

Meeting Summary Planning Unit

Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan April 21, 2004

Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

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| Doug Allen, <i>Dept. of Ecology</i> | Dave Jones, <i>Water Quality</i> | Stan Miller, <i>Spokane County</i> |
| Bill Rickard, <i>City of Spokane</i> | <i>Advisory Committee</i> | Reanette Boese, <i>Spokane</i> |
| Harry McLean, <i>City of</i> | Jane Cunningham, <i>The Lands</i> | <i>County</i> |
| <i>Spokane</i> | <i>Council</i> | Bill Gilmour, <i>Spokane</i> |
| Ty Wick, <i>Spokane Aquifer</i> | Walt Edelen, <i>Spokane County</i> | <i>County</i> |
| <i>Joint Board</i> | <i>Conservation District</i> | Rob Lindsay, <i>Spokane</i> |
| Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth</i> | Tom Hargreaves, <i>Friends of the</i> | <i>County</i> |
| <i>Water</i> | <i>Little Spokane Valley</i> | |
| Steve Skipworth, <i>Vera Water</i> | | |

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

Guests that attended the meeting were: Jim Connolly; Gene Drury, Ecology Water Resources; Keith Stoffel, Ecology Water Resources; .and Jani Gilbert, Ecology Public Information.

Introductions: Sarah Hubbard-Gray called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. Committee members introduced themselves. Stan Miller introduced the new Spokane County Water Resources manager, Rob Lindsay, who will be taking over Stan's position when he retires. Sarah asked for comments or corrections to the March 24, 2004 and April 1, 2004 meeting summaries. No comments were provided.

Reanette announced that there will be a retirement party for Stan Miller on April 30th at the Spokane County Public Works building at 3:00 pm and that everyone is invited.

Jani Gilbert from the Department of Ecology announced that she is putting together a packet with information on watershed planning that may be a useful tool for the Planning Unit. She explained what will be included in the packet. Jani also indicated that she could help the Planning Unit by publicizing that the draft plan is available for review.

Washington Department of Ecology Update on Water Rights Transfer Applications: Ecology Water Resources staff, Gene Drury and Keith Stoffel, provided information to the Planning Unit on how they will be processing water rights transfer applications to comply with the new municipal bill 1338. They reviewed the steps in the process under the old processing system and the new processing system. They explained that previously they could not issue water rights certificates until after the water was put to beneficial use, and that under the new process they will issue certificates for municipal rights before the water is put to beneficial use. They said that they will start processing change applications associated with currently allocated water in the Middle Spokane and Little Spokane basins, but not new applications. Ecology staff indicated that the result will be increased pumping over time, but that it will take decades.

A variety of questions were asked and items discussed. The need to consider this change (increased pumping) in the modeling was acknowledged. It was suggested that a recommendation in the water rights section of the Watershed Plan could be developed that relates to the municipal bill and associated changes.

Update on Modeling Scenarios: Reanette passed out a handout that describes some of the preliminary results of the modeling scenarios being run, including 1) Scenario 2 – Spokane River Diversion and Aquifer Injection During High Flows, and 2) Scenario 3 – Redistribution of pumping away from the Spokane River. The preliminary conclusion of the scenarios was discussed, along with the possibility to make additional model runs to further test the scenarios.

Update on Middle Spokane River Instream Flow and Multi-Use Storage: Stan Miller explained that he is developing a summary of the Middle Spokane River Instream Flow study results. He told the Planning Unit that the Avista water quality report on aesthetics and recreation, which identifies the desired flow levels, but does not specify recommended flows, is on the Avista web site. Stan also explained that the Multi-Use Storage application was submitted, but that they have not heard yet from Ecology on whether it will be funded.

Review of Middle Spokane Instream Flow Issues and Recommendations: The Planning Unit began discussing the Middle Spokane Instream Flow issues and recommendations at the April 1st meeting, and the discussion continued and the following decisions were made:

Policy

II.A Assure that instream flows for the Middle Spokane River meet the needs of rainbow trout and other associated aquatic biota. (Work Group 12/4/03, Approved 3/24/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

Issue

II.A.01 Does the information on rainbow trout from the Hardin Davis Instream Flow and Habitat Study establish the basis for setting instream flows on the Middle Spokane River? (Work Group 12/4/03, Approved 4/1/04; confirmed 4/21/04)

Recommendations

II.A.01.a Establish a target flow for the Spokane River near Post Falls (USGS Gage 12419000) that provides wetted useable area for juvenile rainbow trout rearing at the Barker Road transect. (Staff 2/27/04; Re-worded and Approved 4/1/04; confirmed 4/21/04)

II.A.01.b Avista's 2007 operating license for the Spokane River Hydroelectric Development should require minimum release at the Post Falls HED to provide habitat for juvenile and / or adult rainbow trout in the Post Falls Reach using the ~~at the~~ Barker Road transect as the indicator site. (Staff 2/27/04, re-worded and Approved 4/1/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

II.A.01.c Flow in the Middle Spokane River should be managed to optimize spring spawning, incubation and emergence for rainbow trout. A protocol should be established between the WDFW, IDF&G and Avista to accomplish this task. Specific flow levels and timing would be established as early as possible each year and based on snow pack and expected runoff conditions for that year. (Staff 2/27/04, Re-worded and Approved 04/01/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

Issue

II.A.02 Would using flow at the Spokane River near Post Falls gage (USGS 12419000) provide better protection for aquatic biota in the Middle Spokane River than using flow at the Spokane River at Spokane (USGS 12422500)? (Staff 2/27/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04)

- At the 4/21/04 meeting the City of Spokane requested to defer decision until next meeting when Lloyd Brewer will be in attendance. Request was made to re-evaluate the how the term 'Middle Spokane' is used and be specific in describing what the issue is.

Recommendations

II.A.02.a The flow regime in critical habitat areas for aquatic biota identified in the Middle Spokane River are more closely related to flow at the Spokane River near Post Falls gage (USGS 12419000) than at the Spokane River at Spokane (USGS 12422500). To improve flow management in the Middle Spokane, take steps to upgrade the Post Falls gage to that of a "real time" gage. (Staff, 3/26/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

- The Planning Unit confirmed this recommendation at the 4/21/04 meeting with the understanding that the terminology used in Issue II.A.02 will be carried over to this recommendation so there is consistency.

II.A.02.b Instream flow for the Lower Spokane River could be managed using USGS Gage 12422500, the Spokane River at Spokane. Conduct fish habitat studies focusing on juvenile and adult rearing on at least 3 sites in the Lower Spokane River between River Mile 56 and 72. This work could be conducted as part of the WRIA 54, Lower Spokane River Watershed Plan and/or as an Avista relicensing PM&E. (Staff, 2/27/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

- The Planning Unit confirmed this recommendation at the 4/21/04 meeting with the understanding that the terminology used in Issue II.A.02 will be carried over to this recommendation so there is consistency.

Policy

II.B Manage flow in the Middle Spokane River to provide for aesthetic and recreational use. (re-worded and Approved 04/01/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

Issue

II.B.01 What flow provides an aesthetic experience in the "north channel" of the Spokane River in Riverfront Park? (Staff 3/26/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

Recommendations

II.B.01.a Use the Avista Recreation and Aesthetics Work Group findings as the basis for aesthetic flows in Riverfront Park. (Staff 3/26/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04)

- On April 21, 2004, the Planning Unit requested to defer confirmation of this recommendation until the Avista Work Group findings were more fully reviewed.

II.B.01.b Identify constraints to providing 300 to 500 cfs in the “north channel,” during low flow conditions, as identified as desirable flow by the Avista Aesthetic and Recreation Work Group. (Staff 3/26/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04)

- On April 21, 2004, the Planning Unit requested to defer confirmation of this recommendation until the next meeting.

Issue

II.B.02 What flow conditions are needed to provide recreation experiences on the Middle Spokane River during the low flow period? (Staff 3/26/04, re-worded and Approved 04/01/04; Confirmed 4/21/04)

Recommendations

II.B.02.a Use the Avista Recreation and Aesthetics Work Group findings as the basis for recreation flows in the Middle Spokane River. (Staff 3/26/04; Approved 4/21/04)

II.B.02.b Endorse the use of periodic increases in flow for recreational use in the Middle Spokane River while taking into account effects on aquatic biota and water quality. (Staff 3/26/04)

- On April 21, 2004, the Planning Unit requested that this recommendation be sent back for re-writing and to change “endorse” to “evaluate” and consider summer (re: 1350 cfs).

II.B.02.c Evaluate the impact of periodic releases of 2000 to 5000 cfs for recreational use of the Middle Spokane River. (Staff 3/26/04)

- On April 21, 2004, the Planning Unit requested that this recommendation be sent back for re-writing and clarification.

Policy

II.D Manage flow in the Middle Spokane River to maintain water quality adequate ~~to protect~~ for identified beneficial uses. (Staff, 04/09/04; Approved 4/21/04b)

Issue

II.D.01 What flow related water quality conditions limit aquatic biota? (Staff, 04/09/04)

- On April 21, 2004, the Planning Unit requested that this issue be sent back for re-writing and to consider 1) What is the affect of flow on DO and temperature in the Middle Spokane River?, 2) What is the relationship between DO, Temperature, and aquatic biota as affected by flow?, and 3) the integrated relationship between aquatic biota, DO/temperature, and flow.

Issue

II.D.01 What flow conditions would result in compliance with water quality standards? (Staff, 04/09/04; Re-worded and Approved 4/21/04)

Policy (new from recommendation at the April 1 meeting)

II.E Integrate flow recommendations for aquatic biota, recreation, aesthetics, and water quality into an overall recommendation for flow management in the Middle Spokane River. (Planning Unit Discussion, Staff 04/01/04; re-worded and Approved 4/21/04)

Issue

II.E.01 What flows are needed to meet different seasonal uses? (Staff, 04/09/04; Re-worded and Approved 4/21/04)

During the discussion of issues and recommendations, it was suggested that:

- Need to have a recommendation in the Multi-Use Storage or Middle Spokane River Instream Flow section relating to flow being adequate for diversions for injections, etc.

Wrap Up: Stan reminded everyone that the goal is to have the first Draft Watershed Plan completed by the end of June 2004. The need to have an additional meeting to accomplish this goal was discussed and it was decided that another meeting would be added. To even out the time between meetings, the following new meeting dates were set for May and June 2004:

May 13, 2004 (Thursday), from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
June 2, 2004 (Wednesday), from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
June 23, 2004 (Wednesday), from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

All of these meetings will be held at the Spokane County Conservation District upstairs conference room.