

MEETING SUMMARY – Call #3
Water Resources and Quality (Freshwater) Preparation/Adaptation Work Group
Water PAWG
September 14, 2007, 10AM-12PM

ATTENDANCE**1. Water PAWG Members:**

- a. Tom Laurie, WA Dept of Ecology (Lead)
- b. Ginny Stern, WA Dept of Health
- c. Michael Garrity, American Rivers
- d. Dave Monthie, King County
- e. Tom Myrum, WA State Water Resources Assoc.
- f. Carl Samuelson, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife
- g. Jane Banyard, WA DFW
- h. Tom Ring, Yakama Nation Water Program
- i. Alex McGregor, McGregor Company
- j. Paul Fleming, Seattle Public Utilities
- k. Hal Schlomann, WA Association of Sewer and Water Districts

2. Agency and Staff Support:

- a. Hedia Adelsman, WA Dept of Ecology
- b. Stephen Bernath, WA Dept of Ecology

3. Other attendees:

- a. Nancy Tosta, Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd.
- b. Andy Chinn, Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd.
- c. Roma Call, Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/PAWGdocs/wr/91407WRAgenda.pdf>
2. Summary of July 30th Meeting:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/PAWGdocs/wr/73007Summary.pdf>

DISCUSSION AND KEY ISSUES:

1. The Scenario Team gave an update on its work. After the first meeting, a smaller team was created to focus on scenario factors. This team worked on defining the factors that will shape the future of water use in Washington State through 2030. The team came up with about 25 factors that are likely to occur and is writing a story based on these factors. Once that is completed, the group will begin to look at the uncertain factors that were identified and see how they impact the story. The team will share this work with the full PAWG within the next week. Hopefully this will be a good way to discuss issues that the larger group may or may not be talking about, and PAWG members will be able to lend their expertise to various elements of the story.

2. Discussion of Priority Action Recommendations

The PAWG discussed the compiled responses to the “Issues and Actions” document. Ross & Associates reported that 11 PAWG members sent back a populated spreadsheet, and based on this they created a compilation document that included the following:

- The actions that received the highest number of “high priority” votes
- The actions reported as highest priority within category by over half of respondents
- General comments or concerns

The purpose of this document was to focus on a handful of actions rather than attempt to address all of the actions identified by the PAWG. It is important to note that the full list of actions will be included in an appendix to the PAWG report. PAWG members provided the following comments:

General Comments:

- The categories of actions are potentially problematic; for example there are actions under water management that are also under the drought section.
- The categories are not absolute in any way, and the list of actions can be divided into categories in different ways. It is important not to get stuck on the categories.
- Michael Garrity, Mo McBroom, and Mike Petersen sent a letter to Tom Laurie suggesting an alternative proposal: Further research should be the overriding recommendation of the PAWG. Tom responded that the alternative proposal fits into the category of research recommendations, and that there will be other places within the report to address overarching critical concerns.

Category A: Drought

- All of the actions within the “Drought” category can be consolidated into a single recommendation.
- Drought is merely a symptom of the problem that we face, which is the need for a shift from emergency response to adaptation and preparedness.
- One possible way to organize this list is to have overarching themes with specific lists underneath them. Three potential themes are: Drought, conservation/water use, and changes in water management/planning.
- The title “drought” should be changed to “emergency management”, since drought is a condition, not a response. This would make the category more relevant to the tools of emergency management.

Category B: Water Management

- From an agricultural perspective, “regulate exempt wells” and “enforce penalties for illegal use of water” are examples of Washington’s reckless “use it or lose it” policy. As long as we have a situation where wise stewardship is penalized, it would be politically unwise to pursue these strategies.
- Exempt wells are just one issue; we should identify water policies in the state that may exacerbate impacts of climate change.
- These issues are very strongly related to development. The question is: “How should water be regulated for future development?”
- It would be useful to try to define the connection between water issues and population planning more tightly. To talk about rampant development in areas where the state is losing population doesn’t make sense.

- One of the problems with item number 4 (the first item under “Water Management”) is that the language “regulate exempt wells” is the only part of this section that is easily understood.
- Under “management of groundwater resources”, our current relinquishment statutes are a barrier to the good management of water and this issue needs to be included.
- A more suitable way to restate item number 4 may be “Ways to sustainably manage strained/threatened groundwater resources”.
- We may also want to include in number 4 language such as “Identify existing management tools that would support adaptive management and identify what barriers exist”.
- Items 7, 8, and 17 could be combined.
- One concern is that we are overlooking market incentives, which should be encouraged as a conservation tool. This is partially covered in item number 5.
- The PAWG should not pre-judge the ability to accomplish something politically as a barrier to inclusion on this list.
- Items 8 and 9 are separate. The PAWG could make a statement such as “meet rules that have been set for instream flows.”
- This section (Water Management) is about water management’s existing tools and new needs.
- There could be a broader category about water management tools; highlighted sections could be emphasized but other options would not be ignored. That would be a good way to bring in a broader audience.
- The PAWG should consider integrated water management, including high flows as well as low flows.

Category C: Conservation

- Item 17 belongs in the water management category.
- Item 11 appears to be an overarching theme, and all of the actions that follow it are included. 11 could be reworded as “conservation funding” with conservation tools falling within it.
- Item 27 is an overarching theme, not an individual item. The CIG is also going to be looking at this issue closely.
- There is a newly emerging consensus on global warming, and within that there is an emerging consensus on decreased peak flows, increased base flows, etc. However, we don’t know as much as we would know 20 years from now if we don’t implement 27 and 28. There will be surprises in what happens and we need to be prepared. Information gathering is critical to management tools and planning assumptions.
- There is a definite need for a distinction between monitoring and science.
- 23-25, 27 and 28 could be combined, and keep 26 somewhere (possibly part of 29).

Category E: Planning

- Item 29, which had the most votes, could be the overarching theme of this category, and all planning activities should consider climate change and state that preparation/adaptation should be the primary approach.

Category F: Outreach

- If the PAWG has outreach recommendations specifically related to water resources, these should be included in the report. Other general outreach recommendations will be covered by the CAT.

Public Comment:

The PAWG opened the public phone line to allow opportunity for public comment.

- Sue Gunn from CELP commented that it is important that as part of its recommendations the PAWG explains what research is needed to make the conclusion on the decisions rather than just leaping forward with decisions.

NEXT STEPS AND AGREEMENTS:

- PAWG members organized into groups to begin drafting two to three page recommendations for each category of action. Tom Laurie briefly reviewed the outline for the report that each group will use (sent to PAWG members before the meeting). The following PAWG members are responsible for each category:
Drought: Carl Samuelson, Ginny Stern (joint leads)
Water management: Dave Monthie, Michael Garrity (lead), Alex McGregor
Conservation: Paul Fleming, Ginny Stern (lead), Tom Ring, Alex McGregor (nominated – others will include him and see if he wants to contribute)
Planning: Allen Hamlet (lead), Mo McBroom (nominated by Michael Garrity)
Information Gathering/Science: (other groups will have this as a subtask for each category)
Outreach: (PAWG will revisit this after Oct. 9)
- Each group will aim to have their drafts completed and sent to either Tom Laurie or Nancy Tosta by October 1st. The drafts will be circulated prior to the October 9th meeting.
- The scenario team will send its initial work to the PAWG prior to the October 9th meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

The Water PAWG will meet in person on Friday, October 9, 2007 10AM-3PM at Ecology Headquarters in Lacey.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

November 7 (Conference Call)
December 4 (Conference Call)