

**FINAL**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**WRIA 54 - Lower Spokane River Watershed**  
**November 28, 2007**

**Location:** Lakeside High School Library, Ninemile Falls, WA.

**Planning Unit members and guests recorded on the sign-in sheet were:**

Mike Hermanson, Spokane County	Rob Lindsay, Spokane County
Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe	Lloyd Brewer, City of Spokane
Dick Price, Stevens County PUD #1	Sara Hunt, WA State Dept. of Ecology
Hank Nelson, Avista Corporation	Charlie Peterson, Spokane County Conservation District
Lynn Wells, Riverside State Part Advisory	Cynthia Carlstad, TetraTech
Bryony Stasney, Golder Associates Inc.	
Wes McCart, Stevens County Farm Bureau, Stevens County Water Conservancy Board and Landowner	

**Call to Order**

Bryony opened the meeting at 6:00 pm. Attendees introduced themselves. Bryony requested that each attendee complete the sign-in sheet.

**Review and Approve October 2007 Meeting Summary**

The draft October 24, 2007 WRIA 54 Planning Unit meeting summary was reviewed with the following edits: 1) change the third sentence on page 1 under Public Comment to read, "The Stevens County Conservation District proposes to monitor the near shore area of Lake Spokane to identify areas of concern due to nutrient loading and bacteria concentrations. The Stevens County Conservation District proposes to conduct effectiveness monitoring of all Best Management Practices (BMPs) installed as part of the project." Those present accepted the suggested change to the meeting summary and approved the summary as final. The final summary will be posted on Spokane County's web site at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm>.

**Public Comment**

Rob noted that the December 20, 1:30 pm WRIA 54 Planning Unit meeting will be held at the Spokane County building, conference room 2B, since Airway Heights court is in session.

Ecology has hired David Moore as the Spokane River TMDL lead. David will start next week. David previously worked for Washington State Department of Transportation and has a degree in soil science with specializations in phosphorus and group collaboration.

**Review and Approve Operating Procedures (revised 102407)**

Bryony reviewed editorial changes and revisions approved by the Planning Unit at the October 24, 2007 Planning Unit meeting and noted that this is the second meeting for approval of the operating procedures (assuming that there is a quorum and that all present are in agreement with the changes). The Planning Unit agreed with the changes discussed and Bryony noted the agreement as the second and final approval. Rob requested that the approved operating procedures be distributed to the Planning Unit and that a few copies are available at Planning Unit meetings.

**Water Quality QAPP Scope for Palaeochannel Study and Ninemile Area. Presentation by Cynthia Carlstad, TetraTech.**

Cynthia provided copies of the Draft Scope of Work, Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Development – Ninemile Area Non-Point Source Monitoring Study and Palaeochannel Water Quality Monitoring Study. The Water Quality Work Group discussed and approved the draft scope at the November 28, 2007 morning meeting. The QAPPs are essentially sampling and analysis plans for water quality studies in the two areas. This revised version of the scope of work has changed only slightly from the draft copy provided to the Planning Unit at the

October 2007 meeting. The Water Quality Work Group is hoping that the Planning Unit will provide approval for the scope so that the County (as the lead) can access the remainder of the grant funds.

The palaeochannel water quality monitoring study involves compiling and assessing existing information and developing a water quality sampling and analysis plan for the palaeochannels on the West Plains.

The Ninemile area study involves compiling and assessing existing information and developing a water quality sampling and analysis plan for the contributing area to Lake Spokane. The study area boundaries will be established as an objective of the QAPP.

The two QAPPs will be submitted to Ecology for approval and, once approved, would provide the foundation for the field work, data assessment and reporting. Having approved QAPPs will make it more likely that the Planning Unit will obtain funding for the projects.

**Q:** When we get the draft QAPPs in April 2008, would this final draft also be submitted to Ecology?

**A:** Sara said that she will trouble-shoot earlier drafts so that the final draft can be submitted to Ecology.

**Q:** Will all available information be reviewed in preparation of the QAPPs?

**A:** Yes. For example, Colleen Little was at the WQWG this morning representing Spokane County stormwater and made good comments on land use and has additional information to provide on stormwater. Ben Brattebo, Spokane County's lead for the non-point source project was also there and has already been collecting and compiling information for this project. Dave Moss, Spokane County's water reclamation lead also attended the WQWG meeting this morning. We are hoping that this type of communication will ensure that we are sharing information and not duplicating efforts.

**Q:** Standards used in this project should be equivalent to standards developed for other projects.

**A:** This could be included as direction in the QAPP scope of work.

**Q:** What is the project area for the TMDL?

**A:** The current point of compliance for the Spokane River dissolved oxygen TMDL is at Long Lake Dam, in the hypolimnion. This assumes that any exceedances in the discharge from the Lake Spokane would be addressed. Sara said that the compliance point will be confirmed as the TMDL process continues. Hank noted that compliance points at other dams in the US are generally located at the discharge from the reservoir and not within the reservoir due to the complications of reservoir stratification, etc.

**Q:** Does the dissolved oxygen TMDL extend to the Columbia River (i.e., does the TMDL include the reach of the Spokane River from the Long Lake dam to the Columbia)?

**A:** No, the compliance point is currently Lake Spokane.

**Q:** Is the Ninemile project similar to the project that the Stevens County Conservation District is hoping to receive grant funds for?

**A:** Yes, however the timing of the two projects makes it hard to coordinate. The Stevens County Conservation District will find out in March 2008 if they have received the funding from Ecology and hope to start work in August 2008. This project will be complete in spring 2008. If the Stevens County Conservation District is funded we will sit down together and work out how best to cooperate.

After confirmation of a quorum (10 Planning Unit member votes), the Planning Unit members approved the scope of work by consensus with the following changes:

- Page 5: Data reporting and sharing (bullet added after Data review, verification and validation) – to address standards for reporting / distribution to be consistent with other ongoing projects.
- Page 5: under Subtask 5.2, General, the first sentence was edited to read, “This project would focus on the impacts of non-point sources of pollution along the shorelines of Lake Spokane.”

- Page 8: Data reporting and sharing (bullet added after Data review, verification and validation)  
– to address standards for reporting / distribution to be consistent with other ongoing projects.

### **Water Management Work Group Report**

Mike Hermanson informed the Planning Unit that all the work group information is now posted on Spokane County's web site at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/wria54.htm>. There are six work groups anticipated: water management, water quality, technical information, land use, education and instream flow. Currently, the water quality and water management work groups are developing issue papers. The land use and technical information work groups will be starting up in January 2008. Once the land use and technical information groups are wrapping up, the education and instream flow work groups will begin. Currently whether or not there will be WRIA 54 instream flow work group will be determined by the WRIA 55/57 and 54 instream flow group and depends on whether or not the WRIA 54 instream flow needs will be addressed within the larger watershed instream flow process.

Mike provided an overview of the November 13, 2007 Water Management Work Group (WMWG) meeting:

- The WMWG confirmed the scope as water allocation (water rights), water supply and water use, and regulation. Understanding groundwater and surface water resources will be passed on to the technical information work group. Connection between land use planning and water availability will be passed on to the land use work group.
- The group discussed the overarching concern for water management in WRIA 54 and agreed that there are systems in place to manage water resources in WRIA 54 (e.g., water rights processing, land use planning and water system planning) but that not all components of these systems function to support effective management of water resources.
- Water supply – the group discussed importation of water from the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer (SVRP) in WRIA 57 into WRIA 54 and use of interties both to offset withdrawals from the West Plains aquifers and to accommodate maintenance activities. This will be discussed further at future WMWG meetings.
- Water allocation – the group is evaluating statements recorded during the Phase II issue polling and concluded that some statements need clarification from the Planning Unit:
  - *Request that Ecology process applications for water rights changes and transfers more efficiently.*
    - The Planning Unit concluded that “efficiently” means faster and with less cost.
    - Ecology maintains an order for processing based on the order in which the application for change / transfer is received. Using Ecology's cost reimbursement program, an applicant can have Ecology process a change / transfer by paying for all other changes / transfers ahead in the line.
    - Conservancy Boards can process changes and transfers for claims but the Conservancy Board cannot change the water right claim to a certificate. The only way a claim can be changed to a certificate is through court adjudication. Sara Hunt said she is researching this.
    - Water rights changes and transfers can be processed through the Spokane, Stevens and Lincoln County Conservancy Boards and then passed on to Ecology for the final decision (which Ecology must make within a designated timeframe). We noted that Conservancy Boards are generally able to work through changes and transfers and provide recommendations to Ecology within a year.
    - Sara suggested that both Ecology and the Conservancy Boards communicate with the WMWG with any suggestions to make the processing more efficient.
    - Lloyd suggested that the establishment of the Conservancy Boards has worked to address the efficiency issue.
    - Conservancy Boards are currently unfunded and request fees (about \$1,000 plus publication) to cover processing costs. In comparison, Ecology charges a \$50 fee and has long waiting lines.

- Lloyd noted that currently Ecology appears not to be processing water rights because they are waiting for instream flow and watershed planning recommendations. Bryony noted that the WMWG has requested that Sara research and bring back information to the WMWG on Ecology's impediments to water rights processing in WRIA 54.
- The WMWG will obtain information on applications for new water rights and water rights changes and transfers in WRIA 54.
- *Consider joint mitigation planning for WRIA 54 cities for water right applications.*
  - The WMWG discussed a recommendation to initiate a water purveyor group similar to the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board for water purveyors on the West Plains. These water purveyors have met a couple of times already at meetings hosted by Spokane County and Ecology.
  - After discussion, mitigation was described as offset for new withdrawals, e.g., direct use and / or recharge of reclaimed water; recharge of treated surface water; purchasing and retiring valid water rights.
  - Water leasing / importation of water to the West Plains are not mitigation for new water rights.
  - Wes noted that the Growth Management Act encourages maintenance of agriculture and natural resource industries. Wes hopes that the WRIA 54 Watershed Plan will not encourage purchase of valid agricultural water rights and subsequent mitigation for / change of use of these rights to municipal supply. This does not enhance agriculture.
  - Cynthia suggested review of Ecology's policies on mitigation.
  - Water trust / banking may be considered mitigation.
- *Maintain and expand water rights, especially for agriculture and exempt water use due to growth.*
  - Wes noted that from an agricultural perspective, it is important for agriculture to maintain existing water rights. Wes noted that if farmers cannot irrigate, it becomes economically unfeasible for them to continue farming.
  - Mike asked if there are pending water rights applications that are hindering agriculture. Wes said that this is an issue in the Chamokane Basin but that he is not aware of this being an issue elsewhere in WRIA 54. Wes noted that storage is a potential solution for the Chamokane Basin.
  - Wes noted that this could be an issue associated with the need to protect agricultural land through growth management and land use planning.
  - The City of Spokane's consideration of reclaimed water to provide water to establish an irrigation district could potentially provide water for additional agricultural land.
  - Wes noted that this issue could be linked with water spreading – i.e. by improving irrigation efficiency or changing crops, a greater area of land can be irrigated with the same amount of water. A water rights transfer is needed for the place of use increase.
- *Develop and maintain a public database of willing water rights buyers and sellers throughout Stevens County (currently being implemented by the Stevens County Water Conservancy Board)*
  - The WMWG is interested to find out if the Conservancy Board has seen benefits in this.
  - Wes noted that the Stevens County PUD #1 started this a couple of years ago. The Conservancy Board laws allow the Board to maintain a database of willing water rights buyers and sellers. The Conservancy Board has now taken over maintaining this database from Stevens County PUD #1. There are currently only a couple of listings in the database. Dick Price noted that many farmers do not understand water rights law and that there is a demand for this type of database.
  - Wes suggested that Bryony contact Janet Rajala (Ecology's Water Conservancy Board representative) to find out if this type of a database would also be useful in Spokane and Lincoln Counties.
  - Wes noted that the Water Conservancy Boards' will need to make a statement that the extent and validity of the water rights in the database are not guaranteed.

- Wes suggested that the Planning Unit could approach this as an obligation in the Watershed Plan for the Stevens, Spokane and Lincoln County Conservancy Boards maintain this type of database.
- *Clarify rights of permit exempt well owners to be assured of continued water quality and quantity.*
  - This is not clear to the WMWG.
  - The Planning Unit felt that this might be a water quality issue – in the event that the water quality of a well becomes compromised (e.g., groundwater quality contamination in the Deep Creek area).
  - The Planning Unit agreed that this could be struck from the water management issue paper.
- *Increase permit-exempt well use for small to medium developments.*
  - This is not clear to the WMWG and appears contrary to discussions that have occurred within the WMWG.
  - This refers to the use of permit-exempt wells for short plats. This appears in contradiction to current policy.
  - Wes felt that this is a land use issue – and could be managed by land use regulations.
  - The Planning Unit felt that this is potentially a concern and that use of permit-exempt wells for small to medium developments should not be increased, particularly if there are concerns about water availability in the area.
- *There is a need to address illegal uses of permit-exempt wells.*
  - Wes noted that there is a recommendation in the WRIA 59 Watershed Plan for Ecology to provide a watermaster for the north-eastern region of Washington.
  - Bryony asked if there are specific concerns with illegal water use. Planning Unit members said that this is an issue.

WMWG meetings are tentatively set for the second Tuesday of each month on Dec 11, Jan 8, Feb 12 and Mar 11, 10 am to noon at Spokane County Public Works Bldg, Conf Rm 4A or 4C.

### **Instream Flow Update**

Mike Hermanson informed the group that the joint WRIA 54 and WRIA 55/57 instream flow work group has not met since the last WRIA 54 Planning Unit meeting and plans to meet on December 11, at 1:30 pm, near the Ninemile dam, at the corner of Charles Road and Carlson. A notice of the meeting will be emailed out to the group and this Planning Unit. John Covert (Ecology) will attend the meeting to discuss instream flow control points. Brad Caldwell (Ecology) and Hal Beecher (WDFW) will also attend to talk about their insights on instream flow. The WRIA 54 instream flow group will wait to see where the larger group is going before deciding on a scope for WRIA 54 Phase III planning.

### **Public Comment**

- Bryony said that water storage will be addressed by the water management work group as a potential solution for water management issues and will also be considered by the technical information group in terms of what information may be needed to support water storage projects.
- Wes noted that water could be made available to areas of growth and confirmed that this is being addressed by the water management work group, e.g., via considering importation of water.
- Wes asked if adjudication is being considered. Bryony said that this is currently a potential solution noted in the water management issue paper.
- Sara noted that there is a meeting on December 6 of the watershed planners supporting the Columbia River Water Management County Commissioners group. The watershed planners will discuss hosting a water trust / water banking workshop in Feb / Mar 2008. Sara will update the Planning Unit at the next meeting.
- Cynthia provided a handout with an updated draft summary of the previous and on-going natural

resource based programs and plans that may relate to the WRIA 54 Watershed Plan. Cynthia noted that this is currently a work in progress.

### **Administration and General Schedule Announcements**

Mike Hermanson informed the group that he reviewed voting members and attendance and sent out 18 letters, including a note that if the County does not receive a response, that the entity / individual will lose voting status. The responses to date are as follows:

- The Greater Spokane Chamber group intends to participate as a voting member.
- The Lincoln County Conservation District would like to be removed as a voting member.
- A landowner responded to say that they would like to be informed but will not be a voting member.
- 15 others have not responded.

Wes asked that Spokane County make another public outreach effort now that the watershed planning process has moved into Phase III. If there is limited response, at least the Planning Unit has tried and can present these efforts to the County Commissioners. Rob noted that there was significant public outreach above and beyond Spokane County's scope with Ecology at the beginning of the WRIA 54 Watershed Planning process. Rob said that it would be appropriate to send a letter to the 20+ groups that Spokane County gave presentations to in Phases I and II, providing an update and following up with phone calls. Rob said that he has resistance to buying space in newspapers because Spokane County has found that this is not effective in increasing public involvement. Wes suggested that a news release in local papers with a phone call may be more appropriate. Rob agreed that Spokane County will send out a news release. Rob noted that the snow tonight has likely resulted in a low attendance at this meeting. The October 2007 WRIA 54 Planning Unit meeting in Airway Heights was very well attended. Bryony suggested that the Planning Unit be surveyed at the December 2007 meeting to make sure that the Planning Unit is happy with the meeting times and locations.

The following meetings are scheduled and open to everyone:

#### **DECEMBER 2007:**

- WRIA 54 Water Management Work Group, Tuesday December 11, 9 – 11 am, Conf. Rm. 4A, Spokane County Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway Ave, Spokane, WA.
- WRIA 55/57 and 54 Instream Flow Work Group, Tuesday December 11, 1:30 – 4:30 pm, Fire District 9 Building, Charles Road, Ninemile Falls, WA.
- WRIA 54 Water Quality Work Group, Wednesday December 12, 10 am – noon, Conf. Rm. 4A, Spokane County Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway Ave, Spokane, WA.
- WRIA 54 Planning Unit, Thursday December 20, 1:30 – 3:30 pm, Conf. Rm. 2B, Spokane County Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway Ave, Spokane, WA.

#### **JANUARY 2008:**

- WRIA 54 Water Management Work Group, Tuesday January 8, 10 am – noon, Conf. Rm. 4A, Spokane County Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway Ave, Spokane, WA.
- WRIA 55/57 and 54 Instream Flow Work Group, Tuesday January 22, 1:30 – 4:30 pm, venue TBA.
- WRIA 54 Land Use Work Group, Wednesday January 23, 10 am – noon, Conf. Rm. 4A, Spokane County Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway Ave, Spokane, WA.
- WRIA 54 Planning Unit, Wednesday January 23, 6 – 8 pm, Lakeside High School Library, 5909 Highway 291, Ninemile Falls, WA.
- WRIA 54 Technical Information Work Group, Wednesday January 30, 10 am – noon, venue TBA.

### **Next Meeting Date and Adjourn**

The next WRIA 54 Planning Unit meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2007, 1:30 – 3:30 pm at Conf. Rm. 2B, Spokane County Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway Ave, Spokane, WA. Bryony adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.