

DRAFT

WRIA 54 Water Management Work Group Meeting

01/11/2008

Attendees: Sara Hunt, Charlie Peterson, Bill Rickard (sitting in for Lloyd Brewer), David Luders, Craig Volosing, Mike Hermanson, Rob Lindsay, Mark Wachtel, Brian Crossley, Wes McCart, Stan Miller, Dick Price, Albert Tripp, Sarah Orrange. **Facilitated by:** Bryony Stasney.

GOALS

Group reviewed the goals for water management in WRIA 54 and agreed to the following:

- ❑ Balance the needs of instream and out of stream uses.
- ❑ **Strive for water availability** ~~Ensure that water will be available~~ in the future to protect quality of life, healthy economy, and a healthy environment.
- ❑ **Promote** ~~Ensure~~ sustainable use of water resources.
- ❑ Strive for adequate laws and regulations that are dictated by reality and that support sustainable management of water resources.

Wes McCart will reword the following goal and bring language to the next WMWG meeting for consideration by the group:

- ❑ Coordinate areas of growth and development with water availability.

WATER ALLOCATION – INFORMATION REVIEW

The group reviewed the following information:

- 5-page excerpt from Ecology's Eastern Regional presentation for GMAP (Dec, 2007).
- Maps and table of the 7 pending change applications in WRIA 54.
 - 6 change apps in the Airway Heights area.
 - 1 change app in the central portion of WRIA 54, south of the Spokane River.
- Maps and table of the 37 pending applications for new water rights in WRIA 54.
 - All but two apps for new water located south of the Spokane River.
 - The two apps for new water on the north side of the Spokane River are located close to the river in the Long Lake North subbasin.
- Maps showing increase in water wells from 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2007 (from Ecology's well log database).

WATER ALLOCATION – MATRIX REVIEW

Using the handout as a guide (WRIA 54 WMWG Water Allocation Issues / Solutions Matrix), the group discussed water allocation issues and potential strategies to address the issues. Bryony reminded the group that the role of the WMWG is to identify the water management concerns associated with water allocation and develop alternative solutions for later evaluation and confirmation by the Planning Unit. The results of the discussion are included in the WRIA 54 WMWG Water Allocation Issues / Solutions Matrix (updated 011608).

Issues

Group confirmed the water allocations issues as:

- There is uncertainty about the actual amount of water appropriated through water rights permits, certificates and claims as well as unquantified Federal reserved water rights. This restricts the ability to effectively manage water resources in WRIA 54.

- Groundwater and surface water is believed to be over allocated in localized areas. There is a need to coordinate with adjacent WRIAs (e.g., WRIAs 55&57, 34, 43 and 56) where applicable.
- Availability of new water rights is limited.
- The timeline for processing water rights is unreasonably long.
- The relinquishment rule is a disincentive for conservation.
- Estimated actual water use exceeds water rights appropriations in three sub-basins: Harker Canyon, Little Chamokane and Pitney.
- Increase in water demand is anticipated to be high in the West Plains and near the Spokane River downstream from the City of Spokane.

Discussion from the group included:

- Consider streamlined adjudication that involves stipulations (e.g., stipulation that domestic wells can only use 1,000 gpd). Stipulations have to be agreed to prior to the adjudication. Helps the process move quicker through the court since those who agree with the stipulations do not have to defend in court.
- Fairchild Airforce Base will provide additional information at the January 23 Planning Unit meeting (if information is available) and/or at the February 13 WMWG meeting on the status of Fairchild Airforce Base's water rights claims. The claim is currently listed as #6 in terms of priority date on the list of new water rights applications. Fairchild Airforce Base has been waiting now for 10 years for a response from Ecology. The group considered an early action item to recommend that superior court adjudicate Fairchild Airforce Base's water rights claims.
- Ecology's pre-adjudication work in WRIA 54 includes tasks that will result in a clean-up of the WRATs database, including:
 - Corrections of technical inaccuracies in the WRATs database, including incorrect place of use or point of withdrawal information.
 - Notations of duplicate claims in an additional database. However, duplicate claims can only be removed from WRATs through adjudication.
 - Notations on the likelihood that claims are being actively used and the nature of the use in an additional database.
- Public education on water rights is needed.
- Sara will research the assessment of water rights validity completed by WRIA 15?

Potential Solutions / Toolbox

Group identified alternative solutions as documented on the water allocation matrix (updated 011608).

Next meetings

The Water Management Work Group agreed to the following 2008 meeting dates:

- February 13, 8:30 – 11:30 am, Spokane County Public Works Building, Conf. Rm 4A.
 - Topic – Water use (including conservation, reclamation and reuse)
- March 21, 9 – noon, Spokane County Public Works Building, Conf. Rm 4A.
 - Topic – Water supply