

WEST BRANCH LITTLE SPOKANE RIVER WATERSHED COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

July 23, 2007

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: Bill Harmon, Burt Covert, Dolores Storms, Dan Peterson, Lynne Anderson (alternate for Dick Anderson), Gil McGee, Greg Sweeney, Howard Rowley (alternate for Josh Roath), Bev Rowley, Brian Farmer (alternate for Jaime Short), Jeff Storms, Sally Storms, Jill Short, Luke Short, Jim Peterson, John Harkness, Karen Averitt (alternate for Linda Cannon), Kathleen Werr (alternate for Russ Fletcher), Darrell Johnson, Mary Sterling, Mike Carney, Pam Zarko, Dan Ross (alternate for Rick Noll), Tammera Kirk, Sandra Roath, Diane Wear, Jim Wood, Pat Wood, Bill Storms, Max Smith, Jason Sargent, Denise, Jason Sargent.

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).

Agenda Review: Public Comment, Updates, and Issue Consolidation will be discussed. There are no meeting summaries for review.

Public Comment:

- Greg Sweeny noted that Ecology has asked all Little Spokane River junior water rights holders have been asked not to withdraw water until further notice.
- Burt announced that the Eloika Lake Association will host a tour of the lake this Saturday July 28th, 8:00am at Jerry's Landing.
- Brian Farmer (Department of Ecology) noted that Ecology will be sending out letters to junior water rights holders along the Little Spokane River notifying them that they will have to turn off their pumps due to flows in the Little Spokane River being below the existing instream flow requirements.

Updates:

Sacheen Sewer District Beaver Tube Replacement Project

There was a mix-up with the mailings and some of the downstream land owners and landowners along Sacheen Lake did not receive notifications from Pend Oreille County. Pend Oreille County has resent the notifications and extended the comment period to August 23. The Pend Oreille County Commissioners will now hear the project on September 6. If the Commissioners approve the project, there is a standard 14 day local appeal time. The closing date for the local appeal is September 20. After this, there is an additional 21 day period for appeal of the shoreline permit. The anticipated

start date after all the appeals is October 11th. Bryony said that she had contacted Jeff Lawlor (WDFW) to confirm if the October 11th start date would be approved by WDFW.

Jeff Storms noted that on July 11, the WRIA 55/57 planning unit members gave approval for the beaver tube replacement project and will submit a letter of support to Pend Oreille County by August 2.

Jeff Storms noted that we need an extension to the existing grant (which currently expires August 2007) to allow the \$15,000 to be spent on this project. The Conservation District will write a letter to Ecology requesting an extension and will clarify the grant and timelines at the next meeting. Bryony noted that if the beaver tube replacement project does not start until next year, the group should consider using the \$15,000 for a different implementation project, such as stream gaging or sewer replacement. Brian noted that as of 6/6/07, the balance on the grant is \$59,979.

WRIA 55/57 DIP

Bryony attended the last WRIA 55/57 meeting and spoke with the WRIA 55/57 facilitator about scheduling and agreed that the WB LSR Committee will need to provide actions to the WRIA 55/57 group at their August 29th meeting.

Rustler's Gulch

The sale of the land is still in progress.

Field Trips

Jeff Storms noted that the Sacheen Sewer District received a letter from a resident noting that the tour was biased. Jeff offered to give another tour. Diane said that she could provide copies of the letter to any interested Committee members.

Issue Consolidation

Bryony provided a track-changes copy of the *Draft Consolidated List of West Branch Little Spokane River Issues to Consider for WRIA 55/57 DIP* (dated July 23, 2007). The Committee started working from the bottom of page 3 of this document.

Tributaries to Trout Lake

Land Use

- It is a general issue throughout the WB LSR watershed that timber harvest (including road construction) impacts watershed hydrology.
- The Counties issue timber harvest permits for small acreages. DNR issues permits for larger acreages via Forest Practices Applications. Spokane County issues permits for harvest of 20 acres or less. Sometimes a substantial shoreline development permit is required from the Counties if the harvest occurs along the shoreline.

Instream Needs

- The need for establishing a minimum instream flow for the tributaries to Trout Lake will be incorporated into the watershed need to establishing minimum with this reach identified as a priority. Bill Harmon asked if this issue is included in the

grant request to Ecology for a watershed-wide wetlands delineation for the WB LSR watershed. Greg said that the grant request attempts to include instream flows.

- The nearest flow gage on the Little Spokane River to the West Branch is the Chattaroy gage. The river is gaged regularly at this location but this location is not used by Ecology to regulate junior water rights holders.
- The issue that human activities are resulting in reduced fisheries will be removed and incorporated into a watershed-wide concern categorized under habitat.

Trout Lake

- There is a need for water storage. This would be considered within the flow regime for the watershed.
- There are beaver tubes below Trout Lake that are maintained under HPAs.

Eloika Lake

- Greg said that unexplained flow surges are not necessarily related to spring runoff and can occur at any time of the year.
- Illegal beaver dam removal to artificially lower lake is specific to Eloika Lake. A hydraulic project approval (issued by WDFW) would be required for this type of activity. Greg said he is not aware of any active HPAs.
- Burt noted that up until about 7 years ago, most landowners along Eloika Lake could swim from a sandy / gravelly beach on their land at the average water level. The lake level has dropped about 3 feet in the summer time. Spokane County accepted a court decision that the road at the downstream end of Eloika Lake was built too low and placed some gravel that was washed out the next spring. There is now much more weed growth and the lake is used much less. The Eloika Lake Association believes that the lake has been significantly lowered by destruction of the downstream beaver dams and lowering of the road / culvert. The Eloika Lake Association would like consent of the agencies before pursuing actions and is hoping to achieve consent for implementation actions through the WB LSR watershed planning process.
- Wetlands at the lower end of Eloika Lake could be considered for purchase by timber companies / developers as mitigation.
- Eloika has about 7 miles of shoreline and about 123 parcels on the lake, many of which are 20 acre minimum lots (forest preserve land). It is difficult to raise money and take action because there are relatively few land owners.
- At its deepest point, Eloika Lake is about 15 feet deep.
- Eloika Lake was used to float logs for 60+ years until 1954. The Eloika Lake Association believes that there may be 15ft of logging debris in the lake.
- On topographic maps, the lake level is shown as 1906 ft amsl. Current average lake level is actually 4 to 5 feet lower than this.
- Greg noted that some flow surges result in significant sediment deposition into the lake. The typical spring flushing flow does not occur regularly and therefore sediment tends to accumulate upstream until there is sufficient flow to transport the sediment into the lake.

- Howard said that in the past the northern end of Eloika Lake was scraped using a dragline.
- Burt noted that the Eloika Lake Association received a \$3 million quote to effectively dredge Eloika Lake. The weed growth would make dredging difficult and require a large dredge.
- Burt said that the Eloika Lake Association would like to develop a family swimming area on public lakefront (Spokane County owns one parcel and Washington State owns two parcels).
- Dan Ross suggested including an action to identify historic wetland areas.

Diamond Lake

- John noted the Diamond Lake West Bay homeowners recently removed 3 – 5 ft wood debris from the lake bottom using a barge. The debris was pumped on to land owned by the Boy Scouts.
- Dan Ross confirmed that the SCCD operates a gage on Moon Creek, just above Sacheen Lake. SCCD does not operate a lake level gage nor gages at the inflow to and outflow from Diamond Lake.
- Springs and two small tributaries feed Diamond Lake. Currently a small stream that previously flowed into Diamond Lake may be blocked by a beaver dam that results in water bypassing Diamond Lake and forming a 17-acre pond. This water may now be flowing into Sacheen Lake.
- Wetland mitigation is dictated by County critical areas ordinance. The Counties have approximate wetland delineation maps. If a person fills in a wetland illegally they are subject to enforcement by the Army Corps, State and County.
- John noted that the Diamond Lake Water and Sewer District is running out of water rights and lagoon capacity and has established an aggressive rate structure to encourage water conservation.
- Illegal water use from Diamond Lake was observed by residents last year.
- Instream flow is a regulatory flow used to condition junior water rights. There is no requirement to put water in the stream to achieve the instream flow.
- Instream flow rules have the potential to restrict issuance of new water rights.

Horseshoe Lake

- Sandra said that unexplained flow surges occur at Horseshoe Lake (e.g., on July 4, 2007). Kathleen suggested that the landowners take notes to document these surges. Sandra agreed to do this.
- Dan Ross noted that there is currently no gage immediately downstream of Horseshoe Lake and that landowner agreement would be needed to install and monitor a gage at this location. Mr. Reiner was identified as a landowner on Trout Lake to contact to ask if he would be interested in having a streamflow gage on his property.
- There is a flow gage monitored by the Spokane County Conservation District on Buck Creek (a tributary to Horseshoe). No other major tributaries to Horseshoe are gaged.
- The Horseshoe Lake members of the Committee agreed to remove the issue of beaver over population at Horseshoe.

- Jeff suggested that the Committee send a letter to Governor Gregoire to support state purchase of the Rustlers Gulch property. The Committee agreed. Diane agreed to draft the letter and email it to Bryony. Bryony will mail the letter out to the Governor and will email it to the Committee and local elected officials. Greg will email Bryony a list of elected officials and their emails.
- Bryony will remove the issue of water well rights. The Committee agreed.
- Restoration of kokanee spawning area on Buck Creek is underway. This will be noted in the action to conduct a barrier survey for the WB LSR watershed.

Watershed Wide

- Continued housing development on the hillsides above the lakes / river reaches is a concern since springs (i.e. groundwater) provide recharge to lakes and river reaches within the WB LSR watershed. Expanded use of domestic exempt wells therefore has the potential to impact river flows. There is an obligation in the WRIA 55/57 watershed plan for Ecology to regulate domestic exempt wells considering the Little Spokane River instream flow rule.
- There is a need to develop comprehensive GIS coverages for streams, wetlands etc. for the WB LSR Watershed.

Public Comment:

- Burt reminded everyone about the Eloika Lake tour on Saturday July 28th, 8:00am. Burt's phone number is 292-2748.
- Jeff asked if the group would be interested in having Ecology review the Sacheen wetland delineation report. Brian (Ecology) noted that Ecology did review the draft and provided comments on the draft to the contractor. Brian suggested that Shannon and Wilson (the contractor) present the report to the Committee.
- Mary noted that the Sacheen Lake Sewer District has received an HPA to maintain existing beaver dams below Sacheen Lake.

Membership:

Diane, Jim, and Pat have attended 3 consecutive meetings and are eligible to request committee membership. Jim and Pat requested membership. The Committee agreed. Diane said that she would like to wait before becoming a member.

Next Meeting:

- The next Committee meetings will be held between **6 – 9 pm** on Monday August 13, 2007 and **6 – 9 pm** on Monday August 27, 2007 at the Riverside Fire Station, 3818 E. Deer Park – Milan Road, Riverside, WA.

Adjourn:

- Bryony adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.
- Digital recording files for this meeting will be mailed to Carolyn Russell and to the POCD. Digital recording files of this meeting are:
 - WBLSR Committee 072307a.wav
 - WBLSR Committee 072307b.wav