

Meeting Summary

WRIA 55 RCW 90.94 Watershed Plan Update
Planning Unit Meeting #7 – July 16, 2020

The July 16, 2020 WRIA 55 Planning Unit meeting, held remotely using Zoom, was the seventh meeting convened under this process. The meeting agenda is attached to this summary. The primary topics include:

- Overview of the Plan Addendum and Net Ecological Benefit (NEB) Evaluation
- Plan implementation including funding, management, monitoring, and policy decisions
- Overview of the Plan Addendum approval process

Meeting Attendees

Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting	Amanda Parrish, The Lands Council
Carl Einberger, Aspect Consulting	Julie Loveall, Stevens County Farm Bureau
Mike Hermanson, Spokane County	Doug Greenlund, City of Spokane
Amy Sumner, Spokane County	Lindell Haggin, Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley/Audubon
Curtis Johnson, Washington Dept. of Ecology	Brandy Reynecke, Washington Dept. of Ecology
Casey Flanagan, Spokane Tribe	Rob Lindsay, Spokane County
Tim Murrell, Whitworth Water District	Erik Johansen, Stevens County
Josh Kerns, Spokane County Commissioner	Isaiah Paine, Spokane Home Builders
Greg Sweeney, Eloika Lake Association	Renee Kinnick, WDFW
Jim Pacheco, Washington Dept. of Ecology	Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner
Karen Skoog, Pend Oreille County Commissioner	John Covert, Washington Dept. of Ecology
Roger Krieger, City of Deer Park	

Meeting Summary

Meeting began, 1:05 PM

Dan Haller (Aspect) led the discussion in his role as lead facilitator with facilitation and technical presentation support from Carl Einberger (Aspect).

Key topics addressed in the discussion are summarized below and additional information can be found in the attached presentation.

The meeting began with introductions, a quick introduction to Zoom protocols, and a review of the meeting agenda was presented. No additions to the agenda was requested.

The 5-step implementation process for the watershed plan update that was previously presented to the Planning Unit was reviewed:

Step 1: Define 20-year exempt well consumptive use impacts

Step 2: Define water-for-water projects at WRIA 55 watershed scale

Step 3: Define mitigation gaps in time and space at subbasin scale

Step 4: Define list of Net Ecological Benefit (NEB) projects

Step 5: Determine NEB for WRIA 55, consensus recommendation on watershed plan update & Initiating Governments' approval

Dan Haller (Aspect) reviewed the Department of Ecology Net Ecological Benefit (NEB) Final Guidance, recently released from Dept. of Ecology. Carl Einberger (Aspect) then gave an overview of the revision history of the Little Spokane future exempt well demand. Changes included 1) adding historic growth rates for Spokane County; 2) removing demand projected to occur in the area governed by WAC 173-557; and 3) adding a 10% contingency to address climate change.

Carl Einberger (Aspect) gave a presentation on the projects included in the NEB evaluation to address water supply. This included a description of: the Little Spokane Water Bank; water rights acquisitions being pursued by Spokane County; a source exchange proposed by Whitworth Water District; a surface water storage project at Eloika Lake; managed aquifer recharge projects; and various habitat and basin wide projects.

Dan Haller (Aspect) provided attendees with an opportunity to discuss or ask questions. Only one question was presented and discussed:

Roger Krieger (City of Deer Park) asked how a proposed wetland banking project near Deer Park fit in with those described in the presentation. He described the Spring Creek project as being mitigation for a private project. Mike Hermanson (Spokane County) stated that if the Spring Creek project is serving as mitigation for wetland impacts it cannot be double counted by using it towards stream flow. Roger Krieger (City of Deer Park) felt that there must be some way to support the project in the Plan Addendum.

Carl Einberger (Aspect) gave a presentation on the NEB Evaluation, demonstrating how it met the requirements of Ecology's Final Guidance.

Dan Haller (Aspect) provided attendees with an opportunity to discuss or ask questions. Only two questions were presented and discussed:

Jim Pacheco (Wash. Dept of Ecology) stated that projects higher in the watershed are beneficial to lower areas, and noted that the Beaver Creek surplus being higher in the watershed should be separated out from Dragoon Creek. Carl (Aspect) indicated that Dragoon's water balance could have been zero acre-feet per year (afy), and Beaver Creek as 23 afy, but the opposite is used instead. Wes McCart (Stevens County) stated that to address uncertainty, it is probably wise to show surplus or offset in both Dragoon and Beaver Creek subbasins.

Wes McCart (Stevens County) followed up with asking how the 10% contingency in demand was accounted for in the NEB Evaluation. He stressed that the evaluation is over estimating and covering uncertainty, but is not sure that is clear. Dan Haller (Aspect) commented that he believes the point is made but will ensure that this is highlighted in the document.

Dan Haller and Carl Einberger (Aspect) continued with a presentation regarding Plan Addendum implementation. This included a note that the awards for funding authorized under ESSB 6091 should be announced at the end of September. Brandy Reynecke (Dept. of Ecology) confirmed this in the Zoom chat box. She typed that grant application scores are being reviewed by leadership team and they have until September to complete their review and select projects. The award announcement is scheduled for end of September.

The presentation regarding Plan Addendum implementation continued with a note from Dan Haller (Aspect) that the understanding is that no recommended modifications to the policy considerations under RCW 90.94.020(4)(d) will be made.

The presentation then included an outline of the adoption process. Carl Einberger (Aspect) noted that the process to adopt the Plan Addendum is to assume that if an agency/organization does not comment on the draft during the comment period (ends July 30th) then it is assumed that the agency/organization endorses the Plan Addendum. If an agency/organization sends comments, it is asked that they indicate their level of endorsement or non-endorsement of the Plan Addendum. Dan Haller (Aspect) indicated that the intent is to submit the Plan Addendum early to Ecology, possibly late next month (August).

Dan Haller provided attendees with an opportunity to discuss or ask questions. Only two questions were presented and discussed:

Brandy Reynecke (Ecology) spoke to reiterate her earlier comment in the Zoom chat box for attendees who might have missed it. She also noted that 30 points is assigned to projects that are in a watershed plan. Dan Haller (Aspect) followed up to ask Brandy if funding is available immediately following the announcement. Brandy Reynecke (Ecology) clarified that funding is not available until the negotiation process is complete and a grant agreement is signed. Carl Einberger (Aspect) summarized the projects submitted for funding: two from Spokane County, one from WDFW, one from Whitworth Water District, and one from the Spokane Conservation District.

Doug Greenlund (City of Spokane) updated the group on the City's progress for approving the Plan Addendum. He is in the process of updating the City Council and a vote for approval is expected between end of August to mid-September.

John Covert (Ecology) brought up the emailed concern from Ken Merrill (Kalispel Tribe) about the Eloika Lake project having a lot of weight, but there is potential for degrading water quality from releasing warm, stored water from the lake. Ken (Kalispel Tribe) indicated there needs to be more acknowledgement of this in the Plan Addendum. Carl Einberger (Aspect) stated additional information regarding the need for further study of water quality and other impacts will be added to the Plan Addendum. Greg Sweeny (Eloika Lake Assoc.) indicated that there was a SEPA review in 2013 which includes details of the permitting process needed. He recommended adding this as an attachment to the Plan Addendum.

Julie Loveall (Stevens County Farm Bureau) stated she likes how this process has moved forward and is willing to move with a positive vote.

Jim Pacheco (Wash. Dept of Ecology) mentioned Ecology has minor comments on the Plan Addendum and asked whether Brandy (Reynecke, Ecology) shared them. Dan Haller (Aspect) replied no. Jim said that there is a lot of discussion of what the Plan Addendum is doing but more details are needed to

support the decision that it provides a net ecological benefit. He recommends specifying where the projects are located and that the deficits are at the bottom of the watershed.

Brandy Reynecke (Ecology) asked for clarification on how consensus is to be documented if there is not going to be another meeting. Dan Haller (Aspect) reiterated that consensus is being documented by comments on the draft Plan Addendum. It will be assumed that agencies/organizations without comment agree with the Plan Addendum. For those submitting comments, it is asked that they include their level of agreement: they are endorsing the Plan Addendum, they are endorsing the Plan Addendum with reservations, or they are not endorsing the Plan Addendum. Brandy Reynecke (Ecology) expressed concern that there are people not in attendance at this meeting that may not know this is the process. Dan Haller (Aspect) agreed to follow up with an email to outline the process and to specifically reach out to let folks know.

At this point, Dan Haller (Aspect) called for a break. Break 1:50PM – 2:00PM PST

Brandy Reynecke (Ecology) asked is there will be a list of all comments and how they were addressed in the Plan Addendum. Carl Einberger (Aspect) indicated that this will be included. Greg Sweeny (Eloika Lake Assoc.) asked whether the comments will be made available to see. Dan Haller (Aspect) stated that the comments can be made immediately available, and the response to them will follow.

Brandy Reynecke (Ecology) wanted to get a feel from the attendees on where they are with reviewing the Plan Addendum. Dan Haller (Aspect) asked for attendees to use the Raise Hand feature if they read the whole Plan Addendum; no hands were raised. Next he asked attendees to raise their hands if they've only reviewed new sections; approximately 10 hands were raised.

John Covert (Ecology) asked for clarification on how the initiating governments are voting; whether they're voting individually at a regular meeting. Mike Hermanson (Spokane County) stated that the plan is for each to approve in an open meeting with a resolution. Karen Skoog (Pend Oreille County) stated they had no comments on the Plan Addendum.

Dan Haller (Aspect) reminded everyone that comments are due at the end of the month (July 31). Dan Haller and Carl Einberger (Aspect) Thanked everyone for their collaboration during this process.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:20 PM PST