

Update

Eastern Washington Watershed Planning

This Update will include “what now?” information about what happens when the watershed planning process is winding down, and what takes place as local planning units begin to discuss implementing the plans they’ve worked so hard to prepare.

Ten watershed planning units are operating in Ecology’s eastern region. The following information will bring you up-to-date with the status of each:

- **Colville Watershed** — The U.S. Geological Survey has completed the Phase II technical assessment and is almost finished with an associated calibrated-groundwater model. The planning unit finalized a “water storage assessment” last spring that explored on-and-off stream-storage options. The group will receive a water quality supplemental grant to help complete a water quality assessment of the basin. Phase III of the planning unit’s grant, is in progress and is on schedule to be completed in the fall of 2004. Challenges for the group continue to center around the desire to open the Colville Basin to further appropriation. Among the greatest needs are municipal water for community growth, and irrigation water in a basin closed since 1977. **Contacts: Linda Kiefer, Stevens County Conservation District, (509) 685-0937; and Mimi Wainwright, Ecology, (509) 329-3419.**
- **Upper Crab Creek/Wilson Watershed** — Kennedy-Jenks and Geoengineers were hired to conduct the watershed assessment in summer 2003. Kennedy-Jenks will complete the water quantity and water-quality elements, while Geoengineers will complete the stream flow and habitat elements. Assessment work will continue through spring and summer 2004. **Contacts: David Lundgren, Lincoln County Conservation District, (509)725-4181; and Doug Allen, Ecology, (509) 329-3600.**
- **Hangman/Latah Creek Watershed** — The final stream flow assessment is complete, and the draft phase II watershed assessment has been released for review. The planning unit has been trying to come to consensus on a minimum stream flow recommendation since September 2003, but no agreement has yet been reached. The planning unit has applied for a supplemental grant to evaluate water storage opportunities, and is compiling issues to address in the watershed plan (due December 31, 2004) and is identifying preliminary recommendations. **Contacts: Walt Edelen, Spokane County Conservation District, (509)535-7274; and Doug Allen, Ecology, (509) 329-3600.**

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- **Lower Spokane Watershed** — The “initiating governments” held their first meeting on Dec. 16, 2003. Early discussions concerned the scope of the planning effort, operating procedures and planning-unit membership. **Contacts: Stan Miller, Spokane County, (509) 477-3604; and Doug Allen, Ecology, (509) 329-3600.**
 - **Kettle River Watershed** — A draft watershed technical assessment was recently completed. A scope of work is expected to be ready early this year for stream flow work starting in the spring. This group faces challenges such as planning for future water appropriations with already existing low flows in the Kettle River and coordinating with British Columbia in a watershed where the greatest portion lies in Canada. **Contacts: Joy Osterberg, Ferry County, (509) 775-5229; and Mimi Wainwright, Ecology, (509) 329-3419.**
 - **Middle/Little Spokane Watershed** — The final watershed assessment has been submitted, and work has begun on the watershed plan (due Dec. 31, 2004). The planning unit is trying to reach consensus on recommending stream flows in the Little Spokane River. Assessment work on the Spokane River was initiated in August 2003, and should be finished by spring 2004. **Contacts: Stan Miller, Spokane County Public Works, (509) 477-3604; and Doug Allen, Ecology, (509) 329-3600.**
 - **Middle Snake River Watershed** — The planning unit completed phase I of watershed planning in March of 2003. Workshops to introduce and explain watershed planning to the larger community were held in five locations in May. In addition to hosting these meetings, the planning unit has established a Web-site to help with both internal communications and public information: <http://www.asotinpud.org>. Check the Web-site for new documents, meeting schedules and agendas. The planning unit, through the Asotin PUD, has been approved for Phase II and Phase III of watershed planning. In support of watershed planning, Ecology has installed seven telemetry gauges and four staff gauges in tributaries to the Snake River. The sites of all the gauges and the data from the telemetry gauges are found at the following Internet site: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/flows/regions/state.asp?mode=ero>. **Contacts: Tim Simpson, Asotin Public Utilities District, (509) 758-1010; and Victoria Leuba, Ecology, (509) 329-3578.**
 - **Palouse Watershed** — The planning unit completed phase 1 organizational work in the summer 2003 and has just hired a consultant to help complete a phase II technical assessment as well as doing stream-flow work. Major issues for the unit include stream flows in the Palouse River and tributaries, water quality concerns and cleanup plans or TMDLs, water for development along the Moscow, ID – Pullman, WA corridor, and coordination with Idaho. **Contacts: Rob Buchert, Palouse Conservation District, (509) 332-4101; and Mimi Wainwright, Ecology, (509) 329-3419.**
 - **Pend Oreille Watershed** — The watershed’s phase II water-quantity assessment was completed in 2001. This spring, phase II, level II flow work will culminate. The phase III, watershed plan is due in June 2004. Challenges include: coordination with an active Salmon Recovery (House Bill 2496)

group, as well as stream bank erosion and milfoil proliferation in the mainstem. **Contacts: Don Comins, Pend Oreille Conservation District, (509) 447-4217; and Mimi Wainwright, Ecology, (509) 329-3419.**

- **Walla Walla Watershed**--Current information on planning unit activities and other watershed related activities can be found at the new Web-site: <http://www.wallawallawatershed.org/>. In addition to Washington's watershed planning information, this site has a calendar and newsletter. Information also is available here on the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's sub-basin planning process and the Habitat Conservation Planning process both underway in the Walla Walla basin in Oregon and Washington.

Recent discussions within the planning unit have focused on developing a stream-flow strategy and stream-flow values. Fourteen management points for setting in-stream flows have been identified. In addition, the planning unit has delineated six implantation areas and has developed draft plans with recommendations for each of these areas: lower Walla Walla River, Middle Touchet, Mill Creek, Touchet, upper Touchet and Walla Walla. The draft plans are available for review at <http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/Departments/community-development/Watershed/plunit.htm>. **Contact: Cathy LaRoque, Walla Walla Co. Planning Dept., (509) 527-3285; and Victoria Leuba, Ecology, (509) 329-3578.**

- Two other planning processes are taking place in the southeast Washington region which will be important to watershed plan implementation. These are the Governor's Snake River Salmon Recovery Region planning process, <http://www.snakeriverboard.org/> and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's (NPCC) sub-basin planning process in four sub-basins: Walla Walla, Asotin, Tucannon and Middle Snake. Information on sub-basin planning is at the NPCC site: <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/Default.htm>.

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