

Meeting Summary Planning Unit

Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan September 15, 2004

Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

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| Lloyd Brewer, <i>City of Spokane</i> | Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth Water</i> | Tom Hargreaves, <i>Friends of the Little Spokane Valley</i> |
| Ty Wick, <i>Spokane Aquifer Joint Board</i> | Jane Cunningham, <i>The Lands Council</i> | Reanette Boese, <i>Spokane County</i> |
| Brian Farmer, <i>Washington Department of Ecology</i> | Roger Krieger, <i>City of Deer Park</i> | Rob Lindsay, <i>Spokane County</i> |
| Bruce Howard, <i>Avista Utilities</i> | Dave Jones, <i>Water Quality Advisory Committee</i> | |

Consultants that attended the meeting were: Sarah Hubbard-Gray of Hubbard Gray Consulting.

Guests that attended the meeting were: Stan Miller; Amber Waldref of The Lands Council.

Introductions: Sarah Hubbard-Gray called the meeting to order at 9:10 am. Committee members introduced themselves. Sarah asked for comments or corrections to the August 18, 2004 meeting summary. No comments were provided.

Update on September 14 and 15, 2004 Public Meetings: The people that had attended the September 14th public meeting provided comments/reactions and provided suggestions for the September 15th meeting. It was suggested that the presentation should acknowledge the value of the studies, how much the information is being used outside the project, and the integration of the WRIA work with other related planning projects (e.g., in the Bi-State Aquifer Study).

Update on Storage Assessment: Reanette explained that Golder checked on the wetland rating of Saltese Flats, however, an official classification of the wetland has not been done. Golder would like the Planning Unit to request that Ecology conduct an official classification so it is clear what options are possible for Saltese Flats. The option of having the Planning Unit write a letter and make this request was discussed. It was decided that first Brian Farmer of Ecology should first request the categorization to be done per Ecology's role on the Planning Unit, and that if a letter from the Planning Unit was needed to facilitate this request that it would go out on generic Planning Unit letterhead with a simple request for the classification.

Reanette went on to explain that a meeting had been held with Mr. Baker, owner of Ponderosa Lake. Mr. Baker was not interested in raising the Ponderosa Lake dam since it would be drawn down during the summer months. However, he was supportive of storing water just upstream of the lake on Beaver Creek. Since this would mean building a new dam, Golder suggested also looking into a new dam on Buck Creek because there may be natural fish barriers on Buck Creek. Since on-channel storage has the potential of storing more water and allowing controlled release of water during low flows, and since no Planning Unit members expressed concern about continuing to evaluate these on-channel storage options relating to the Ponderosa Dam Raise option, the County gave Golder the OK to pursue them. It was acknowledged that many people, especially Sierra Club members, had expressed concern about on-channel storage. However, the Planning Unit agreed that it is valuable to understand the pros and cons of the different options before ruling them out. It was also explained that many of the people opposed to the on-channel storage may not understand that the storage would be drawn down in the dry summer months and would not be managed like

typical dams that keep the water levels up for summer recreation. It was suggested that the word “dam” should not be used since it implies a different meaning. Stan Miller also expressed concern that the option for using Spokane River water for aquifer recharge seems to have been dropped from the analysis.

Middle Spokane River Instream Flow: Stan Miller passed out a memo regarding Avista minimum release at Post Falls. He then went on to explain that the fisheries managers have made a recommendation to the Avista Fisheries Work Group of a 600 cfs release from Post Falls dam, except in years of expected drought conditions that would result in the lake drawdown greater than 6 inches, when the release would be 500 cfs no matter what effect on the lake. This recommendation was developed based on minimum flow needs of fish and the effects of drawing more flow from Coeur d’Alene Lake that has high summer temperatures. The issue is that more flow coming from the lake will increase the temperature in the Spokane River and make it unsuitable for fish habitat. This recommendation calls for a lower flow than is currently recommended in the draft WRIA 55/57 Watershed Plan. After discussion, the Planning Unit decided 1) to consider the most current Avista Fisheries Work Group recommendation when the draft Watershed Plan comments are reviewed (with the understanding that the Avista recommendation may not be finalized until after the Watershed Plan is finalized), 2) that the Watershed Plan Middle Spokane Instream Flow Needs recommendation does not need to be the same as Avista’s since the Watershed Plan looks at both the aquifer and the river (but that it would be nice if they were compatible), and 3) that the Watershed Plan Middle Spokane Instream Flow recommendation needs to be clear on it’s intent and association. It was decided that a fisheries representative would be requested to attend the next meeting where the instream flow needs are discussed to help the Planning Unit develop their recommendation.

Rob Lindsay then brought up the option of having Hardin Davis conduct a seepage study in the Middle Spokane River near Barker Road with funds that are remaining in their contract. After discussion, it was decided that the remaining budget should be used by Hardin Davis to have Mr. Hardin attend some of the Planning Unit meetings to provide technical assistance that will help the Planning Unit finalize the instream flow recommendations. In addition, it was decided that a recommendation for conducting a seepage study should be added to the Watershed Plan.

Implementation Matrix: Rob Lindsay explained that Ecology’s guidance asks the Planning Unit to provide initial thinking on the what, who, and when regarding implementation. The Planning Unit then discussed how to move forward with the development of the implementation matrix. Some of the items discussed included:

- The high level of specificity may not be needed until the implementation phase.
- The importance and urgency of the recommendations may be a good way to consider the priority of the recommendations.
- The City of Spokane will commit budget to items in the implementation matrix to provide clarity to the City Council on the level of commitment associated with plan approval. The City of Spokane would like to see other agencies/organizations commit specific budget as well to show the City Council the other levels of involvement that have been committed to implementation.
- Definitions used in the matrix need to be refined and clarified to assist in completing the matrix.

It was decided that additional specific Planning Unit meetings will be held to work on the implementation matrix. Two Planning Unit meetings will be held each month through the rest of 2004; one on the implementation matrix and the other on the plan recommendations.

Wrap Up: The next meetings will be held September 29, 2004 from 9:00 am to noon, (location to be determined) to work on the implementation matrix, and October 20, 2004 from 9:00 am to noon at the Spokane County Conservation District upstairs conference room to discuss the draft Watershed Plan.