

**Meeting Summary**  
**WRIA 54 - Lower Spokane River Watershed**  
**December 22, 2009**

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

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

Cynthia Carlstad, Tetra Tech  
Mike Hermanson, Spokane County  
Rusty Post, Washington State Department of Ecology  
Michael Hamilton, Citizen  
Bob Derkey, Citizen  
Bill Rickard, City of Spokane Water Department  
Dick Price, Stevens County PUD  
Jim DeGraffenreid, Lincoln County Planning  
Meghan Lunney, Avista Utilities  
Charlie Peterson, Spokane Conservation District  
David Luders, Fairchild AFB, Civil Engineering Squadron  
Bryan St. Clair, City of Airway Heights  
Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe  
Charlie Kessler, Stevens County Conservation District  
Dave Jones, Spokane County Planning Commission  
Lloyd Brewer, City of Spokane  
Mike McCollum, Citizen

**Call to Order**

Cynthia Carlstad opened the meeting at 10:00 am. Attendees introduced themselves. The sign-in sheet was passed around the room for everyone's signature.

**Review and Approve the November 24, 2009 Meeting Summary**

Draft meeting summary was reviewed. One edit was requested: page 5, under public comment, clarify that the hold on signing grant agreements at Ecology was related to the Watershed Planning grants, not the Water Quality grants. The Water Quality fund is the funding source for the Stevens County Conservation District project. The final meeting summary will be posted to the County website (<http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/project54/asp/Minutes.asp>).

**Agenda Revision**

New information related to funding for the WRIA 54 project, and watershed planning in general requires a revised focus for today's meeting. Cynthia suggested that the group insert this discussion topic into the agenda following the first public comment period. Participants agreed.

**Public Comment**

Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe: The Tribe is continuing work on the CEQUAL W2 model for the lower Spokane. They are using the output from the upstream model that ends at Long Lake Dam, and running it through the lower 34 miles of the Spokane with the different scenarios. For example, they have modeled temperature, dissolved oxygen, and potential impacts to fish habitat.

Mike Hermanson reminded participants to record on the sign-in sheet their time spent on WRIA 54 meetings and related work for the match requirements on the grant.

## **WRIA 54 Phase IV Budget Discussion**

The lead agency, Spokane County, was notified by Ecology last Thursday that continued funding for WRIA 54, as well as other watersheds is very uncertain going into the future. While the situation is still evolving, right now it appears that WRIA 54 will retain its current level of funding through June 30, 2010, but no funding will be available after that. The current state budget includes minimal funding for the watershed planning program following June 30, 2010 to close out the program. Current WRIA 54 funding is coming through two types of grants: Phase IV Watershed Planning and Planning Unit Support grants.

Given this new budget situation, the Planning Unit must decide how it will continue through June 30. Options include the following:

1. Continue as originally scoped in the Phase IV grant through June 30. As scoped the final DIP was to be completed by October 2010 so this effort would result in completion of a first draft of the Detailed Implementation Plan.
2. Revise the grant scope to (1) complete the prioritization; then (2) shift the focus to an early implementation project focus.
3. Revise the grant scope to focus entirely on an implementation project, noting that the implementation project must be consistent with the DIP requirement to develop strategies to provide sufficient water for future needs.

The lead agency recommends the second approach above. Mike Hermanson expressed Spokane County's viewpoint that while it is valuable to finish prioritizing the Watershed Plan recommendations, the Detailed Implementation Plan itself is not important to complete if State funding for the program is not going to be available in the future. Completing the DIP is a prerequisite for Planning Units to receive additional Phase IV implementation grants. If the budget situation for the watershed planning program improves in the future, the Planning Unit would still be eligible for approximately \$30,000 for its first year, which could be used to fund completion of the DIP.

Mike Hermanson proposed that, under option #2 above, the Planning Unit shift the available funding to the Water Demand Forecast implementation project that has recently been initiated as a cooperative effort between WRIs 55/57 and 56. This project was ranked #1 last year for supplemental project funding submitted by WRIA 54. Ecology funded half of that project, which will fund a data and forecasting methodology review, and study plan for model development. The additional funding from WRIA 54 would allow that project to complete a preliminary regional water demand forecast model by June 30, 2010. A rough breakdown of proposed funding is the following:

- WRIA 54 - \$83,000
- WRIA 55/57 - \$97,000
- WRIA 56 - \$18,000

Mike Hermanson and Rusty Post provided more information about the Water Demand Forecast project. The forecast model will be a spreadsheet-based tool that will predict water needs for domestic, commercial, agricultural and industrial uses for the Spokane County region. It will go beyond the simplistic forecasts developed for each of the Watershed Plans, and actually apply factors that influence water use at a much more detailed level, such as precipitation, soil type, lot size, and socioeconomics. This model will allow "what-if" scenario modeling to assess the value of various conservation efforts as well as tailoring land uses to available water sources. It also looks at how water is used, for example if you develop 10 acres and put more houses on it versus putting multi-family housing on it such as apartment complexes etc. Cynthia commented that Tetra

Tech, teamed with the firm CDM, was assisting Spokane County with the current Water Demand Forecast project.

There was general discussion about what value this water demand model would provide to WRIA 54. Mike Hermanson explained that one of the project goals is to create a model that can be used to evaluate differing water needs for different geographic areas. Getting a better handle on rural water uses and needs is currently a major data gap; the forecast model for areas in the Little Spokane and Latah Creek will be transferable to rural areas in WRIA 54. The West Plains will also be directly benefitted as this is part of the study area.

David Luders commented that the water demand forecast shows up in several of the WRIA 54 Watershed Plan high priority recommendations. The full project was ranked #1 for supplemental funding and it leverages the money amongst the greatest number of people.

Cynthia solicited other project ideas from meeting participants and a candidate project list was documented on a flip chart (see table below). Much discussion ensued. The selected project must meet the following criteria:

1. Fulfill Phase IV grant requirement to develop strategies to provide water for future needs
2. Contain a stakeholder participation, facilitation, or administrative component to satisfy the Planning Unit Support grant requirement
3. Have a defined scope and deliverable that can be completed by June 30, 2010

CANDIDATE PROJECTS	DISCUSSION SUMMARY
1. Water Demand Forecast Model	See discussion above. This project does fulfill the criteria listed above.
2. Chamokane Build-out Analysis	No readily-available project that could be initiated and completed within required timeframe. USGS results not available yet.
3. Stevens Conservation District project	June 30, 2010 project completion deadline would be problematic. Timeline does not relate well with the District's other grant project that was recently awarded.
4. Water Supply Analysis (source water)	Related to West Plains Basalt Aquifer study below
5. Chamokane Storage Project	No readily-apparent project that could be initiated and completed within June 30, 2010 timeframe. It was suggested that the Columbia River program could be a good funding source for this project concept; that program's funding is still intact.
6. Suncrest Area Nonpoint Source Project	Spokane County Nonpoint Source Assessment project, currently underway, may address many of the same issues.
7. West Plains Basalt Aquifer Study	No readily-apparent project that could be initiated quickly and completed within the June 30, 2010 timeframe.
8. Groundwater Well Inventory	Some interest in this, both from Bob Derkey (EWU), and Spokane County. Bob indicated that he has data that needs to be input and evaluated. Mike Hermanson expressed that Spokane County would like to extend the well inventory work it did for the Little Spokane into WRIA 54.
9. Spokane Tribe CEQUAL W2 Modeling below Lake Spokane	Brian Crossley indicated that he did not see a way to make use of the funding for this project.

Meeting participants discussed the potential value of completing the Detailed Implementation Plan as currently scoped. State requirements dictate that the Planning Unit cannot receive Phase IV grant funding for years 2 through 5 until you have finished your detailed implementation plan. The DIP is intended to guide the group moving into implementation by detailing the what, who, and when for each recommendation. The question is, if Watershed Plan recommendations are implemented by individual entities rather than the group, is the DIP needed? The group discussed the possible downside – what if watershed planning funding is restored, and WRIA 54 does not have a DIP – will it be a disadvantage? Rusty commented that the current scope for the DIP went beyond state requirements; a simpler version of a DIP could be completed for less money. Mike Hermanson noted again that the Planning Unit would still be eligible for \$30,000 if future funding came available, and that could fund completion of the DIP.

Rusty Post explained that Ecology could potentially support shifting the scope to focus on an appropriate implementation project. With the uncertainty of future funding, it is wise to choose a focus that will give you the most bang for your buck between now and June 30, 2010. The Water Demand Forecast project accomplishes some of the main elements that you would do in developing a DIP. It is also coming out as one of the highest priority projects in the Watershed Plan. The recommendation that Spokane County has come up with makes a lot of sense along those lines because it will provide the ability to move forward in terms of future decision making on really big stuff such as land use planning, growth management and water resources, and water availability. This need is not getting answered anywhere else right now; it is one of those blockages in the system because of the lack of information about it. It also sets some good groundwork for any future TMDLs that might get done or any adjudication that is likely to happen at some point in the future. There are two other studies that are going on that this will dovetail with. One is USGS - they are doing a region-wide water supply and demand forecast. That is a broader scale and this would fit in with that. The second thing is that Ecology has contracted with Washington State University to do a similar kind of thing but more focused on the Columbia River. This work and having this kind of model and how those things kind of fit together, really starts setting the stage for decision-making for local governments.

This discussion continued for over an hour. Cynthia observed that the group appeared to want to pursue Option #2 outlined above - Revise the grant scope to (1) complete the prioritization; then (2) shift the focus to an early implementation project focus. She asked for confirmation. Jim DeGraffenreid indicated that he was still inclined to stick to the original scope and complete the DIP, but would go along with the group. The group confirmed this was their desired approach.

Regarding completing the Watershed Plan recommendation prioritization, all agreed that this was important. It will be added to the Watershed Plan as an addendum, and will serve as an indication of regional priorities from the WRIA 54 perspective.

Initially, meeting participants were inclined to set up a time period over the following week or so for members to propose projects that would meet the necessary criteria, then reconvene in early January to decide which project to do, but following further discussion about the constraints of the funding and realities of available projects (summarized in the table above), decided to move forward with amending the Phase IV grant agreement to fund a portion of the water demand forecast project. Ecology would like to receive all draft grant amendments by January 8 for processing, and there are definitely advantages to being earlier in the queue.

Mike Hermanson indicated that a small amount of money, approximately \$4,000 was available, potentially for the well inventory work proposed either by Bob Derkey or Spokane County. The Planning Unit would need more information either way, to understand what would be produced for this project.

## Next Steps

The following next steps were documented on a flip chart:

1. Clarify legal/financial requirements associated with Ecology grants and lead agency administration
2. Revise grant agreement to partially fund the Water Demand Forecast project (as shown on page 2).  
*Note: Grant amendment completed.*
3. Determine whether current Tetra Tech contract allows for additional subcontracting (such as to EWU).  
*Note: This is allowable under the current contract.*
4. Planning Unit decision at regular January Planning Unit meeting for what to do with the \$4,000-\$5,000 that may be available.
5. Under this revised strategy, the January Planning Unit meeting will be the last Planning Unit meeting to complete the prioritization and decide how to use the \$4,000-\$5,000 discussed above.

## **Watershed Plan Recommendation/Obligation Prioritization**

The previous month eleven Planning Unit members completed a homework assignment to rank Watershed Plan recommendations within each technical issue category from the Watershed Plan, and evaluate the merit of completing a more detailed rating exercise for each recommendation. These assignments had been compiled by Cynthia prior to the meeting and the results distributed for review and discussion.

Cynthia asked for comments from meeting participants on the ranking/rating exercise. Comments included the following:

- The ranking has to be based on some assumptions. You may assume that a recommendation is not likely to be funded, and rank it lower even though it is a high priority to you.
- In light of the budget discussion and decisions today, members should re-rank recommendations, and specify their top 5 priority recommendations across categories.
- Have discussions of the categories so individuals can speak up for their project. It is useful to see how I was thinking compared to others.
- Recommended that they stay away from ranking in the end; categories of high, medium, and low might be as far as they want to go.
- Some of the land use recommendations seemed to be pieces of the same project. It would be easier to rank them if these pieces were combined. Mike Hermanson agreed to provide his consolidated groupings as these recommendations pertained to Spokane County.
- Some of the recommendations are policy items that don't really require funding to implement. Does it make sense to separate these out so they can be considered separately? The participants decided not to separate them out, but rather just footnote them as appropriate. They acknowledged that these items still take resources, even if it's just staff time.
- (On the test case detailed rating) It is easy to get lost in the small things. This would not be worth doing.

## Next Steps

1. Cynthia will send out the ranking homework sheets again, with the consolidated groupings for the land use recommendations. She will also send a form for members to specify their top 5 priority recommendations.
2. Prior to the January 27 Planning Unit meeting, Cynthia will compile the ranking results and distribute to the Planning Unit.
3. At the January meeting, the group will review each category, and members will have the opportunity to advocate for their priorities. Groupings will be established for each technical issue category – high, medium, low

Cynthia commented that at the previous meeting Spokane County had requested a prioritization scheme that

resulted in a clear 1 through 57 ranking. Since the steps outlined above will not provide that, is that agreeable? Mike Hermanson said it was.

## **Governance Subcommittee Meeting**

The governance subcommittee met today prior to the Planning Unit meeting. They discussed several options, including the Watershed Management Partnership model used by WRIA 59 and consolidating some of the WRAs together for more efficient administration.

There was support for convening again after July 1, 2010 for those interested in continuing to work together on watershed issues. Separate from the funds discussed earlier, there is still \$15,000 in Planning Unit support grants that should be available starting July 1. This money could be used to potentially develop a path forward for the Planning Unit.

## **Public Comment**

Charlie Kessler announced the Linda Kiefer has accepted a position with Avista Utilities. She will no longer be the WRIA 59 watershed lead.

## **Administration and General Schedule Announcements**

The next Planning Unit meeting will be held at this location on January 27, 2010, from 9:00 am to noon.

The Water Demand Forecast project will have an advisory committee. The first meeting will be in January.  
*Note: this meeting has been subsequently scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2010, from 10:00 am to noon at the Spokane County Public Works Building.*

## **Adjourn**

Cynthia adjourned the meeting at 1:05 p.m.