

Meeting Summary Planning Unit

Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan
December 17, 2003

Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

Doug Allen, <i>Dept. of Ecology</i>	Dave Jones, <i>Water Quality Advisory Committee</i>	Megan Harding, <i>Washington Department of Health</i>
Harry McLean, Jr., <i>City of Spokane Water</i>	Steve Skipworth, <i>Vera Water</i>	Rodger Krieger, <i>City of Deer Park</i>
Lloyd Brewer, <i>City of Spokane</i>	Rick Noll, <i>Spokane County Conservation District</i>	Terry Liberty, <i>Spokane County Planning</i>
Ty Wick, <i>Spokane Aquifer Joint Board</i>	Walt Edeken, <i>Spokane County Conservation District</i>	Stan Miller, <i>Spokane County</i>
Julia McHugh, <i>Spokane Aquifer Joint Board</i>	Jane Cunningham, <i>The Lands Council</i>	Reanette Boese, <i>Spokane County</i>
Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth Water</i>	Tom Hargreaves, <i>Friends of the Little Spokane Valley</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 : Dale Gill.

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 November 19, 2003 meeting summary. No comments were provided.

Reports from Work Groups: Spokane County staff gave brief reports on the work group activities since the last Planning Unit meeting. An overview of the three work group meetings was given and handouts from each work group were passed out. It was decided that discussions would focus on Domestic Exempt Wells since little review of this work group's suggestions has occurred at recent meetings. It was decided that the Conservation work group's new suggestions would be reviewed at the January 2004 meeting. The City of Spokane indicated that they have proposed draft language relating to instream flow and Stan Miller suggested that it should also be considered at the January 2004 meeting, the City's proposed language is:

III.A.01.a. The current minimum instream flow setting for the Little Spokane River involves a number of minimum flow triggers varying with time of year and location. Planning Unit representatives agree that the current minimum instream flow triggers at, and below, Dartford are higher than necessary to protect fish in that particular portion of the Little Spokane River as a result of Spokane Aquifer input. The Dartford flow settings are appropriate for upstream protection and upstream regulation. The current Dartford and Confluence minimum flow settings are not appropriate for Spokane Aquifer use regulation. Given the current regulatory use of these settings and the need for additional study, the planning unit recommends no change in the minimum instream flows in the current rule at this time.

Review of Domestic Exempt Wells Work Group Suggestions: The work group suggestions that had not previously been considered by the Planning Unit were reviewed and the following preliminary decisions were made:

New Issues:

4. Could the Department of Ecology be clearer and more consistent when assigning water rights quantities for water systems taking over domestic exempt wells that have no record of previous water usage?

- *Planning Unit support, carry forward*

5. Should the counties have Growth Management policies that make replacing domestic exempt wells in urban growth areas or urban reserve areas with public water systems reasonable and cost effective?

- *Send back to work group to clarify. Not clear what is meant by “reasonable and cost effective” and question if application in “urban reserve areas” can be reasonable and cost effective. Growth Management may not be the tool to use, should check Comp Plan.*

Recommendations:

For Issue 1a: Run a sensitivity analysis on water domestic exempt well use with the watershed model. If the model is recalibrated with different data in the future, another sensitivity analysis will need to be done.

- *Planning Unit support, carry forward. Edit to include “well”.*

For Issue 1b: Run a sensitivity analysis on unmetered Group A and Group B water use with the watershed model. If the model is recalibrated with different data in the future, another sensitivity analysis will need to be done.

- *Planning Unit support, carry forward. It was noted that this recommendation will address quantity and geographic (location) elements of the model.*

For Issue 1c: The Department of Ecology should establish and fund a Water Master for WRIAs 55 & 57 to identify all water users and usage, maintain a database of the users and usage, and oversee water rights compliance in the basin.

- *Send back to work group. Get input from Ecology regarding the feasibility of this recommendation and consider making the recommendation more general and not specifically referencing Ecology funding.*

For Issue 1c: Request the Department of Ecology to initiate the adjudication process on the water rights in both watersheds.

- *Send back to work group. Consider inventory/data from recommendation on Water Master above, then evaluate if adjudication would be warranted due to high cost. May want to change the recommendation in a way that calls for cleaning up the mess, but not specifically recommending adjudication.*

For Issue 2: Support low residential densities in areas of the counties designated as ~~Rural~~ rural in order to protect water supplies. (One house per 10 or 20 acres.)

- *Planning Unit support, carry forward. Add 40 acres and change rural as noted.*

For Issue 2: The counties should implement a policy or procedure requiring a person who is developing property within a water service area to ask the water purveyor about the potential for public water service before creating a development dependent on domestic exempt wells.

- *Planning Unit support, carry forward. Change “ask” to “consult with”.*

For Issue 2: Support efforts to limit water use allowed under the state domestic exemption rule to provide supplies for single-family residences.

- *Send back to work group. Not clear what “limit water use” means and should consider model sensitivity analysis.*

For Issue 3: At a minimum, when flows in the Little Spokane River are expected to fall below minimum instream flows, a (local non-regulatory) group will send (caution) letters should be sent 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.

- *Planning Unit support, carry forward with edits noted above.*

For Issue 4: Recommend that the Department of Ecology make the policy for assigning water rights quantities for water systems taking over domestic exempt wells with no record of previous water usage clearer or more consistent. The policy could be made clearer by using the same quantities in use for assigning quantities for water rights. The policy could be made more consistent by assigning 800 gallons per day for each residential connection.

- *Send back to work group. Consider deleting the first sentence and re-write to clarify meaning.*

For Issue 5: Cluster developments should be consistent with county growth management policies and allow for reasonable and cost effective expansion of water system infrastructure.

- *Send back to work group. Consider revisions to issue 5 when revising, clarify if it relates to individual wells or “six packs”, and consider Comp Plan definition of “cluster” and that it doesn’t prevent future urban development.*

For Issue 5: Development inside of water service areas should be required to connect to the water system or be built in accordance with the purveyor’s specifications for connection to the purveyor in the future.

- *Send back to work group. Consider revisions to issue 5 when revising, clarify if it relates to individual wells or “six packs”, and consider Comp Plan definition of “cluster” and that it doesn’t prevent future urban development.*

Formation of New Work Groups: It was decided that the Domestic Exempt Well Work Group would also work on water rights issues. It was also decided to form a new work group on storage to look at groundwater and instream storage in the Middle Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers. Several Planning Unit members volunteered to participate in this new work group.

Other Announcements: It was asked if their needs to be a liaison between the Watershed Planning and Bi-State Aquifer study identified. It was decided that there are individuals that are participating in both projects that can help with coordination and information sharing. Doug Allen explained that Ecology has asked that the Bi-State Aquifer Study use the WIRA 55/57 model for consistency and Stan Miller will be suggesting that they incorporate adequate public involvement into the process.

Stan Miller gave an update on the WRIA 54 progress. He explained that they had an initiating agency meeting on December 16, 2003 and had good turnout, including representatives from Lincoln County,

Stevens County and the Spokane Tribe. They have Phase I money to set up the Planning Unit and their second meeting will be held January 15, 2004 to finalize formation of the Planning Unit, identify issues to address, and to begin working on operating process.

Stan Miller also explained that the Middle Spokane River Instream Flow field work has been done, data collected, and a draft report on the habitat element should be done in January 2004. He also explained that the Middle Spokane River Instream Flow report should go to Avista by the end of January 2004.

Wrap Up: The next Planning Unit meeting was set for January 21, 2004 at 9:00 am at the Spokane County Conservation District. Note that this is one hour earlier than normal to help get through more material.