportunity.

Rusty Post announced that Ecology may have a small amount of implementation project funding available starting July 1. He will be working directly with grantees who have ongoing projects for which the funding could be directly and immediately beneficial.

ADMIN & GENERAL SCHEDULE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following schedule items were announced:

- Supplemental Project Grant Ideas Scope – due to Mike Hermanson by July 9th
- Next Planning Unit Meeting is July 28th, from 9 to noon, same location
- Water Demand Forecast Meetings:
 - Final model presentation – June 29, from 1:30 to 4:30 at the Spokane County Health District Building, first floor auditorium

- Hands-on model workshop – June 30 from 9 to noon at the same location

Bob Derkey provided an opportunity for attendees to view the geologic maps that he completed for the West Plains area.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:30 pm