

Shoreline Master Program
SAG Meeting October 25, 2006
Caucus Representatives
Jerry Barnes – Agriculture
Jon Wyss – Natural Resources
Angel Lund – Alternate Business/recreation
Lee Bernheisel – Environment / Conservation
Absent – Dave Hanna – Homeowners / Property Owners

Introductions

Caucus Reports

Angel Lund reported that she gave a presentation to prospectors but there didn't seem to be much interest.

Sandra explained that since the Methow River has the most comprehensive inventory already completed she thought it would be a good idea to start with their information and proceed to the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers.

Kurt gave a brief summary of the status and stated that 3 of the participating cities are on board.

Darlene asked if Regional meant within the county and was told yes – we are just working within Okanogan County.

Bonnie Lawrence gave a presentation on the Watershed Planning process that WRIA 49 has been going through and the status of that effort. Bonnie explained that she is the Chairman of the WRIA 49 Planning Unit, which was started under RCW 90.82, Bonnie read RCW 90.82.010 Findings which says “The legislature finds that the local development of watershed plans for managing water resources and for protecting existing water rights is vital to both state and local interests. The local development of these plans serves vital local interests by placing it in the hands of people: Who have the greatest knowledge of both the resources and the aspirations of those who live and work in the watershed; and who have the greatest stake in the proper, long-term management of the resources. The development of such plans serves the state's vital interests by ensuring that the state's water resources are used wisely, by protecting existing water rights, by protecting in stream flows for fish, and by providing for the economic well-being of the state's citizenry and communities. Therefore, the legislature believes it necessary for units of local government throughout the state to engage in the orderly development of these watershed plans.” Bonnie further explained that when the watershed council was formed it required buy in from Okanogan County, the City of Omak (as the largest city) and Oroville Tonasket Irrigation District (as the largest water purveyor). The watershed council received a grant from the Department of Ecology and operates under the Okanogan Conservation District as lead agency. They have completed the Phase I, scope of work, which includes an assessment of water quantity (a required element), water storage, water quality, habitat and flows (optional elements, all of which the Planning Unit has chosen to address). They are now starting Phase II. They received their Level I assessment at the end of July which means Entrix gathered existing data, organized it in a logical manner and made observations on data gaps and determined where additional data was needed. Bonnie said that she is here because she wants to know how SMP will

impact WRIA 49 and is concerned with how it will impact WRIA 49 plans for water storage and DOE's interpretation of SMP guidelines i.e., no net loss of ecological functions. Jeremy added that each project has a science base – we don't need to reinvent the wheel.

Lee Bernheisel stated that the Methow group had opted out of in stream flows and Bonnie replied that the Okanogan group had opted to try and do in stream flows.

Darlene Hajny asked how decisions were made and Bonnie replied that they used a modified consensus method, following Roberts Rules of Order when consensus cannot be reached. Agencies are only advisors, not voting members and that you had to maintain attendance in order to vote.

Chris Johnson came representing the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation, Chewuch Basin Council and as the City of Okanogan Planner. The MSRF focuses on implementing salmon recovery and has joined with Bureau of Reclamation and Forest Service to accomplish this. CBC focused on irrigation and bringing existing irrigators into compliance and helping with improvements. He said that they primarily work with the Twisp, Methow and Chewuch Rivers as well as their tributaries.

Sara Kretz asked who is paying for all this and Chris responded that it is funded with a combination of private funding and state and federal grants.

Roger Erlandsen asked how they characterized the inventory (prioritized projects?) and Chris responded that they used a combination of floating the rivers, flights and field expertise. They broke the rivers into reaches and identified problems and opportunities.

Lee asked about the Fulton Dam design as he understood it was supposed to make passage easier for kayakers and it didn't. Chris responded that the Fulton Dam project was a 2 year project that received a lot of input from property owners, both adjacent to the dam and in the general area. The project that was approved should be better for both people and fish.

Craig Nelson came representing the Okanogan Conservation District. He said the Conservation District was formed under RCW 89-08. Craig presented an overview of Conservation District projects and goals and then opened for questions and answers.

Bonnie asked if the conservation district was funded by the state and Craig said yes.

Sara asked who plants the trees and pays for the fence materials and construction. Craig said that it is 100% funded.

Lee asked about the mechanics, the Beaver Creek diversion hasn't been used for years and asked if the conservation district would check to see if reinstalling the diversion may be in conflict with state laws. Craig said that they do consult with DOE and other agencies to check for relinquishment of water rights, and have declined projects in the past because of potential damage to other landowners downstream.

Angel asked if they don't report problems they see in the field, isn't that a conflict of interest with what they are trying to achieve. Craig said that they are a voluntary agency and try to stay non regulatory and try to fix problems directly with the landowner.

Lee asked about the constitutionality because the state is not allowed to give capital improvements. Craig said the loophole is that these projects are good for the environment (serve an identified public interest).

Lee asked what was good about a center pivot and Craig said that the benefit was a saving of water.

Darlene asked if the money that is available for salmon includes streams that could have salmon and Craig said it included everything.

Char Beam presented information about two other natural-resource related endeavors currently underway: Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Planning in the Methow and Okanogan subbasins; and the DNR's Habitat Conservation Plan. There was some discussion of the relationship between critical areas (including flood hazard areas) and shoreline management. Gary Graff (Ecology) noted that last week's Anacortes decision has clarified the distinction between Critical Areas Ordinances and Shoreline Master Programs.

Char also showed an example of the GIS with which Gene Wyllson (Okanogan County) is developing the SMP inventory. GIS layers are not yet available on line; the County intends to post them soon and will notify all when that has been done.

The next SAG meeting is scheduled for November 29th and will focus on the current county and city SMP's. January's meeting will feature presentations from Ecology staff on the new SMP guidelines. Kurt Danison (Highlands Associates) suggested that SAG members come to that meeting prepared to question Ecology staff about what changes to existing SMP's will be needed to achieve compliance. At the following meeting, staff anticipates having an outline and some text for SAG members to review.