

**Walla Walla Watershed
Planning Unit
Meeting Notes**

Date: January 27, 2003

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: WSDOT Building, 1210 G. Street, Walla Walla

Attendees

Betty Walker, Bob Carson, Bob Hutchens, Dave Mastin, Dayle Rainwater, Dick Ducharme, Don Howard, Janet Howard, Gene Warren, Hal Thomas, Judith Johnson (phone), Kirk Klicker, Randy Halley, Roland Schirman, Ron Jackson, Steve Martin, Steve Washam, Terry Bruegman, Cathy LaRoque, Mimi Wainwright, Kevin Miedema, Bob Martin, Tom Page.

Housekeeping Items

- ✓ Introductions and sign attendance sheet.
- ✓ Reviewed 10/14/02 Meeting Notes and approved meeting notes
- ✓ Announced that Phase I Final Assessment document is now posted on Watershed Website <http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/Departments/planning/Watershed/index.htm> and available on CD-Rom. Requests for a printed version can be directed to Cathy LaRoque.
- ✓ Eric Johnson, Planning Unit Co-Chair from Columbia County, has submitted a letter asking to resign from his Co-Chair position. The Planning Unit accepted Eric's resignation and Gene Warren would serve as a conduit to determine a new Columbia County Co-Chair.
- ✓ Chair of the Outreach Subcommittee, Judith Johnson, was calling-in to the meeting with information on the Outreach Subcommittee's Plan under development. The Outreach Plan will be comprehensive, covering a number of strategies to provide education and outreach. Mimi Wainwright from DOE noted that we could likely amend our DOE grant agreement to spend the \$15k identified as Outreach funding past the current June 30, 2003 end-date. The Outreach Subcommittee will complete the final draft Outreach Plan and it was agreed that the Planning Unit delegates authority to the Steering Committee to approve the Plan and proceed with funding the Outreach approach.

Watershed Plan Development Approach

- Ben Floyd from EES presented information in the scope of work handout "Develop Walla Walla Watershed Plan" describing the approach to be used in developing the Phase III watershed plan. In general, this approach will shift to a place-based management focus using five proposed management areas. This will utilize the established planning objectives and create action plans for each management area, including outreach and a written plan. The watershed map showing five management areas was presented with a schedule of tasks (note: add February 19th subcommittee meetings to schedule).

- A question was raised: how does the subcommittee work relate to and integrate with the management areas approach? Ben gave the example of the City of Walla Walla as a management area; flows will be basin-wide across areas, but the local description and issues will be more detailed within each management area. It was suggested that for Water Quality, would we be back to the drawing board to apply each topic (Quality, Flow, Habitat) to a management area? Ben said in the Yakima basin they did a topic-based approach; but this management area approach proposed for the Walla Walla will be more integrated, applying all topics in each area and rolling into the basin-wide plan. The integration of topics can be seen if we do a pilot management area first and see how it flows through all committees. It was noted that the plan will likely all come down to this type of approach anyway – some areas will demand more detailed focus and unique issues (such as flood control). Ben replied that managing competing interests is the challenge, to avoid unintended consequences. Since we must manage resources and interests by area, we’ll need to work with a flexible timeline and consider out-of-basin effects basin-wide. Other issues such as flow enhancement strategies will also likely be basin-wide.
- The map was discussed, with Ben noting that he originally identified seven management areas. The discussion was whether we want to divide the map based on fish functions or land use characteristics. Roland Schirman suggested we use the phrase Implementation Areas instead of management areas and the change was accepted. After some discussion about similarities in upper river areas, it was determined that we would identify six Implementation Areas and begin with a pilot on the Mill Creak Area. It was also suggested that on page ten of the handout under the heading “Get funding for and implement early actions during plan development” an additional bullet should be added to read “No till or direct seeding and/or farm management best management practices.” Ben noted that the additional storage assessment could be useful in looking at shallow aquifer recharge as an early action plan.
- This Implementation Area approach will rely on Planning Members in each area to work with local people (lead/host workshops, invite neighbors, raise prominence). Expanded participation will be part of this approach, incorporating feedback to make the plan better. It was noted that people want to participate in the decision-making process, not just be educated; also suggested that we need to don’t pick a fight by titling plans as a “working document” as opposed to portraying it as a done-deal. Ben said that after local workshops, the Planning Unit will come together and evaluate/incorporate suggestions.
- It was suggested that for the workshops, we need to have identified flow targets so we can present it to the local people in specific terms. Discussion was that perhaps we need to have all area plans drafted before we do pilot outreach in Mill Creek; participants noted that a pilot must work the first time when it’s being presented to citizens, since we don’t often get a second-chance when it comes to presenting this type of information successfully. Ben replied that a target flow is just a junior water right; Mimi Wainwright from DOE noted that since we accepted the Instream Flow assessment grant, we must recommend and instream flow by rule. Discussion was that even if we hadn’t accepted the grant, we’d be subject to DOE setting instream flow by rule.

- Additional discussion was that work by WA and OR Water Trust is one of the tools to be considered when looking at flow issues. The flow committee will be working with a dual purpose – to set targets and develop action plans to meet the target. The dual focus is embodied in the Quantity and Flow subcommittee, with Planning Unit representation across the board – City, Agriculture, Environmental, Tribal – so all have a say in it to balance needs. The individual irrigators and irrigation districts will be the focus on the CIDMP project to integrate with this effort.
- The draft plan is scheduled for completion in January 2004, with preparation of the final draft plan mid-2004.
- Suggestions made by Planning Unit members: put gauge locations on the Implementation Area map; also put a link on the County Watershed Website that directs users to the gauge location website.
- The Planning Unit recommends that the County authorize EES to proceed with the scope of work with minor changes as discussed.

Information Updates

- The Level 2 assessment updates for Instream Flow, Water Quality, and Multi-Purpose Storage will be presented at the February 19th subcommittee meetings in Dayton.
- EES and the County are working on a matrix to depict integration of the various planning efforts.
- The HCP Flow subcommittee will meet on January 30th at the Milton Freewater Community Center at 1pm. We will be starting to develop a risk profile and compliance action plans for HCP signers.
- The Walla Walla Subbasin Planning Workplan was approved by the Northwest Power Planning Council and contracting will be underway. The Subbasin Plan will be overseen by the lead entity Planning Unit on the Washington side, in coordination with Oregon's lead entity The Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council. We've jointly drafted Operating Principles for this bi-state project and Planning Unit members have until February 6th to review and comment the final draft Principles (distributed to group) before we move forward with the organization and Council contracting; comments are to be directed to Cathy LaRoque. The Subbasin Plan will use the existing Planning Unit framework with subcommittees to meet all planning process objectives.

Upcoming meetings

- ✓ February 19, 2003 Subcommittee meetings in Dayton: Water Quality at 6pm and Flow/Quantity at 7:30pm
- ✓ March 24, 2003 Planning Unit meeting in Dayton at 7pm