

Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit
Meeting Notes

Date: November 29, 2004

Time 7:30 – 9:00PM

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

Attendees: Ben Floyd (HDR/EES), Beth Thiel (Blue Mountain Land Trust), Dayle Rainwater, Dick Ducharme, Don Howard, Gene Warren, Hal Thomas (City of Walla Walla, Public Works), Judith Johnson (Kooskooskie Commons), Mark Wagoner, Cathy LaRoque (Walla Walla County), Elena Escalante (Walla Walla County), Randy Halley (City of Waitsburg), Stuart Durfee (Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13), Tom Page (Native Creek Society), Mimi Wainwright (Ecology), Jean Dolling, Greg Farrens (Walla Walla Community College), and Jack Myrick.

Handouts: Agenda; September 27, 2004 Planning Unit meeting minutes, November 16, 2004 Planning Unit meeting minutes.

Summary of Action Items:

1. Ben Floyd will send Elena Escalante Draft Exhibit 1 map (to be posted online).
2. Elena Escalante to burn CD's of Toxics TMDL Report for Stuart Durfee.
3. Elena Escalante to acquire PowerPoint Presentation from Dave Mastin.

Housekeeping:

- The sign-in sheet was passed around.
- Jack Myrick and Greg Farrens (WWCC) were added to the November 16, 2004 attendees list.
- The November 16, 2004 and the September 27, 2004 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved by members present.
- Ben Floyd (HDR/EES) reviewed the Instream Flow subcommittee recommendation (from meeting held earlier on November 29th), noting that the subcommittee came up with recommendations at different locations (i.e. Bowles Bridge). It was commented that setting an Instream Flow has an affect on the streams above the management point. Ben also said the subcommittee agreed up closures for the mainstem and tributaries (April 1 – December 15); target values for management point (MP) recommendations; recommendations for water budget development and more research into ground/surface water interaction in rural areas.
- Ben Floyd noted that the Water Quality Subcommittee Meeting will be held on December 2, 2004. Information to be discussed includes DOE's TMDL for toxics and other information that may be put into the Watershed Plan. Ben noted that TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) process has fallen behind so that it may not be completely ready in time for inclusion in our Watershed Plan.

Watershed Plan Implementation Framework Review:

Dave Mastin and Ben Floyd reviewed the Watershed Plan framework and how the sections on Strategies and Implementation will fit in the plan. It was noted that DOE Phase IV funding for watershed Planning is committed to provide \$400,000 of implementation funding over the five years following plan adoption (\$100k for the first three years to refine the implementation framework and for projects, with \$50k provided in each of the fourth and fifth years after plan adoption). For DOE to provide the implementation funding, the Planning Unit must remain intact and provide the oversight and input on use of the DOE funds.

Question: For the instream flow issues that were not able to be resolved through the planning effort, could that be part of the implementation? Answer: Yes, issues for instream flow (rural development and other management points) would be valid to address as part of the implementation strategy.

Dave Mastin presented a PowerPoint presentation describing the draft implementation framework and sought input from the Planning Unit. Dave's presentation covered the following:

First Principle:

- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Get existing wheels pointing in the same direction

Second Principle:

- Enhance implementation funding

Third Principle:

- Establish long-term commitment

(*Need for institutionalization – based upon funding)

Lead Coordinator Roles & Responsibilities:

- Oversee implementation and monitoring.
- Coordinate efforts to address specific implementation issues, difficulties, and problems.
- Lead governmental coordination and communications.
- Provide administrative, technical, and outreach education support.
- Designate Ad Hoc Work Groups as necessary
- Prepare on five- and ten-year priority project schedule.
- Target funding sources.
- Assist in effort to gain land-owner assurances from regulatory agencies.
- Lead adaptive management process.

Bi-State Workgroup Roles & Responsibilities:

- Annual plan review.
- Identify bi-state issues and support specific strategies.
- Support intergovernmental coordination and communications.
- Support efforts to obtain funding for watershed efforts.

Lead Coordinator Work Group Roles & Responsibilities:

- Assist lead coordinator in plan implementation.
 - On-going coordination of effort.
 - Identifying and addressing specific implementation issues, difficulties, and problems.
 - Developing project priority lists.
 - Developing adaptive management strategies.

Ad Hoc Technical Work Group Roles & Responsibilities:

- Recommend additional or reduction of monitoring efforts for specific data types, as necessary.
- Recommend revisions to data collection protocols, as necessary
- Recommend revisions to the location, durations, and frequency of each type of data measurement, as necessary.

Storage Work Group Roles and Responsibilities:

- Refine potential storage locations.
- Refine on-going aquifer recharge opportunities and locations.
- Identify new opportunities.

Rural Ag. Land Work Group Roles and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate project implementation efforts within each management area.
- Assist project implementers, as necessary.
- Identify unforeseen, imminent take threats.

Land Use Development Work Group Roles & Responsibilities:

- Review and recommend revisions, as needed, to local ordinances and regulations
 - Septic systems installation and maintenance.
 - Storm water retention.
 - Set back requirements.
- Review and recommend revisions to ESA (Endangered Species Act) compliant road maintenance programs

Habitat Restoration (Mitigation): We need to continue working together and this slide solidifies the need of a unified basin effort. Question: What do you mean by mitigation? Answer: Mitigation is an ESA term used in conjunction with minimization. If someone potentially “takes” an ESA listed species, it must be mitigated for.

Discussion ensued about other out of stream uses, including municipal water supply and the streams in the cities. Question: What about where the Yellowhawk goes through town? Is something being done to address illegal water use? Answer: DOE watermaster Bill Neve oversees water use and enforcement.

Ben talked about the HCP Land Use Subcommittee work, including recent reviews of local land use regulations, critical areas ordinances and shoreline management plans across the entire basin. Comment: There is a major issue of conserving water within the city system and Dave noted that the municipal area will be added to the framework. Ben also suggested that surface water/groundwater management strategy will be included.

Mimi Wainwright (DOE) discussed how Ecology would distribute the implementation funds for the Planning Units (WRIA 32) under Phase IV of watershed planning. Question: The Walla Walla subbasin plan and the WRIA32 watershed plan should be the same. How definitive will the plans be so that you can implement it? If you take elements out of the strategies, then you can prioritize and look for money to implement prioritization. Ben said that in other watersheds such as the Yakima, they didn’t have working entities similar to like what our region has in place (Conservation Districts, Tribes, RFEES, non-profits all doing project work); so we’ve already established some avenues for coordination to occur around specific projects, but we’ll need to build on that to make sure the plan is efficiently implemented. Comment: I don’t want to see all the money going to administration.

Dave Mastin noted that the implementation framework described in the powerpoint presentation is to capture coordination of existing entities; we’re not using this framework to identify the project list far ahead of time. It’s not the implementation of existing planning, but rather creating a framework for the prioritization of strategies.

Question: Does this proposed framework fit into other agencies where priorities can combine/coordinate?

Comment: Another priority is where funding comes from. Cathy LaRoque replied that we could implement this plan with one of two driving forces leading the way:

1. The Planning Unit can continue to exist so that they can guide work on implementation.
2. The PU can cease and the agencies will do work on implementation.

The idea is to continue coordinating with other planning processes and agencies, but there are benefits to coordination stemming from the stakeholder group (Planning Unit). An example was given that the Middle Touchet has several issues and projects identified to fix them; but we can expand upon projects to get a bigger bang for the buck; i.e. if it’s just barrier removal, turn it into a habitat enhancement project. Selling is the key for public buy-in.

Ben Floyd summarized the comments received at this meeting to suggest that the Planning Unit should continue as the advisory committee. Mimi said that the Planning Unit is only the entity able to make decisions on where the DOE funding goes.

A question was asked, where does the Walla Walla Watershed Alliance fit in? Dick Ducharme is an Alliance board member and he replied that the Alliance has a role to be a funding source; they get the money. Projects that the Alliance wants to fund are looked at for consistency with the Watershed Plan. They can bring funds that can implement the plan, with the Alliance deciding how the money is spent. It was noted that coordination is needed and there needs to be oversight on how the money is spent; it was suggested that the Planning Unit subcommittees are qualified to review the implementation of the projects.

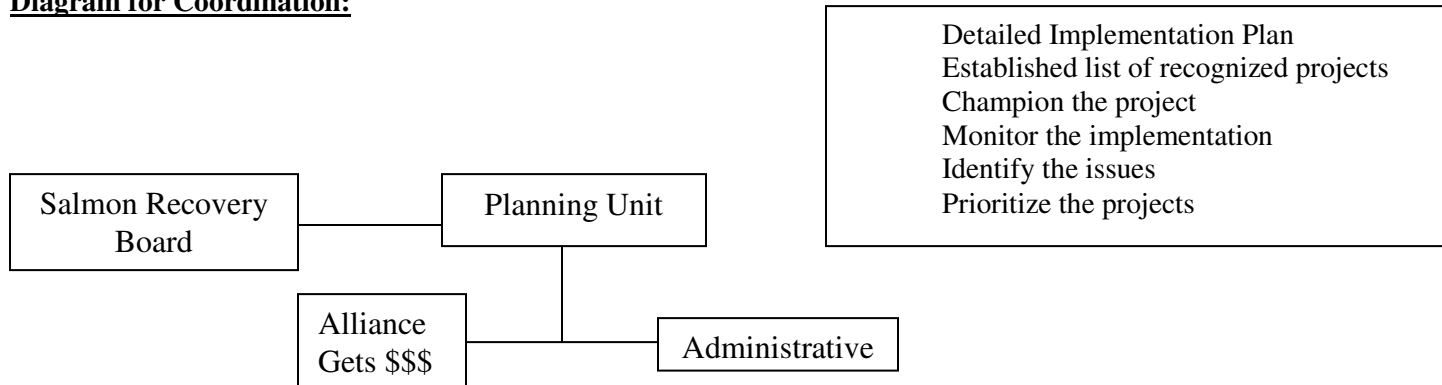
The basin’s Conservation Districts are leading the implementation effort for landowners. A comment was made that the Conservation Districts will continue with the projects, but not necessarily with the Planning Unit’s vision; so the Planning Unit should decide how to implement the plan. Each entity (Conservation District or Planning Unit) may prioritize (the projects) differently.

It was suggested that the Planning Unit wants to develop the project implementation list, with the subcommittees doing the reviewing and advising. The Planning Unit won’t have much authority unless the projects are prioritized; the list of prioritization would be for competitive funding.

Mimi Wainwright said that Phase IV implementation funding for watershed planning requires a 10% match. It's \$100,000 for each of the first three years and \$50,000 for years four and five for a total of \$400,000. In order to qualify for implementation funding for years two through five, the Planning Unit must complete an approved Detailed Implementation Plan in Year one.

Comment: There is a need for a coordinator and someone responsible for maintenance. Question: How is this going to be coordinated? Hal Thomas replied that the purpose behind the Planning Unit was to be overseer and to pull people together to prioritize projects for efficient use of restoration funding. Comment: The Planning Unit represents a large group of people that gives them a strong voice and power; identifying them publicly. They prioritize, publicize and they're a watchdog; if a list was developed then the implementing entities would have a better chance at getting funding if there was a coordinated effort. Ben Floyd diagramed the proposed approach for coordination to collect feedback from the group:

Diagram for Coordination:



Comment: Salmon recovery Board can provide the scientific data. Hal Thomas noted that by law we have to prioritize the projects with a list of on-going projects and the phase(s). Ben Floyd said that based on today's discussion, he will provide the draft implementation plan framework and it will be in a chapter for review in the Watershed Plan. Steve Martin (Snake River Salmon Recovery Board) also commented that a \$700,000 project plan would be funded through SRFB (Salmon Recovery Funding Board).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.