

WEST BRANCH LITTLE SPOKANE RIVER WATERSHED COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

May 19, 2008

Riverside Fire Station, 3818 E. Deer Park – Milan Rd., Riverside, WA

FINAL

Bryony Stasney (facilitator) opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Attendees Present: Greg Sweeney (alternate for Bill Harmon, Mary Harmon, Mike Carney, Dean Fanara and Burt Covert), Darrell Johnson, Mary Sterling, Kathleen Werr, Jim Wood, Pat Wood, Luke Short (alternate for Jill Short and Max Smith), Tom Wimpy, Linda Cannon, Karen Averitt, Mike Lithgow, John Harkness, Richard Stafford, Bonnie Stafford, Anthony Newcomb, Pam Zarko, Sandra Roath (alternate for Howard Rowley, Bev Rowley and Tammy Kirk), Josh Roath (alternate for Dick Anderson and Lynne Anderson), Dolores Storms (alternate for Sally Storms), Dan Ross (SCCD), Andrew Huddleston (POCD), Debbie Kanyer (alternate for Mike Kanyer), Ron Schmidt (Sacheen Lake Sewer District), Jeff Lawlor (WDFW).

Introductions: Everyone introduced themselves. Bryony asked everyone to sign-in to the meeting and to check and edit the information on the sign-in sheet. Bryony introduced herself as the Committee's facilitator. Bryony's contact information is: Bryony Stasney, bstasney@golder.com, 208-676-9933 (office) and 208-755-1010 (cell).

Public Comment:

- John Harkness noted that Fire District 3 is not requiring fire permits this year.
- Karen Averitt informed the Committee that the Sacheen Betterment Assoc. Annual General Meeting is scheduled for June 14, 9 am at the Sacheen Fire Station.

April 28, 2008 Meeting Summary Review

The following corrections were discussed and agreed to by the Committee. The final meeting summary will be posted on the web site at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/projects/ASP/WestBranch.asp>.

- Page 6: Pam noted that an elevation of 8.3 at Sacheen Lake may not allow sufficient volume to allow space for spring melt. After discussion, the Committee agreed to maintain an interim elevation of 8.3 for the deceiver and leveler project.
- Page 7: Sheila Pearman (Sacheen Sewer District) confirmed with Bryony on the phone that the Sacheen Sewer District has record of 340 hours of paid time (at \$12 per hour) for beaver tube maintenance in 2007. These hours do not include volunteer hours. Volunteer hours are not recorded by the District.
- Page 7: Mary Sterling noted that Jim's last name is Hance and not Entz.

Presentation on Sacheen Lake sites for consideration for bank stabilization / restoration demonstration projects (Bryony Stasney, Golder Associates and Andrew Huddleston, Pend Oreille Conservation District)

Bryony reminded the Group that bank restoration demonstration sites are one of the priority projects for implementation with the 2008-2011 funding (administered by CTED). This funding must be applied to beaver mitigation projects. The Pend Oreille Conservation District may also have cost share available for native planting (as a component of a bank restoration strategy).

The sites to be considered were identified and listed at the April Committee meeting. Requests were made by Bryony to the Committee during the February and March meetings to be thinking about potential sites.

Jeff Lawlor confirmed that beavers tend to be self limiting in their numbers and distribution. Beavers are territorial and they drive their young away after about a year. There is a process in place to move beaver from one location to another. The process involves meeting specific criteria. Trapping or moving beavers may remove beaver from an area but beavers will move into habitat if there is an opening. For the reach of river below Sacheen Lake population studies have not been conducted so it is not possible to say if there are more beavers now than in the past. Beaver habitat exists in this reach and beavers have continued to be active in spite of attempts to remove the dams in the past. Management options that involve living with the beavers are worth trying.

Jeff Lawlor confirmed that the Harworth Fish Barrier Dam was constructed in about 1960. Washington State Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has survey records from Sacheen Lake to the Harworth Fish Barrier Dam. The elevation of the Fish Barrier dam does not influence Sacheen Lake elevations. Luke Short noted that aerial photos show that the river channel appears to be the same prior to and after the construction of the Harworth Fish Barrier Dam. This indicates that the dam has a localized pool. The fact that beavers were active in the area prior to and after installation of the dam suggests that beaver habitat existed prior to installation of the dam.

The Committee discussed and confirmed the ranking criteria for the potential bank restoration sites as:

- Are buildings threatened?
- Are large trees / native shrubs threatened?
- Opportunity to restore to native vegetative state?
- Landowners OK with using the project as a demonstration site?
- Is the site suitable for a demonstration site?
- Opportunity for water quality improvement (sediment & nutrients)?

A demonstration site would require the landowner to sign a contract with the Pend Oreille Conservation District to allow the Conservation District to bring people to view the site. The Conservation District staff would call the landowner in advance of any site visits. The landowner would be required to have some signage.

Access for the public to view (from the ground and the water) and a good potential for restoration are components for a site to be suitable for a demonstration site.

The water quality improvement criterion includes the presence of erodible soils, steep banks, lawn adjacent to the lake (that would be buffered with native vegetation as a component of the restoration).

All of these projects would require a substantial development permit from Pend Oreille County and a HPA from WDFW.

Bryony and Andrew provided a presentation on Sacheen Lake shoreline sites that they visited on May 12, 2008. A copy of the presentation will be posted on the web site at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wgmp/projects/ASP/WestBranch.asp>. The sites visited were:

- Jim and Pat Woods
- Denise and Jason Sargent
- Bill Storms / Jim Morris
- Pam Zarko
- Luke and Jill Short

Jim and Pat Woods

- Wall crumbling (built pre 1979 about 12 feet from water).
- Sand bench and wooden bulkhead removed (around 1980).
- Water higher since 2005 (water now about two feet high against the wall).
- No-wake rule for Sacheen will not be supported.
- OK with native plantings.

The remedy could include construction of a rock bench in front of the wall and native plantings between the wall and the bench that would tie into the neighbor's property to the north. To protect the trees, removing the rock wall and sloping the bank is not recommended. Mike Lithgow noted that Pend Oreille County will require that the bench be planted with native vegetation to provide a buffer between the lawn and the lake. Mike noted that the restoration would mean that this lake shore could no longer be used as a beach. Jim and Pat Woods concurred with this.

Denise and Jason Sargent

- House built 70 years ago. Bank sloughing about 10 - 15 feet from house
- Additional bank sloughing this year.
- Undulating wall along lake shore – was originally straight. Concrete pad in front of wall.
- Has talked to Jeff Lawlor and filled out a JARPA.
- Homeowners OK with use of concrete and native plantings.

The weight of the soil and maybe ice-push are pushing the wall towards the lake and causing the wall to undulate. A concrete pad / walkway exists at the base of the wall.

There is some sloughing of the slope where the concrete ends that may be exacerbated by high water. Mike noted that Pend Oreille County and Ecology would not approve adding additional concrete to stabilize the slope. Jeff Lawlor concurred with this and said that WDFW would not permit restoration that included the use of concrete along the shoreline. Jeff Lawlor noted that the restoration should include consulting with an engineer due to the proximity of the house to the eroding slope. Mike noted that Pend Oreille County would allow the wall to be rebuilt with a drain but may require a softer approach and plantings. Andrew noted that it would be preferable for both the eroding slope and wall to be addressed at the same time.

Bill Storms

- Uses sump pump to keep basement dry.
- Rocks placed along shoreline.
- OK with native plantings.

Jim Morris (Bill Storms' neighbor to the north)

- Bank erosion at south end of property (adjacent to Bill Storms' property).
- OK with native plantings.

Andrew noted that native plantings would be good along the Storms / Morris shoreline to further stabilize the bank and provide a buffer between the lake and lawn.

Pam Zarko

- Water level higher since 2001.
- Water occurs on property above Sacheen Lake level of 9.3 – 9.4 ft (Beyersdorf gage).
- 2 ft rock wall (now at water level, actively maintains).
- Would like passage to dock (boardwalk OK) and berm raise near house.
- OK with native plantings.

Andrew noted that there is a natural drainage that flows in an easterly direction across the property to the lake. The ground in front of the house has been raised in the past (prior to Pam's purchase of the house) with about 200 cubic yards of gravel. An option for restoration would include raising the ground near the house with fill and building a board walk over the wet ground to the dock. Both WDFW and Pend Oreille County would need to be involved in the restoration. Native water tolerant plants could be planted across the portions of the property that are wet in the spring. The front part of the property remains wet until about the end of June (and depending on the lake level).

Luke and Jill Short

- Community beach for 4 lots.
- Concern that beach is eroding. There is currently a log protecting the beach.
- Would like to maintain small section of beach access with plantings elsewhere (other than access).
- OK with native plantings

Luke noted that the beach is constructed of decomposed granite that was brought into the site by the developer. The decomposed granite is being washed away. Andrew noted that the proposal for this site is to revegetate along the shoreline and leave a small lake access area and beach.

Andrew noted that:

- The POCD has a program for revegetation with native plants and the cost to revegetate with native plants may be about \$2,000 per site.
- A general cost estimate for armoring along the Pend Oreille River shoreline is about \$10,000 per 100 feet.

In order of cost (from high to low) for the sites is likely: Sargent, Woods, Zarko, Storms / Morris, Short. Andrew confirmed that there is about \$74,600 in CTED funds. A portion of these funds could be used for bank restoration work if related to beaver mitigation.

Bryony asked that the Committee members rank the sites as homework and email or mail in the completed ranking sheets by end of the day Friday May 30.

Presentation on beaver dams below Sacheen Lake (Bryony Stasney, Golder Associates and Andrew Huddleston, Pend Oreille Conservation District)

Bryony and Andrew provided a presentation on the beaver dams visited on May 2, 2008. A copy of the presentation will be posted on the web site at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/projects/ASP/WestBranch.asp>.

- Tubes installed at Dams #1, #2 and #3
- Dams that impact Sacheen Lake level (current thinking)
 - No for Dam #1(the dam is open and not impounding water)
 - Yes for Dams #2 and #3
 - No for Grand Dam
 - No for Harworth Fish Barrier Dam
- Next Steps
 - Levelers and deceivers
 - Profiling and hydraulic modeling?

The following items were discussed:

- Dam #s 2 and 3 are within 40 feet of each other and the stream has a low gradient in the area of these dams. The tubes in Dam #s 2 and 3 are currently allowing significant flow through the dams.
- The water elevation difference (between upstream and downstream of the Dam #s 2 and 3) is currently about 6 inches. This will change to a higher elevation difference as the spring flows subside and if the tubes do not work to level water on either side. The elevation difference has been as high as 2.5 feet.
- The beaver have not been active yet this year.
- Dam #3 appears to have the most impact on water levels.

- The tubes at Dam #3 have resulted in erosion of the streambed to granite (i.e. have eroded out the streambed sediments immediately downstream of the tubes due to the water flow through the tubes).
- Beavers cache and store food for the winter months and use the water pool created by dams to protect their lodges. Beavers tend not to be active over the winter and early spring months. Beavers will build up their dams until the elevation of the pool is right to protect their lodge(s).
- Senator Morton has provided funding to address the water elevations along this reach of the WB LSR.
- Jeff Lawlor confirmed that there is a possibility that the dams could be removed. Mike Lithgow said that Pend Oreille County may require an environmental impact statement that would likely make dam removal cost prohibitive.
- The WB LSR could consider modeling / survey work between Sacheen Lake and Harworth Road to confirm the structures (e.g., beaver dams, bedrock constrictions) that control the elevation of Sacheen Lake. Andrew noted there has never been a longitudinal survey done of this reach to see if there are other structures that may control the elevation of Sacheen Lake. The WB LSR Committee said that they would be interested in this type of study.
- Andrew asked if the barrier dam is affecting Sacheen Lake. Jeff Lawlor said not in terms of elevation. The dam is licensed through Ecology. Pend Oreille County cleaned out the sediment from the pool in front of the dam a couple of years ago. It is not a priority for WDFW to remove the dam. If the dam is removed there would need to be a study of the wetlands upstream of the dam. Darrell noted that if the dam is removed it would be nice to have another alternative to measure streamflows. Bryony noted that the Committee has a recommendation to consider removing the dam in the draft action plan for the watershed.
- Ron said that Sewer District is hoping that the WB LSR Committee will provide a recommendation to the Sewer District on the leveler and deceiver project. The Sewer District is hoping to resolve access issues at their next meeting.
- The WB LSR Committee agreed to support the beaver deceiver and leveler project as a pilot project through 2011 at Dam #s 1, 2 and 3.

Public Comment:

- Bryony noted that the WB LSR Committee received \$4,000 in Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) grant funding. The funds must be spent by June 30, 2008. Bryony wrote the grant with review by Andrew. The funds will cover facilitation and evaluation for the bank restoration sites.
- Andrew confirmed that there is about \$19,000 remaining in the existing Ecology grant.
- Greg said that those Committee members who are not involved in Sacheen Lake may not attend consistently until the Committee starts working again on basin-wide issues. Bryony noted that because the CTED funding is allocated specifically for beaver mitigation, the focus of the meetings will be Sacheen Lake for the next meeting or two so that the applications for the CTED funding can be completed.
- Bryony thanked Pat for the food she provided for the meeting.

- Bryony noted that she will be away in July. The Committee will confirm next month whether or not they want to meet in July.

Membership:

The Pend Oreille Conservation District called the following members (who have missed three or more consecutive meetings) to see if they are interested in continuing as members of the Committee: Dolores Storms, Jeff Storms, Sally Storms, Rick Noll, Rob Lindsay and Dean Fanara.

Dolores, Sally, Rick and Dean said that they want to remain as Committee members. Greg said that he will call Dean to see if he is interested in attending the next meeting.

Rob Lindsay (Spokane County) said that he would like to stay on the email list but would not remain as a Committee member. Rob said that he would be happy to attend meetings if Spokane County issues are addressed.

Ron said that Jeff Storms is not planning to attend or continue as a Committee member. Dolores confirmed this. Greg said that he would call Jeff to confirm that he no longer wants to be a member.

Next Meeting (agenda, tasks and announcements):

The next Committee meeting will be at the Riverside Fire Station, 3818 E. Deer Park – Milan Road, Riverside, WA at **6 – 8:30 pm** on Monday June 23, 2008. Bryony will bring coffee for the next meeting. The meeting will include:

- Presentation by Andrew Huddleston on bank stabilization and complete ranking bank restoration sites.
- Discussion on June 2008-2009 CRM grant application.

Additional ideas for workshops / educational presentations:

- Work Plans and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs).
- Hydrology of the WB LSR watershed by the Spokane County Conservation District (based on review of the gaging completed to date by the Spokane County Conservation District).
- Ecology / Spokane County Conservation District presentation on WB LSR water quality impairment and TMDLs.
- WDFW on WB LSR wildlife habitats and Corridors (contact Jeff Lawlor / Steve Zender)

Adjourn:

- Bryony adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.
- Digital recording files for this meeting will be mailed to the POCD. Digital recording files of this meeting are:
 - WBLSR Committee 051908.wav