

## Meeting Summary Planning Unit

### Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan February 18, 2004

#### Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

Doug Allen, <i>Dept. of Ecology</i>	Mary Wren, <i>City of Liberty</i>	Matt Zupich, <i>Pend Oreille</i>
Harry McLean, Jr., <i>City of</i>	<i>Lake</i>	<i>Conservation District</i>
<i>Spokane Water</i>	Dave Jones, <i>Water Quality</i>	Stan Miller, <i>Spokane County</i>
Lloyd Brewer, <i>City of</i>	<i>Advisory Committee</i>	Reanette Boese, <i>Spokane</i>
<i>Spokane</i>	Steve Skipworth, <i>Vera Water</i>	<i>County</i>
Ty Wick, <i>Spokane Aquifer</i>	Tom Hargreaves, <i>Friends of the</i>	
<i>Joint Board</i>	<i>Little Spokane Valley</i>	
Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth</i>	Bruce Howard, <i>Avista Utilities</i>	
<i>Water</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, Colin Depner, John Klindworth, Ray DeLacruz, Andrew Balavage, Gina Zehetmir, Cliff Taxter.

**Introductions :** Sarah Hubbard-Gray called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. Committee members introduced themselves. Sarah asked for comments or corrections to the January 21, 2004 meeting summary. No comments were provided.

**Middle Spokane Instream Flow Update :** Stan Miller explained that the project contractor, Tim Hardin of Hardin Davis, would be in Spokane the week of February 25, 2004 to provide an overview of the work done and results. Stan explained that the draft report is being reviewed by the Avista work group and that it would then be posted on Avista's web page. He then went on to describe the sites that were studied and what they looked at (e.g., rainbow trout spawning, rearing phases, flow values, seasons, etc.). Bruce Howard also explained that other flow related studies are being conducted by Avista as part of their relicensing efforts.

**Review of WRIA 55/57 Watershed Plan Document:** Stan Miller passed out the draft watershed plan document and reviewed the organization. He explained that Section 5 includes the Recommended Actions and that the technical summary will be included in the updated larger draft document that will be sent out in a few weeks. Stan suggested combining Section 3, Water Availability Synopsis, and Section 4, Analysis of Available Water. Some of the new issues and recommendations that will need to be discussed by the Planning Unit (e.g., stormwater infiltration, aquifer recharge) were identified. The following comments on the draft document were provided by the Planning Unit:

- Tables on fish habitat and needs could be changed so the flow ranges are shown in association with the needs (e.g., flow vs. habitat).
- Recommendation III.A.01.a should be changed to indicate that the City of Spokane does not accept it rather than saying it was put on hold.
- Need to make sure that changes get carried forward and are consistent between sections.
- Eastern Washington cities and City of Spokane should be included in Table II.1.I.
- Water Rights work group should consider instream flow recommendations.

**Discussion of Section 6 Implementation:** Stan Miller explained that the intent of Section 6 of the draft watershed plan is to provide a framework for involvement if actions are implemented – not to bind agencies. He reviewed the content and that it addresses the roles of lead agencies, cooperating agencies, study management agencies, and voluntary agencies. The Planning Unit discussed whether level of effort should be included and the associated ramifications and pluses and minuses. During the discussion three options were identified, which include:

1. Each agency can be asked to fill in their level of effort in a matrix independently.
2. County staff could do an initial designation of level of effort and request that the agencies review the proposed level of effort and provide comments/response.
3. Send the level of effort matrix out to all the agencies and organizations, then form small groups to work together to fill in the level of effort, and then bring back the proposals from each small group for comparison by the Planning Unit.

Stan Miller suggested that the agencies and organization representatives be invited to a workshop to explain the recommendations and associated implementation and solicit their help in developing the level of effort. Since this workshop couldn't be done until all the recommendations are developed, Stan proposed that the draft plan be completed by June and that the level of effort be developed using this workshop format between June and September 2004.

**Review of Domestic Exempt Wells Work Group Suggestions:** The work group suggestions that had not previously been approved or confirmed by the Planning Unit were reviewed and the following decisions were made (approved changes are noted):

***Recommendations Confirmed on 2/18/04:***

IV.A.01 a. Support low residential densities in areas of the counties designated as rural in order to protect water supplies. (One house per 10, 20, or 40 acres.) (Approved 12/17/03; Confirmed 2/18/04)

IV.A.01 b. The counties should implement a policy or procedure requiring a person who is developing property within a water service area to consult with the water purveyor about the potential for public water service before creating a development or single-family residence dependent on domestic exempt wells. (Approved 12/17/03), (DE workgroup added “single-family residence” 1/12/2004) (Confirmed 2/18/04)

IV.A.02. At a minimum, when flows in the Little Spokane River are expected to fall below minimum instream flows, 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. (Approved 12/17/03; Confirmed 2/18/04)

IV.B.01. Run a sensitivity analysis on water use from exempt wells with the watershed model. If the model is recalibrated with different data in the future, another sensitivity analysis ~~will~~ may need to be done. (Approved 12/17/2003; Confirmed 2/18/04)

IV.B.02. 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. (Approved 12/17/2003; Confirmed 2/18/04)

**Issues Confirmed on 2/18/04:**

IV.C.01. 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? (Approved 12/17/03; Confirmed 2/18/04)

**Recommendations Approved (first consideration) on 2/18/04:**

IV.C.01. Recommend that the Department of Ecology clarify policy 1230 (Consolidation of Rights for Exempt Ground Water Withdrawals (1/11/1999)) to ensure it is consistently implemented. (DE workgroup reworded 1/12/2004) (Approved 2/18/04)

V.C.01. Ask the Department of Ecology to include information asking users to adopt conservation measures when they send out warning letters to interruptible water rights holders before the stream falls below the minimum flow. (DE workgroup reworded 1/12/2004) (Approved 2/18/04)

**Issues Approved (first consideration) on 2/18/04:**

V.C.01. What are the ~~methods~~ approaches for reducing summertime water use ~~from wells~~ by those with water rights during low flow years? (DE workgroup 1/12/04) (Approved 2/18/04)

**Items sent back to work groups on 2/18/04:**

Recommendation V.A.01. Request the Department of Ecology to establish and fund a regional Water Master to identify all water users and usage, oversee water rights compliance, and other issues as they arise. (*Planning Unit requested that the work group re-evaluate this recommendation and consider other options for getting better information, what a water master typically does, regional compliance/enforcement officer option rather than a water master, and implications associated with the new interstate aquifer study.*)

Policy V.B. Support the creation of a Municipal Reserve for future water rights for municipal water supplies. (*Planning Unit requested that this policy, along with all associated issues and recommendations, be sent back to the Little Spokane River Instream Flow work group to review and re-evaluate prior to Planning Unit review.*)

Recommendation V.C.02. At a minimum, when flows in the Little Spokane River are expected to fall below minimum instream flows; caution letters should be sent to all households 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 requested that the work group re-evaluate and re-write this recommendation to clarify it, tie it to the issue statement, consider if households should be expanded to industrial/commercial users, consider tie to conservation, and take out the reference to "Little Spokane".*)

During the discussions, concerns regarding the headings in the document were raised and it was suggested that adequate background information be included as an introduction to each section to help people understand the context and content (e.g., Domestic Exempt Wells and Water Rights and Claims). It was also suggested that the Water Conservation work group should consider appropriate "triggers" for implementation of actions.

**Other Announcements:** Stan Miller reviewed the scope outline for the Multi-Use Storage Grant. He explained that if the Planning Unit approved submitting the grant application that he would hold a work

group meeting to review the full scope and define exactly what would be done under the grant. The Planning Unit agreed that the grant application should be submitted and indicated that the project was a good use of money.

Doug Allen passed out an Ecology Update on Eastern Washington Watershed Planning. Reanette Boese explained that Golder is putting the final model on the project web page and that the Phase II, Level I Assessment is now posted on the web page. Sarah Hubbard-Gray announced that the Spokane County Wastewater Facilities Siting public meeting will be held February 25<sup>th</sup> and that the Spokane River Use Attainability Analysis public workshop will be held February 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Wrap Up:** The next Planning Unit meeting was set for March 24, 2004 at 9:00 am at the Spokane County Conservation District. Note that this is one week later than usual and again one hour earlier than normal.