

Meeting Summary
WRIA 54 - Lower Spokane River Watershed
November 24, 2009

Location: Airway Heights Community Center, Airway Heights, WA.

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

Mike Hermanson, Spokane County
Jim DeGraffenreid, Lincoln County
Larry Guenther, Stevens County
Lloyd Brewer, City of Spokane
Dick Price, Stevens County PUD #1
Rusty Post, WA Department of Ecology
Bryan St. Clair, City of Airway Heights
Charlie Kessler, Stevens County Conservation District
Charlie Peterson, Stevens County Conservation District
Jeanne Barnes, Spokane Assoc of Realtor and Lake Spokane Park
Homeowners Association
Michael McCollum, Citizen Scientist, Cheney
Bill Rickard, City of Spokane Water Department

Call to Order

Cynthia Carlstad opened the meeting at 10:05 am. Attendees introduced themselves. Cynthia requested that each attendee complete the sign-in sheet.

Review and Approve the October 28, 2009 Meeting Summary

The draft meeting summary was reviewed. Mike McCollum noted that he lives in Cheney rather than Spokane. On page 1, under Public Comment, second bullet - Lloyd Brewer corrected the last sub-bullet to read "upgrading irrigation systems at one fire station." A correction was made to the page numbering. These corrections will be made and the final version posted to the website.

Public Comment

Michael McCollum offered to give a brief talk at a future Planning Unit meeting about what science is and how do you go about selecting what the best science available would be. There was a short discussion about a legal definition in the WACs and that the group would like clarification on that.

Watershed Plan Recommendation/Obligation Prioritization Exercise

Cynthia initiated discussion on prioritizing WRIA 54 Watershed Plan recommendations and obligations.

- Prioritization will be done over the course of the next three Planning Unit meetings, with some between meeting homework for Planning Unit members.
- Focus today:
 - Whether to group recommendations in categories for prioritizing, and if so, what categories.
 - Consider types of criteria
 - Provide general direction to Cynthia on categories, criteria, and ranking/rating system so that she can develop a prioritization exercise for the Planning Unit to use at the December meeting.

There are a wide range of approaches to prioritizing, from simply numbering the recommendations in rank order to rating each recommendation relative to specific criteria. Discussion included a desire for simplicity, the need for the prioritization to reflect individual entity's priorities, but also tie back to the watershed plan mission.

Some quantification, or at least clear description about why recommendations were prioritized as they were may be important in the future for grant applications and other funding pursuits.

Since the Planning Unit deliberately decided to include each recommendation in the Watershed Plan, we are assuming that all 57 recommendations are good ideas. Some of the differences include long term vs short term benefit, and actions that benefit a few vs those that benefit many. Cynthia's goal is to help the group find a scheme that they can use that is not overly complicated but also takes into account some balance.

Cynthia directed meeting participants' attention to the handout titled "Watershed Plan Recommendation Obligation Prioritization Exercise Meeting Handout." This handout contains some basic definitions and example criteria.

Terminology:

Prioritize: What to do first; also implies importance

Categories: Grouping based on some similar attribute

Criteria: Rule or principle for evaluating something

Rating: Position assigned within a graded scale – can be quantitative or qualitative

Ranking: Relative position or standing; order of preference/priority

Cynthia asked the group for some their experiences in terms of prioritizing, good things, bad things, approaches that were used that they thought worked well. Jim DeGraffenreid noted that it can be very difficult to make that first cut when prioritizing a long list of worthwhile recommendations, but it is a critical step. Larry Guenther commented that it's important for people to have time to take a look at all the things that we have come up with and have an opportunity to dialogue. This could be done in subgroups such as the Stevens County people getting together and asking "What things are important to us" and come up with what we feel the rank order of 10 items. Then whoever comes up with that list, that group needs to defend their position. Lloyd Brewer noted that funding often drives what actually gets implemented.

Cynthia reviewed the overall prioritization process and workplan for developing the Detailed Implementation Plan:

- Recommendation/Obligation Prioritization - Today is our first substantive talk about how we are going to do that. In December we are going to come back and actually develop the criteria that we are going to use evaluate our recommendations, and the rating and ranking scheme. Then based on that I am going to send out some matrices for you to complete the prioritization individually and return those to me. I will compile those prior to the January meeting; return the results to you so that you can see on an individual basis how the ratings came out. Then when we convene in January we will, as a group, truth those results. This would be a logical time for group dialogue on the priority scheme.
- Project Plans for High Priority Projects - These will be the meat of the Detailed Implementation Plan, and will be developed voluntarily by project leads for prioritized recommendations. Mike Hermanson provided an example at the October Planning Unit meeting; it included a scope of work, schedule, budget, approach, and description of how that project relates to the Watershed Plan recommendations. The completed project plan will document all necessary information to seek funding to implement the project. Since this will be a bit of effort, not all prioritized recommendations will likely have a project plan developed. It is going to take one of the planning unit members to say "I will lead that effort." Then as far as the writing, it can be done by that person in a sub group or Cynthia can help with the writing. Spokane County set aside money in the grant for planning unit members who want to take on the writing of those project plans themselves.

Regarding grouping the recommendations into categories, the benefit of this approach is to end up with a balanced selection of high priority actions. Options include:

- Watershed Plan technical issue categories – water rights administration, water use efficiency, water for future needs, water storage, water quality, land use, instream flow, technical investigations, education, and implementation.
- Geographic areas – Meeting participants viewed a spreadsheet created by Mike Hermanson that showed the bulk of recommendations would fall into the “all WRIA” category if grouped by geographic area
- Project Lead - As identified in the Watershed Plan. Using project lead categories would help ensure a balanced distribution of workload for implementation
- Capital/Operational Funding – Using this classification would help sort the recommendations for funding opportunities

Dick Price suggested sticking with the technical issue categories reflected by the Watershed Plan chapters. Others generally agreed, and Cynthia commented that from her review of category options, this approach would likely result in balance in geography and project lead too.

Meeting participants engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding criteria, rating, and ranking,. Several members voiced their preference for a simple numerical ranking that would result in a 1-57 priority ranking for all recommendations. A possible two-step process was discussed, with recommendations first ranked in their technical issue group, then relative to other technical issue groups. All agreed that the priority ranking should not be applied rigidly – i.e. if funding were available for the #3 ranked recommendation, it is okay to skip over #1 and #2. While the merits of applying agreed-upon criteria were acknowledged, discussion focused on not overcomplicating the process and acknowledging the differing priorities and criteria of individual Planning Unit members.

Mike McCollum pointed out that some geographical areas, such as the West Plains, are not formally delineated in the Watershed Plan and asked if this was going to be addressed at some point. Cynthia acknowledged that issue had come up several times, and was one of the main reasons the group was looking to move toward more logical, functional subgroups during implementation. The West Plains is a good example of why that is desirable, since it spans three separate WRIAs. Lloyd Brewer also commented that the Planning Unit is still hoping to consolidate WRIAs for easier implementation after the Detailed Implementation Plan is complete.

Ultimately, meeting participants decided on the following as their next steps, which differs somewhat to the timing given earlier in the meeting:

1. Cynthia will send out Watershed Plan recommendation/obligation ranking worksheets to Planning Unit members, to complete as homework and return to Cynthia prior to the December Planning Unit meeting.
2. To test out the level-of-effort required to rate Watershed Plan recommendations/obligations based on individual criterion, Cynthia will also send out a test case rating exercise for one category of Watershed Plan recommendations/obligations. Planning Unit members will be asked to test this exercise out, and come prepared to comment on whether it is worthwhile to do this for all recommendations, and if so, what the criteria will be. Note that the criteria selected for this test exercise were not discussed and decided upon by the Planning Unit.

Governance Organization Subcommittee Update

Mike Hermanson provided an update. This subcommittee is tasked with examining governance structures brought to it by members as possible models for WRIA 54. Mike will facilitate the meeting, and requested that participants provide information to the subcommittee on options they wish to advance for consideration.

Volunteers from the October Planning Unit meeting included: Dick Price, Rob Lindsay, Lloyd Brewer , Jeanne Barnes, and Bryan St. Clair. Mike also contacted Jim DeGraffenreid, Brian Crossly, and Larry Guenther; they all indicated interest.

A subcommittee meeting was scheduled for December 22, 2009, at 8:30, in the Airway Heights Community

Center (same room as Planning Unit meeting; Planning Unit meeting to follow).

Municipal Inchoate Water Rights Analysis

Mike Hermanson gave an update on this topic. One of the requirements in the RCW is: “how inchoate water rights will be used to meet projected future water needs and when implementing instream flow strategies (identified in watershed plan.” Spokane County will be taking lead on fulfilling this required element of the Detailed Implementation Plan.

Mike outlined the approach. He intends to use the municipal water system plans along with a verifying questionnaire sent to each Group A purveyor in WRIA 54 to document where each water purveyor stands in relation to their water rights, looking at a 20-year planning period. Some of this work was already completed for the Phase 2 Level 1 Assessment. This work will be initiated in January, 2010. Rusty Post suggested that Mike use this opportunity to invite each water purveyor to participate in Phase IV.

Water source/water place of use complications exist for both the City of Spokane and Reardan. For Spokane, the City has two wells that are within a block of the WRIA 54 boundary. Reardan has a well that is within WRIA 54, but no service area in WRIA 54. The approach used in the Phase II Assessment was to break out water that is used in WRIA 54 from water that is pumped in WRIA 54.

Since the Watershed Plan does not quantify instream flow recommendations, that will not need to be addressed.

West Plains Geophysical Orientation Survey Results

Mike Hermanson gave a presentation on the West Plains Geophysical Orientation Survey Results. The following summarized narrative accompanied a Powerpoint slide presentation (Available at the following address: <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/project54/asp/home.asp>)

This is an implementation project from WRIA 54, 56, and 34 that Spokane County undertook with supplemental funds from the Watershed Planning Grants during the 2007-2009 biennium. The project got a lot of support from the Department of Ecology water resources staff in the Eastern Regional Office. They have a real interest in finding a way of defining groundwater basins on the West Plains, and they are having some difficulty doing that.

The project objective was to determine the best geophysical measurement technique to use in wide scale determination of the West Plain region’s underlying geologic and hydrogeologic characteristics. Geophysics is a study of the earth by looking at quantitative observations of the physical properties. It is used in a lot of different areas: petroleum, groundwater, building foundations. Essentially you are looking at properties such as mass, density, magnetic, and electrical properties. The real reason for using geophysics is that you can cover a lot wider area for less expense than drilling wells.

The study area was defined based on a previous study done by Diebold (1995) and consultation with Ecology on what they thought was an appropriate study area. There are a lot of water resources issues on the West Plains, including groundwater mining that is affecting municipal purveyors. The conceptual hydrogeology for the study area is a basement rock (granitic) with a varied surface, overlain by layers of basalt, and capped by a layer of sediment. Most of the groundwater of any quantity is within the basalt. Since the basement rock defines distinct groundwater basins, the real key is to be able to map the contact between the basement rock and basalt. Although many wells exist, most do not penetrate to basement rock. The City of Medical Lake has the deepest well, at 1,300 feet deep.

The strategy was to pilot test different geophysical methods, then try out the methods from the pilot test at three locations where subsurface geology was already known. Geophysical methods that were useful in determining

depth to bedrock and also identifying rock layers were selected: seismic methods electrical resistivity, transient electromagnetic, and gravity. Three test lines were designated.

Line #1 extends from near the Airway Heights Parkwest well to a suspected granite exposure at the east end. The first method, electrical resistivity, did not provide anything meaningful at the depth that we were looking at. We thought that if the granitics at the northeast end of the line was a basement exposure electrical resistivity would be a useful method. Had we not drilled the well and not known what was there, we would have thought that this method did not work. In fact it actually profiled generally what was there. The transient electromagnetic did not profile what was there. The results that were actually more useful were from gravity and seismic.

For line number #2, we have some good well log information informing the profile of where the granite and basalt contact is. For this line, the electrical resistivity actually mapped the granite above the basalt, which we know is untrue. The gravity results actually matched very well. It was pretty well controlled area, you can see from the wells. The seismic results gave a reasonable representation when used in conjunction with the gravity data.

For line #3, well log data indicates that the granite is at about 300 feet on one end and over 700 feet deep on the other end. As with lines #1 and #2, the gravity method appeared to work best, although there were some anomalous results associated with the adjacent granitic hill.

We also drilled a 500 foot deep monitoring well as part of this study. It is located in that key area right around where Medical Lake, Four Lakes, and Airway Heights all have a municipal supply wells. So now we have a monitoring well out there in close proximity to an intensely used part of the West Plains. Although granite was mapped in the adjacent area, the well driller never got below the basalt in the borehole, so this well is completed in the basalt.

The conclusion of the study was that there may be a limited use for the gravity method in identifying groundwater basins, however this application is still experimental.

Public Comment

Charlie Kessler announced that the Stevens County Conservation District Centennial Clean Water Fund grant from Ecology should be signed soon. They also have a new application through the Water Quality Fund for monitoring and assessment of phosphorus loading in the Lake Spokane area.

Rusty Post alerted the group that he learned yesterday that a temporary hold had been placed on signing new Watershed Planning Fund grants that do not have a preauthorization letter.

Admin & General Schedule Announcements

The **next planning unit meeting is on Tuesday (not Wednesday), December 22nd**, at 10 a.m. here at the Airway Heights Community Center.

Cynthia alerted the group that she and Mike are putting together preliminary agendas for future meetings, and encourage speakers on various topics of interest to the Planning Unit.

The **WRIA 54 Governance Organization Structure Subcommittee meeting is 8:30 a.m. on December 22nd** here at the Airway Heights Community Center, immediately preceding the Planning Unit meeting. Anybody is welcome.

Adjourn

Cynthia adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.