

Meeting Summary Planning Unit

Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan October 26, 2004

Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

Lloyd Brewer, <i>City of Spokane</i>	Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth Water</i>	Keith Holliday, <i>State Caucus, Department of Ecology</i>
Steve Skipworth, <i>Vera Water & Power</i>	Jane Cunningham, <i>The Lands Council</i>	Shallan Dawson & Walt Edelen, <i>Spokane County Conservation District</i>
Ty Wick, <i>Spokane Aquifer Joint Board</i>	Tom Hargreaves, <i>Friends of the Little Spokane Valley</i>	Reanette Boese, Rob Lindsay & Lisa Dingler, <i>Spokane County</i>

Consultants that attended the meeting were: None.

Guests that attended the meeting were: Ed Haag, Wetland Partners

Introductions: Rob called the meeting to order at 9:10 am. Ed Haag of Stevens County introduced himself and informed the Committee that his company is in the process of finalizing a banking instrument with the Ecology for South Stevens County Wetlands Banks. The banks will be used to trade on-site mitigated land in exchange for mitigated banking sites. It will be the first wetlands banking in Eastern Washington and the area is on the cusp of WRIA's 57 and 59. The banks would be able to sell into these watersheds and if the planning unit is interested he will provide a presentation.

Reanette requested comments and/or corrections to the prior meeting summary. None were provided.

Discussion of Comments from the WRIA 55 / 57 Watershed Plan: The focus turned to the comments from the public workshop to incorporate them into the plan. The comments were divided into several categories.

Conservation Comments: The Planning Unit is not being aggressive enough in forcing conservation.

Suggested Response: There needs to be recognition of policy 1338 requirements and of measures already being taken by individuals/purveyors. Enhancement of the discussion part of plan without adding any "mandatory" language.

Conservation, Reclamation and Reuse Comments: There needs to be more research, education and teeth in conservation, reclamation and reuse.

Suggested Response: As a prelude to the watershed plan recommendations, add a summary of the comments, a summary of the responses and indicate that these recommendations are a volunteer, consensus based process and the result is a living document. Then within the document, hit the individual concerns and responses to them. Add I.C.01.d. to the matrix ("Research possible water reuse and reclamation opportunities." (Lands Council)).

Growth Comments: Limited to no growth in order to protect our water resources. A 20yr growth plan is not long enough.

Suggested Response: The hydrologic cycle does only bring a finite amount of water to our watersheds and our area cannot grow forever without either changing our consumption patterns or

running out of water. No growth is not the only option. Conserving, recycling and reusing water will also keep up from exceeding the carrying capacity of our watersheds.

Water Quality Comments: The strategy should not sacrifice quality for quantity in the Spokane and Little Spokane watersheds. Recreational activity impacts need to be addressed, monitored and managed.

Suggested Response: Methods to improve water quality are outside the scope of this plan.

Recommendation III.C.01.a mentions integrating everything including water quality.

Logging/Reforestation Comments: Decrease logging activity to delay snow-melt and plant trees to increase water storage.

Suggested Response: Since “harvest” and “management” are not the same and since Spokane County defaults to the State Forest Practices Act, change recommendation VI.A.01.c to read, “**In keeping with the State Forest Practices Act**, support forest harvest **and management** practices that....”.

Instream Flow on Spokane River Comments: The planning unit needs to set an instream flow level for the Spokane Falls/Monroe Street areas. To defer until the WRIA54 process is complete in 2009 is indefensible. A recommendation is necessary now to be useful in the Avista relicensing process and to prevent compromises in the instream flow to satisfy upstream Idaho interests.

Suggested Response: Refer to recommendation II.A.02.b.

Continue Discussion of Issues and Recommendations: Rewording of recommendation II.A.01.a. “Establish a minimum instream flow for the Spokane River at the Barker Toad transect (USGS Gage 1240500) of 500 cfs to provide significant weighted useable area for juvenile and adult rainbow trout.” Was confirmed.

Keith Holliday of the DOE distributed the agency’s proposed change to II.A.01.b. Discussion continued on whether or not to add a minimum instream flow at Post Falls HED to the change. This proposed change would put flow controls at the Post Falls HED to maintain a minimum of 500 cfs at Barker Road.

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

- Flow analysis supports setting the flow at Barker at 500 cfs.
- There are too many variables between Barker and Post Falls to set a limit at Post Falls.
- Level of the Aquifer does not effect how much the river loses between the state line and Barker.
- 600 cfs at Post Falls does not equate to 500 cfs at Barker Road. Studies suggest a seepage loss of between 200 to 325 cfs in this reach of the Spokane River between Post Falls and Barker Rd.

The following recommendation was changed:

- Revise II.A.01.b to read: “Avista’s 2007 operating license for the Spokane River Hydroelectric Development should require a minimum discharge to provide habitat for juvenile and adult rainbow trout that would be protected through a minimum instream flow for the Spokane River at the Barker Road transect (USGS Gage 12420500) of 500 cfs.

Keith Holliday confirmed with the planning unit that the draft plan does not explicitly obligate Ecology but recommends Ecology perform a number of actions. Keith's concern with not obligating Ecology is it creates the potential for misinterpretation about the level of commitment to implement the recommendations in the WRIA 55/57 Watershed Plan. The use of the term "obligation" would reduce the potential of Ecology not assigning the same priority or importance as agreed to or conveyed to the planning unit during the development of the plan."

The following recommendations were made:

- On the top row underneath the matrix heading, add “Obligated Agency” in the far left column. This would indicate which agency would be required to take action on the recommendation.
- Throughout the matrix, it will be noted who the obligated agency will be.

All items that had previously been initially approved were reviewed and confirmed. In addition, a couple items that had previously been confirmed were revisited and in some cases re-worded slightly. The following issues and recommendations include the ones that were re-worded at the meeting:

II.E.01.a After the Avista HED license application is filed, the Spokane River / Lake Spokane TMDL data gathering phase is complete, and instream studies on rearing below Monroe Street HED are completed, integrate all of the recommended instream flows into one regime for the whole watershed. The flow regime will be submitted to the DOE for instream flow rule making.

Issue V.A.02 How can water rights be returned to the river? (Or similar wording.)

V.A.02.a Encourage the use of the water rights trust program. (Or similar wording.)

Pend Oreille County would like there to be some instream flow gaging which shows what's happening in their County and whether their water withdrawals are affecting the system. Currently the gage at Chattaroy is where the data for all of that area, as well as parts of Stevens and Spokane Counties, has been collected. They have no interest in changing the plan but wanted any impact from their County separated from Spokane County impacts.

For implementation, the recommendations would need to be prioritized for scheduling and identify the obligated agencies. Once ratings from all agencies come back the tally across will indicate the priority. SCCD should be added as there are issues they would like to be involved in. Jane asked whether individual County Departments such as Parks and Planning will be identified individually on the matrix. For all departments represented as the County, Rob and Reanette will serve as liaison.

Wrap Up: The next meeting will be held November 8, 2004 (Monday), from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, at the Spokane County Conservation District upstairs conference room. The discussion of the public comments will be continued.