

Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit
Meeting Notes

Date: June 28, 2004

Time: 7:00 – 9:30 p.m.

Location: Washington State Department of Transportation, 1210 G. Street, Walla Walla, WA

Attendees: Ben Floyd (EES), Betty Walker, Bob Carson, Bob Hutchens, Chad Fisher (WDOE), Dayle Rainwater, Dick Ducharme, Don Howard, Elena Escalante (WW County), Gene Warren, Hal Thomas (City of Walla Walla), Janet Howard, Kenneth Kuhn (WW County), Mark Wagoner, Russ Bergevin, Steve Martin (Snake River Salmon Recovery Board), Stuart Durfee (Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13), Terry Bruegman (Columbia Conservation District), Tome Page (Native Creek Society), Yancey Reser (Native Creek Society), Jaime Short (WDOE), Brian Farmer (WDOE), Kathy Bergevin.

Handouts: Agenda; May 4, 2004 Planning Unit meeting minutes, Draft outline WRIA32 Watershed Management Plan, Guide to Negotiated Rule Making, Introduction to the Rule-Making Process, draft letter to WDOE re: WRIA 32 Planning Unit to continue to develop Instream Flows in spite of lack of funding, draft Snake River Salmon Recovery Board pamphlet.

Summary of Action Items:

1. Planning Unit members are to review prior meeting draft notes (05/04/04) at the Watershed Planning website www.wallawallawatershed.org; comments or questions can be emailed to Elena Escalante at eescalante@co.walla-walla.wa.us. One suggested change was noted for the May 4, 2004 meeting minutes; clarify Action Items to denote to which plan each item is referring to. Action item #3 is in regards to setting instream flows for WRIA 32, Action items #4-6 are referring to the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan.
2. Agreed by consensus that the draft letter re: WRIA 32 Instream Flow setting continuation will be sent to Wendy Bolender, WDOE. The changes in language will be incorporated to include the reasoning behind continuing to develop instream flows. A copy of the letter will also be sent to Brian Farmer, WDOE.
- 3.

Housekeeping:

- 14 Planning Unit voting members were in attendance. The sign-in sheet was passed around and introductions were made. May 4, 2004 Planning Unit meeting minutes were reviewed. It was suggested that under the Summary of Action Items, more clarification be provided as to which planning process each action item is referring to. Clarification will be made and the notes will be posted on the Walla Walla County Watershed Planning website.

Watershed Plan Development – Next Steps:

Plan Outline:

- Ben Floyd (EES) reviewed the draft outline for WRIA 32 Watershed Management Plan.
Q: Where will the water balance information be located? A: Under Section I: Chapter 3, “Current Conditions”. The information will be summarized to reduce the number of pages, but will include key information. The next steps will be to develop a draft document for review. The Planning Unit will be asked to review the draft Watershed Plan and provide comments. Once comments are finalized, a final review will occur. The Watershed Plan is due either in June, 2005 or December, 2005 depending on DOE’s interpretation of their schedule; at this time, the goal is to submit the Watershed Plan to the corresponding commissioners by April, 2005.
- Discussion occurred regarding including groundwater monitoring as part of the management strategy for the Watershed Plan. There is concern that water right impairments can be difficult to prove, and because the law does not distinguish between shallow and deep wells, groundwater should be monitored along with surface water. Ben Floyd took note of these suggestions. Hal Thomas commented that the City of Walla Walla may be completing a groundwater plan through the Department of Ecology for \$350,000.
- Q: Have you (EES) thought about what is going to happen once Watershed Planning is complete and it is time for implementation? Who will lead the implementation process? A: Ben Floyd commented that the Planning Unit is to make a recommendation on who will lead the implementation. Walla Walla County may be one option, the Salmon Recovery Board may be another, or perhaps a different group will be formed similar to the Watershed Councils in Oregon.

Plan Schedule:

- Ben Floyd reviewed the Watershed Planning schedule for the 2004-2005. Comments on the schedule can be made to Ben Floyd, with copies sent to Cathy LaRoque and Elena Escalante.

Information Updates:

Instream Flow Setting Process:

- Dick Ducharme described the Instream Flow setting process that the Instream Flow/Water Quantity subcommittee is undertaking. The Washington State Department of Ecology has not been able to identify additional funds to assist the Instream Flow/Water Quantity subcommittee. At the recent Instream Flow/Water Quantity Subcommittee meeting on May 26, 2004, Ecology suggested that they (Ecology) would proceed to develop instream flows based on what the Planning Unit had developed to-date. Dick noted that at the recent Steering Committee on June 22, 2004 the Steering Committee unanimously recommended that the Planning Unit continue working to develop instream flows despite lack of funding to avoid having WDOE develop instream flows without the Planning Unit's support. The Planning Unit agreed to this approach and EES will prepare a list of issues to address. The Planning Unit approved the draft letter addressed to Wendy Bolender (WDOE) with the following changes: the language in the first sentence of the second paragraph should read "It is the desire of the WRIA 32 Planning Unit to **continue working to** develop balanced, local solutions to water issues affecting people and fish in the Walla Walla Watershed." It was noted that Brian Farmer, WDOE should also receive a copy of the letter. Brian Farmer suggested that more background and reasoning be included in the letter. Language will be included to provide more background information on the Planning Unit's decision to continue developing instream flow recommendations.

The Instream Flow/Water Quantity Subcommittee will meet a few more times to finalize the outline for a recommendation.

- Brian Farmer commented that Ecology will be interviewing for Victoria Leuba's position shortly. Ecology is looking to potentially hire two Watershed Leads. The position(s) should be filled by August, 2004.
- Steve Martin passed out a draft informational pamphlet on the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board. Steve commented that two of five chapters for the Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan have been completed. Data from the WRIA Watershed Plans and Subbasin Plans will be integrated into the Salmon Recovery Plan. Steve commented that it is the vision of the 21 members of the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board to become the implementation overseer for the different watershed plans under development. This fall, the Salmon Recovery Board will pursue legislation and hope to resolve issues between the Tribes and the Federal Government. Steve noted that several excellent projects from Walla Walla County were submitted to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for project funding.
- Elena Escalante, (WW County), noted that the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan was submitted to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council on May 28, 2004. The Subbasin Plan will be open to public comment until August 12, 2004. Please contact her for information on submitting comments on the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan or if you would like to receive a C.D. version of the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan.
- Russ Bergevin, local landowner and Planning Unit voting member, presented a proposal to create two Reservoirs; one at Blue Creek where it converges with Mill Creek and one on Dry Creek. The water impounded at the diversion dam on Blue Creek at Mill Creek could be diverted to Dry Creek by gravity for irrigation purposes. Russ stated the impounded water would provide; more water for irrigation, would increase the tax base, provide year-round employment, ensure that the flood protection in place remains, hydroelectric power, silt impoundment, and would be a source of recreation use. In addition, the reservoir water could be traded for surface water rights along the Walla Walla River. Russ showed slides of his property and the improvements he has made along the river banks. Russ has also successfully reared steelhead in an acclimation pond he created. After two years more than 400 fish returned to spawn.

Other Items/Next Steps:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm. The next Planning Unit meeting will be held on September 27, 2004 at 7pm in Dayton.