

**Walla Walla Watershed
Planning Unit Workshop
Meeting Notes**

Date: October 14, 2002

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Columbia County Fairgrounds Youth Building in Dayton

Housekeeping Items

- ✓ Reviewed 9/30 Meeting Notes and approved meeting notes following more detailed review and discussion of Watershed Plan Objectives.

Watershed Plan Objectives

Reviewed Planning Process

- EES presented a slide show and summary of the Level 1 assessment report findings and also offered a CD of the assessment report (also available online at <http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/Watershed/index.htm>).

Reviewed and Discussed Planning Objectives

- Presented hand-out of Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit Ground Rules and discussed need to identify key issues, finalize planning objectives and assign objectives to subcommittees.
- Presented additional clarification on Watershed Plan Expectations from 9/30 meeting notes, including:
 - Follow-up on “Fair & equitable process for distributing water in the watershed” was tabled since Janet Howard was not at the meeting to clarify.
 - “Benefits for efficiencies” was expanded to include credit for past efficiencies plus other good efforts, maybe also tax breaks and other incentives for the future.
 - “Make water transfers easier” includes use of water conservancy boards.
 - “Elucidate the connections between ground water and surface water flows including definition of areas for and techniques to assure adequate recharge of both shallow and deep basalt aquifers in the Walla Walla Basin” – comment made that we need to know the basin and hydrology; then know how to recharge the aquifer.
 - “Assure that proposed water quality studies are reasonable & achievable” – temperature standards and other new standards were somewhat subjective, so the Planning Unit Quality subcommittee wrote a letter to DOE asking to change from studies to standards.
 - “Determine ET and how much can be captured by efficiencies, and find out where unaccounted for water in the water balance is going (237,215 AF per year)” – the

- measure of inaccuracy in the water balance is large, but to lower that figure is costly and probably not worth the effort although it would be valid to get ET.
- “Make instream flow recommendations to Ecology for those 11 rivers and streams identified by Kuttel in the Assessment as having inadequate flow for salmonids (Patit, Robinson Fork, S. Fork Touchet, Whiskey, Coppei, Dry, Mill Creek, Yellowhawk, Stone, Cottonwood and Walla Walla). These recommendations should be based on existing studies identified in Section 4 of the Assessment and additional scientifically acceptable studies with a goal of adequate flows for steelhead and bull trout recovery.” It’s suggested that we provide a statement that is achievable, either a recommendation or why a recommendation isn’t being made.
 - “Plan to revegetate burns and unused ground” – reference made to recent work at Wallula, where native grasses were placed in ditches and broadleaf plants elsewhere for run-off and moisture absorption purposes.
 - “Flow for ag” - it was expected that he meant solutions must respect water use for agriculture.
- Were any expectations missed? After review of listed objectives and expectations, discussion included additional items to add to the list:
 1. Need to consider flood management, with reference to the multiple problems experienced by the basin from the 1996 flood.
 2. Need to coordinate planning efforts (objectives and funding).
 3. Need to include CTUIR and WDFW in instream flow process.
 4. Datagap is that we need to know landowners responsibility for stream to remain in corridor, to create surety for landowners.

SEPA Scoping Comments

SEPA scoping comments were requested and the following comment was provided:

Dee Caputo, Office of Community Development, commented that her interest was in the local comprehensive plan and critical are ordinances were related and integrated into the ongoing watershed planning efforts for Columbia and Walla Walla counties.

Gary James, CTUIR, commented that the Northwest Power Planning Council Subbasin Summary was completed in 2001 and includes twelve strategies (pages 120-125) to be considered for our watershed recovery plan.

Watershed Plan Objectives - continued

Reviewed handout on Recommended Planning Objectives; clarified objectives and comments made included:

CROSS-CUTTING

- Several votes in 9/30 meeting were attributed to “Protect existing water rights and private property rights.”

- Proposed to eliminate the use of “voluntary” in the objective “Emphasize **voluntary** incentive-based management solutions.”
- Proposed to add a priority for funding an early action plan to identify the Adult to Smolt ratio. Glen Mendel could give an estimate of how much that will cost.
- Suggested increased efforts to seek buy-in and cooperation from local, state, and federal regulatory agencies – including CTUIR.

PLANNING ELEMENT-SPECIFIC

- “Identify minimum and target flows and manage stream flows to enhance habitat conditions for salmonids (steelhead and bull trout).” Discussion on whether to add spring chinook as a salmonid; suggestion is to substitute “with emphasis on steelhead and bull trout” instead of listing only the two salmonids steelhead and bull trout, so as not to preclude spring chinook. Additional discussion on comparing instream minimum flows to target flows, and use of adaptive management for including targets for Chinook, seasonal flows, and other variations.
 - Water for human uses – reference to the practice to bring ASR surface water to groundwater. Suggested need for water conservancy board to participate in water rights discussions within the planning unit.
 - Proposed a change in terminology to add “Identify” instead of “Implement” strategies such as BMPS, CRP, No-Till, etc in the objective “**Identify Implement** water conservation and efficiency strategies.”
- There was no objection to taking this list as a starting point.
 - Next steps: convene Steering Committee meeting to assign goals to subcommittees.
 - Presented hand-out of Draft Outline for the Watershed Management Plan; will have a draft statement of work to discuss in early Jan. 2003.
 - Upcoming meetings:
 - ✓ November 20, 2002: Quality subcommittee at 5:30pm, Walla Walla County Planning Conference Room
 - ✓ November 20, 2002: Quantity/Flow subcommittee at 7:00pm, Walla Walla County Planning Conference Room
 - ✓ Planning Unit Meeting either in December 2002 or January 2003