

Meeting Summary
WRIA 54 - Lower Spokane River Watershed
March 1, 2011

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
Rob Lindsay, Spokane County
Bill Rickard, City of Spokane Water Department
Rusty Post, Department of Ecology
Charlie Kessler, Stevens County Conservation District
Bart Haggin, Lands Council
Lloyd Brewer, City of Spokane
Linda Kiefer, Avista
Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe
Craig Volosing, Landowner and Palisades Neighborhood
Lance Peterson, City of Airway Heights
Mike Peterson, Lands Council

CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Rusty Post opened the meeting at 10:00 am. Participants introduced themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Crossley provided an update on the work Avista is doing to increase the dissolved oxygen level at the outlet of Long Lake Dam. They are introducing air as the water moves through the turbines. Results to date show an increased dissolved oxygen level. They are also evaluating other measures to decrease total dissolved gas (TDG) such as modifying the spillway.

Charlie Kessler provided an update on the Chamokane Creek Watershed Council and Water Quality project. Since the last WRIA 54 meeting they have met to discuss how to use the cost share funds for water quality improvement projects. Their next meeting is on March 17, 2011.

Rob Lindsay provided information regarding the Washington State University communications students that will be interviewing local water professionals as part of a “perception modeling” project.

REGIONAL WATERSHED MEETING REPORT & DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Rusty Post asked the group for thoughts on the regional watershed meeting held on January 26, 2011 at the Spokane Conservation District office. Rob Lindsay offered that he thought this meeting was useful and others would be worthwhile if there are regional issues to discuss that are relevant. Craig Volosing also offered support for meetings that address regional issues.

The group discussed how land use/water availability issues could be addressed at a regional level. The group also discussed and recognized the challenges to addressing these issues absent a “crisis”.

Mike Hermanson asked the participants that are not within Spokane County, such as the Stevens County Conservation District and the Spokane Tribe, if this type of meeting was useful for them. They said it was

useful to have an update on projects that are going on within other watersheds that impact the Spokane River. Charlie Kessler also expressed support for regional meetings as long as the agenda has relevant regional issues to discuss.

PHASE IV GRANT PROJECT UPDATES

West Plains Hydrogeologic Database

Mike Hermanson provided an update on this project. He has been working with Linda McCollum and Mike Hamilton on this project. All the necessary contracting was in place by mid January. To date the database format has been developed and 350 water well reports have been entered into the database. The project schedule has been changed from completing 1,000 wells by March 31st to 500-600 wells by March 31st and the balance by June 1st.

Bradford Storage Project

Charlie Kessler provided an update on this project. The Conservation District is in the process of hiring an engineering firm that will do the work.

Chamokane Watershed Council By-Laws

Charlie Kessler provided an update on this project. The council is currently determining who should lead the process to develop the by-laws; a third party that is not part of the council or someone that is involved in council. They plan to hire the person selected as a temporary employee of the District to complete the work

Spokane River Forum Conference Support

Spokane County is working with Spokane River Forum staff to determine the best way to provide support, such as contributing to the facility rental, or printing of conference materials, etc.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Rusty Post provided an update on the “Water Smart Washington” legislation. It is currently undergoing some changes and he is unsure of the outcome at this point. The group discussed the proposed Water Commission legislation. The group discussed sending a letter of support for the Watershed Planning element of the Water Smart Washington Legislation. It was discussed that sending a letter at this point may not be beneficial and we should wait and evaluate sending a letter if the bill moves further in the process.

Rusty Post asked the group if they are interested in changing the rankings of the supplemental watershed implementation grant proposals submitted to Ecology in December 2010. The group was comfortable with the rankings that were sent and did not want to revisit the issue. There was a discussion of the role the local rankings have in Ecology’s decision making process. The group expressed that it is important to express local priorities to Ecology.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There was a discussion of how the group would like to allocate Phase IV year III funds if they are available. Spokane County reported that grant administration costs depend on the level of support the County provides for meetings. Approximately \$8,000 is needed for grant administration such as payment requests, quarterly reports, tracking matching funds, etc. The remaining funds would depend on the level of meeting support. An estimate of \$15,000 for grant administration and project management is a good start. Rusty Post suggested continuation of some of the ongoing projects for future funding. It was suggested that it would be appropriate to wait until the funding situation is better known to discuss potential projects and priorities.

ADMINISTRATION & GENERAL SCHEDULE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next WRIA 54 meeting will be on April 20, 2011 from 10-12 at the Airway Heights Water Reclamation Facility with a tour of the facility prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURN

Rusty Post adjourned the meeting shortly after 12:00 pm.