

Meeting Summary Planning Unit

Little Spokane River – Middle Spokane River Local Watershed Plan August 16, 2006

Committee members recorded on the sign in sheet were:

Lloyd Brewer, <i>City of Spokane</i>	Scott Kuhta, <i>City of Spokane Valley</i>	Reanette Boese, Rob
Ty Wick, <i>SAJB</i>	Keith Holliday, <i>State Caucus,</i>	Lindsay, and
Susan McGeorge, <i>Whitworth</i>	<i>Department of Ecology</i>	Robbin Paeper,
<i>Water</i>	Dave Jones, <i>Water Quality</i>	<i>Spokane County</i>
Todd Henry, <i>Vera Water & Power</i>	<i>Advisory Committee</i>	

Guests that attended the meeting were: Tom Wimpy, Diamond Lake, Greg Sweeney, Eloika Lake Assn., Stan Miller, Sarah Hubbard-Gray and April Brast, GeoEngineers, Chelsea Wood and Rhiannon Ervin, City of Spokane.

Introductions and Meeting Summary: Reanette called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Committee members and guests introduced themselves. The meeting summary for July 19, 2006 was reviewed and accepted.

Update on the West Branch LSR lakes committee: The organizing group canceled a meeting in July. The group wants to meet one more time to plan the September public meeting. The Pend Oreille Conservation District and Ecology are almost done with the grant agreement for the West Branch of the Little Spokane River money Senator Morton put in the state budget. The one time grant of \$75,000 will be used for administration, facilitation, and water level management.

Russ Fletcher and Jeff Storms have been cleaning out the beaver tubes below Sacheen Lake 3 times a week. The lake level is down, though maybe not quite as low as the “agreed upon level”.

Update on the Middle Spokane Instream Flow committee: Our consultant (EES) is finishing the instream flow data collection this week. There are no problems or concerns about the quality of the data.

Conservation: There is a meeting at the Department of Ecology on August 17 (tomorrow) to work towards coordinating all of the conservation efforts in our area. The Dept. of Ecology still plans to fund an SAJB conservation project, though Ecology wants to make sure it is coordinated with other efforts.

MOA: There is progress on the MOA – Rob collected rates and hours for the match and added them to the document. There number of hours and rates listed now are more than enough to make the match. The volunteer rate of \$15 per hour will be used for people not listed in the MOA.

Rob suggested we remove Attachment A because it is redundant. Lloyd figures it was left over from earlier phase MOAs. The group agreed that Rob should remove Attachment A, change Attachment B to Attachment A and change all related text. Rob will also add a footer to the document with the version number and date. The corrected version and a red line version will be sent out soon for action by boards.

Pend Oreille Conservation District has decided to not sign the MOA. They will work through Pend Oreille County.

Phase IV: The RFQ is ready for final approval from the Planning Unit and the selection team is in place. The draft RFQ will be emailed to everyone for final comments which will be due Wednesday, August 23 by the end of the work day.

Water rights adjudication discussion: Keith reported that the Department of Ecology felt anxiety from the public on the subject of adjudication. Therefore, Ecology submitted its budget for the next biennium with money for mapping of water rights and collecting historical information. This may be enough information for Washington to negotiate with Idaho. There will be no judicial involvement for now. Ecology will also spend the next 1 to 2 years educating the public on the process. Ken Slattery would still like the Planning Units do discuss adjudication and give a recommendation, if possible.

Lloyd has taken the issue to the City's Public Works Committee. They still need to get a handle on the consequences (costs) and benefits – the consequences are easier to see than the benefits.

Members of the Planning Unit asked how different Ecology's proposal is from the water use data collected for Watershed Planning. Some expressed a desire for Ecology to enforce the metering laws, including water rights claims and exempt wells – the plan requests the "Department of Ecology to monitor and enforce existing water rights holders to meet conditions of their water rights and comply with state law".

Feelings on adjudication may depend upon the court's ruling on the constitutionality of HB 1338 – the Municipal Water Bill. A request to review the constitutionality of HB 1338 was filed by environmental groups.

Showing evidence of water conservation may help Washington's cause – though mandatory conservation would be best. HB 1338 – the Municipal Water Bill – did mandate larger water purveyors with inchoate rights to have a water conservation plan. If the bill is declared unconstitutional that could be a problem.

Idaho and Washington may start to negotiate an agreement after the USGS bistate study of the SVRP Aquifer is done. Additionally, the model made for the study may be able to show harm to the Spokane River from Idaho.

Public Comment and other issues: Megan Nicodemus of the Dept of Health reminded Reanette that the Watershed Planning Unit needs to review all water system plans for consistency with the Watershed Plan. The City of Spokane, Vera Water and Power, and many other water districts in our WRIsAs will be submitting water system plans in the next few months. Reanette and Keith will create a draft set of points we will need to review to send out before the next meeting. The comment period on water system plans is 90 days from the time Dept of Health sends out notices.

Rob summarized a letter he received from a Green Bluff homeowner about a potentially illegal water use. Many Green Bluff residents have trouble obtaining sufficient water from individual wells and Whitworth Water District now supplies many of the homes with domestic water only. Spokane County does not have any regulations to enforce water disputes. Keith will look into Ecology's response. Ecology has only one person to cover illegal water use complaints for 13 counties.

Future Agenda Item Suggestion: Water system plan reviews.

Wrap Up: The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 20, 2006, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.