

Meeting Summary Planning Unit

Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan October 22, 2003

Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

Doug Allen, <i>Dept. of Ecology</i>	Steve Skipworth, <i>Vera Water</i>	Bruce Howard, <i>Avista</i>
Lloyd Brewer, <i>City of Spokane</i>	Megan Harding, <i>WA State Dept. of Health</i>	<i>Utilities</i>
Harry McLean, Jr., <i>City of Spokane Water</i>	Rick Noll, <i>Spokane County Conservation District</i>	Mary Wren, <i>City of Liberty Lake</i>
Ty Wick, <i>Spokane Aquifer Joint Board</i>	Jane Cunningham, <i>The Lands Council</i>	Stan Miller, <i>Spokane County</i>
Julia McHugh, <i>SAJB</i>	Tom Hargreaves, <i>Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley</i>	Reanette Boese, <i>Spokane County</i>
Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth Water</i>		Bill Gilmour, <i>Spokane County</i>

Consultants that attended the meeting were: Sarah Hubbard-Gray of Hubbard Gray Consulting and Bryony Stasney of Golder Associates.

Guests that attended the meeting were: Tracy Rehwald of the Department of Ecology and Rosie Pittman of John L. Scott Real Estate.

Introductions : Sarah Hubbard-Gray called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Committee members introduced themselves. Sarah asked for comments or corrections to the September 17, 2003 meeting summary. It was noted that Chris Pitre did not attend the meeting. No other comments were provided.

Review Plan Development Process: Stan Miller reviewed the decision making process for developing the plan which was discussed and developed at previous meetings (the December 18, 2002 Meeting Summary summarizes the process). The process includes an effort to reach consensus and discussion of items spanning over two meetings with the final decision being made at the second meeting. Stan then described his proposed process for reviewing the work group suggestions relating to issues and recommendations. He suggested that the Planning Unit review each issue and recommendation and determine if: 1) there is consensus support for the item and that it should be carried forward; 2) there are suggestions for minor revisions to the item and that it should be sent back to the work group for refinement; or 3) there is significant concern associated with the item that will make it difficult to resolve and that it be put on hold for the time being. The Planning Unit supported using this approach for reviewing the work group suggestions. The need to re-evaluate the recommendations as the implementation elements of the plan are developed was also discussed.

Little Spokane Instream Flow Work Group: Reanette Boese provided an overview of the October 1, 2003 work group meeting and their suggested objective, issues and recommendations. Sarah Hubbard-Gray then facilitated a discussion using the process described above. The following preliminary decisions and direction were provided by the Planning Unit:

Issues:

Does the information on rainbow trout and mountain whitefish from the Golder study support changing the minimum instream flows on the Little Spokane River?

- PU support, carry forward

How ~~Will~~ will exporting water from the SVRP Aquifer into the Little Spokane Watershed ~~negatively~~ affect flows in the Little Spokane River? (A recommendation from a different section of the plan.)

- Send back to work group to modify – define exporting and replace “exempt wells” with “district water”

How should domestic exempt wells be treated when flows fall below the minimum instream flows?

- Send back to work group to modify – define treated and clarify

Will reactivating the gage at Chattaroy reduce water rights interruptions for upper basin water users?

- Send back to work group to modify – re-write to address Ecology interpretation (request Ecology interpretation of the issue to identify if specific rights are connected to Chattaroy gage.)

New Issues Suggested by Planning Unit:

- Add additional issues that relate to a new recreation and aesthetics objective.
- Review contract to identify additional needed issues.
- Consider issue relating to public access.
- Develop new issue relating to how the model will be managed and used when transferred to Spokane County.

Recommendations:

1.a. ~~Make no changes in the minimum instream flows in the current rule at this time. (A more detailed study on the benefits of increasing the minimum flows may change this recommendation in the future.)~~

- PU support, carry forward

1.b. A more detailed study on the benefits of changing the flows may change this recommendation in the future.

- Send back to work group to modify – develop new recommendation from this statement

2. ~~Conduct~~ Recommend a study on the Little Spokane River tributaries on optimizing habitat for the target species and linking the preferred flows on the tributaries to flows at the control points.

- PU support, carry forward

3.a. Monitor the effects of exporting water from the SVRP Aquifer into the Little Spokane Watershed on the flow of the Little Spokane River below Dartford.

- PU support, carry forward. Clarify how it will be implemented in the implementation section of the plan.

3.b. New recommendation needed.

- Send back to work group – develop new recommendation from results of model, get information to help develop specific a recommendation relating to recommendation 3.a.

4. When flows in the Little Spokane River fall below minimum instream flows, a (local non-regulatory) group will send (caution) letters to all domestic exempt well owners in the Little Spokane Watershed asking them to voluntarily conserve water. Methods for saving water and directions to a website with more information will be included with the letter.

- PU decided to put on hold and discuss along with exempt wells.

5.0 Study the effects of reactivating the gage at Chattaroy for regulation of the upstream water users. If Pend Oreille County wishes, reactivate and fund the gage at Chattaroy with real time capabilities for regulation.

- Send back to work group to modify – edit to address funding of gage

PU did not specifically discuss the following items at the October 22nd meeting (they will be considered at future meetings):

Other Related Issues and Recommendations:

Is it possible to open all of the Little Spokane River to recreational uses?

Explore the legal issues of opening the whole Little Spokane River to recreational use.

Items for more action before further recommendations:

The Spokane County Conservation District will compare Little Spokane River Instream Flow objectives with Water Quality Cleanup Plan objectives and let us know about gaps.

Canoe and kayak groups, Riverside State Park employees, and fishing groups will be consulted about recreation use of the Little Spokane River.

Domestic Exempt Wells / Water Rights Work Group: Reanette Boese and Doug Allen provided an overview of the September 30, 2003 work group meeting and their suggested issues and recommendations. Sarah Hubbard-Gray then facilitated a discussion using the process described above. The following preliminary decisions and direction were provided by the Planning Unit:

Issues:

1. Would a better understanding of water use in the WRIAs help in making water management decisions for WRIAs 55 & 57?

- Send back to work group to modify – 1) clarify if this issue relates to the assumptions used in the model, 2) consider an additional issue relating to the need for a sensitivity analysis of the model assumptions to evaluate if more data is needed and 3) clarify if this issue relates to exempt wells or water rights.

2. Should the counties adopt policies to manage the proliferation of domestic exempt wells?

- PU support, carry forward

3. ~~Are there additional~~ What are the methods for reducing summertime water use from domestic exempt wells during low flow years?

- PU support, carry forward

4. (Question from Susan: Why doesn't the Department of Ecology credit larger water rights quantities for water systems taking over domestic exempt wells?)

- Send back to work group to modify – develop a new issue relating to this question.

PU did not specifically discuss the following items at the October 22nd meeting (they will be considered at future meetings):

Objectives:

Develop a better understanding of water users and use in both watersheds.

Develop approaches to land use management that keep withdrawals from domestic exempt wells at a minimum.

Develop additional methods for reducing summertime water use from domestic exempt wells during low flow years.

Minimize impairment of senior water rights created by proliferation of exempt wells.

Recommendations:

The Department of Ecology should establish and fund a Water Master for WRIAs 55 & 57 to identify all water users, maintain a database of the users and usage, and manage the basin.

Adjudicate the water rights in both watersheds.

Fund a study to determine domestic exempt well water use in WRIAs 55 & 57.

Determine (and help fund) a method for Group B and small Group A systems to track water use.

Support low residential densities in parts of the counties with the Rural designation (areas outside of water service areas) to protect water supplies. (One house per 10 or 20 acres.)

Cluster developments near Urban Growth Areas (water service areas) need to have the potential for infill when the UGA boundary is expanded.

Development inside of water service areas should be required to connect to the water system or built in accordance with the purveyor's specifications for connection to the purveyor in the future.

Ask the Department of Ecology to send out warning letters to interruptible water rights holders before the stream falls below the minimum flow asking for users to adopt conservation measures.

Have the Department of Ecology make all irrigation from domestic exempt wells interruptible for those drilled after the minimum instream flow rule date.

Conservation, Reclamation and Reuse Work Group: Bill Gilmour provided an overview of the September 30, 2003 work group meeting and their suggested issues and recommendations. Sarah Hubbard-Gray then facilitated a discussion using the process described above. The following preliminary decisions and direction were provided by the Planning Unit:

Objective: Reduce per capita water consumption.

ISSUE #1: What steps can be taken to reduce indoor water use?

- PU support, carry forward

ISSUE #2: What steps can be taken to reduce domestic, municipal and public outdoor water use?

- PU support, carry forward

ISSUE #3: What steps should be taken to educate the public on water conservation and use?

- PU support, carry forward

ISSUE #4: What economic political, legal and resource incentives can be implemented to encourage municipalities, utilities and businesses to build and use reclaimed water systems?

- PU support, carry forward

ISSUE #5: What policies can be developed to provide cost-effective options for reuse in small scale and decentralized settings?

- PU support, carry forward

Recommendations

1. Wastewater treatment plant provides 1.6-gallon toilet and other in-door water saving appliance exchange/rebate.

- Send back to work group to modify – consider rewording something like “Wastewater management programs to evaluate in-door water saving options (e.g., low flow devices and appliance exchange/rebates) through their facility planning processes”, and make language consistent with 1338 legislation.

- 2. Water purveyors participate in low flow device give-aways and 1.6-gallon toilet rebate.
 - Send back to work group to modify – consider combining with recommendation #1.

- 3. County/Cities implement zoning development incentives for xeriscaping and use of native/drought resistant vegetation.
 - Send back to work group to modify – consider combining with recommendation #4.

- 4. County/Cities implement zoning development incentives for restricting covenants involving use of water, i.e. green lawns.
 - Send back to work group to modify – clarify intent and consider combining with recommendation #3.

- 5. County/Cities/Water Purveyors encourage implementation of water conservation in watering of public properties such as parks, school lawn areas, athletic fields, boulevards, and highway green areas.
 - PU support, carry forward

- 6. Encourage aggressive maintenance programs by all regional municipalities for pumping, transporting and storing water.
 - PU did not discuss

- 7. Determine indoor conservation issues the public needs to be educated on (i.e. in-door low flow devices such as showerhead, facets, toilets and appliances and habits).
 - PU support, carry forward

- 8. Determine the outdoor conservation issues the public needs to be educated on (i.e., soil development, plant root development, native/drought resistant vegetation, xeriscaping).
 - PU support, carry forward

- 9. Evaluate the public perception of water reclamation use and determine how to educate the public for acceptance.
 - PU support, carry forward

- 10. Evaluate the public perception of water reuse and determine how to educate the public for acceptance.
 - PU support, carry forward

11. Determine what the most effective media form is to educate the public with (i.e., flyers, pamphlets, television, workshops, radio).

- PU did not discuss

12. Encourage development of regional water conservation plans. Urge development of plans for voluntary water restrictions to use in critical times. Encourage study and development of rate structures that lead to decreased water use for future implementation in time of urgent need.

- PU did not discuss

13. Encourage use of several educational methods to reach all segments of the population, those in schools, government, and businesses

- PU support, carry forward

14. New recommendation to add: Local agencies to review plans to evaluate water conservation elements and incorporate water conservation elements into their local plans.

Other Announcements: Stan Miller reminded attendees that the final comments on the Draft Little Spokane River Instream Flow report are due on October 31, 2003.

Wrap Up: The next Planning Unit meeting was set for November 19, 2003 at 10:00 am at the Spokane County Conservation District.