

Hangman Creek TMDL Implementation

June 11, 2014

8:30 – 10:00 AM

Department of Ecology

4601 N Monroe Street, Spokane

Meeting Notes

In attendance:

Ben Brattebo – Spokane County

Eric Keller – WDNR

Lynn Schmidt – City of Spokane

Scott Fields – CDA Tribe

Amanda Parrish – The Lands Council

Daniel Wells – Spokane Fly Fisheries

Steve Sprecher – NRCS

Chris DeForest – Inland NW Land Trust

Meghan Lunney – Avista Corp

Greg Lahti – WSDOT

Doug Greenlund – City of Spokane

Rick Noll – Spokane CD

Walt Edelen – Spokane CD

Elaine Snouwaert – Ecology

Karin Baldwin – Ecology

James Pierce – Benewah Soil & Water CD

Andy Dunau – Spokane River Forum

Harvey Morrison – Trout Unlimited

Elaine started the meeting with roundtable introductions. Elaine then asked each member to provide any implementation updates that had occurred since the meeting in November 2013. These could be updates to something discussed then or new projects that had been initiated.

Elaine mentioned a group effort to address reoccurring flooding issues in Spangle. Ecology, Spokane CD, WSDOT, and Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife have assisted the town in applying for a grant to address the flooding. The proposal takes a holistic approach which includes components beneficial to water quality in Spangle Creek. The proposal includes moderate channel modification, culvert removal and fish passage improvement, riparian enhancement, agricultural incentives for direct seed and grass filter strips, conservation easements, acquisition of property, and elevating homes. The application was a preliminary application and if successful they will be invited to put in a full application in August.

Lynn Schmidt provided an update for the City of Spokane. CSO 20 drains a portion of the South Hill and has infrequent overflow events to Hangman Creek across from the Cheney-Spokane interchange. The CSO 20 control facility is currently in design, and is planned to go to bid this fall. The CSO 20 outfall will be eliminated after construction is complete. Although the CSO 19 outfall still exists, CSO 19 was upgraded in 2011 and is not expected to overflow except in very large events, so these two projects effectively disconnect Hangman Creek from the City's CSO system. The City also adopted their Integrated Clean Water Plan that addresses stormwater, CSOs, and wastewater. An integrated project in the Hangman Creek basin is the High Drive reconstruction project, which will remove stormwater from the CSO 24 basin and infiltrate it as one of the project elements. It is currently in design and will be constructed in 2014 and 2015. In Finch Arboretum, a pervious pavement parking lot and bio-infiltration

facility is being installed this summer to remove additional untreated stormwater flow from the basin. This project includes a monitoring project to assess the treatment capability of the pervious pavement. Doug Greenlund also provided an update of the project to restore a section of Garden Springs Creek in the Arboretum. This project will restore a natural flow regime and include a native riparian buffer. Current plans are to construct it this fall.

Greg Lathi discussed WSDOT's winter maintenance efforts which included seeking and fixing sediment sources in the watershed. The riparian stabilizations and improvement project at the Cheney –Spokane Interchange fared well during the spring high flows. They replaced about 200 plants, are doing weed control, and have started irrigating to ensure plant survival.

Amanda Parrish discussed The Lands Council's Ecology and Fish and Wildlife Partners grants. Under these programs they have distributed over 2,200 brochures, have a list of approximately 25 interested landowners, and are installing large fences around intact vegetation to protect them from browsing. Most of TLC's work has focused on Rock Creek, California Creek, and Hangman Creek.

Steve Sprecher reported that NRCS is still implementing contracts from the previous AWEP and EQIP contracts. An additional 500 acres were enrolled in direct seed and mulch till. Steve also mentioned that as part of the new Farm Bill the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) is accepting preliminary applications for funding until July 14th. This project is similar to the AWEP program but involves additional programs and practices.

Rick Noll reported that the Spokane Conservation Districts project on Hangman Creek (Murdoch project) is doing well. Sediment is accumulating on the bench as designed and the willows are growing.

Dan Wells offered the Spokane Fly Fishers as a resource for volunteers for projects.

Scott Fields of the CDA Tribe gave an update on their creek realignment projects. Currently they are acquiring property to restore 1.5 miles of Hangman Creek to its relic channel. This project will likely be tied into another channel project to result in a total 3 to 4 miles connected to the floodplain. The Sheep Creek realignment project is in the works. In February they held the annual direct seed breakfast with Ty Meyer from the Spokane CD. There was a good turnout and seems to be more interest in direct seed. The Tribal Farm manager would also like to acquire a direct seed drill for use on the farm.

Chris DeForest of the Inland NW Land Trust (INLT) discussed his organization's focus on securing permanent easements along Hangman between Kentuck Trails Rd and Valley Chapel Rd. They also have an emphasis on California Creek.

Harvey Morrison of Trout Unlimited discussed coordinating with The Lands Council, Spokane CD, and INLT to locate fish passage issues. As part of their efforts to restore Redband Trout they would like to apply for grants to address these issues. Eric Keller from DNR suggested that DNR might be a place to

find funding if projects are in forested areas. Harvey is also assisting in maintenance of the plants on the Dunn Property easement along Hangman Creek.

Walt Edelen said the Spokane CD held another “Willow Warriors” weekend event where volunteers planted 5000 willows along Hangman Creek. The CD is also providing flow modeling work for the Spangle project Elaine discussed. Under their Livestock and Land grant they have three projects in the watershed and they have one septic system replacement scheduled under their Septic System Program grant.

Meghan Lunney of Avista reported that they are partnering with the CDA Tribe on their realignment projects.

Ben Brattebo of Spokane County discussed a recent resolution on how they will deal with fencing as part of a water quality restoration project under the County’s Critical Area Ordinance (CAO). The CAO requires large setbacks for structures; fences are considered structures. However, if the fencing is in areas which already have livestock and the fence is part of a restoration or conservation project, the buffer width required by the grant will likely be acceptable. These determinations will be made on a case by case basis.

Andy Dunau of the Spokane River Forum announced that the next Spokane River Forum will be November 19 & 20 at the Coeur d’Alene Resort.

Following the implementation update discussion Karin Baldwin provided a short presentation on her efforts to track implementation (especially nonpoint source implementation) for the greater Spokane watershed. She is creating a database which will track project location, date of installation, funding details, contact information, etc. What she envisions is sending a spreadsheet out to the partners to fill in information about their projects. She will then compile the information which the Spokane River Forum will use to create a public website showing general information about projects. Only certain information will be made public to protect privacy.

Elaine then provided a short presentation on Ecology’s efforts to quantify the acreage in various tillage methods throughout the watershed. So far Ecology has tried two methods. The first involved driving the entire watershed to determine the type of practice being used in each field. There were some definite challenges with this method including accuracy of the assessment and the resource intensive nature of it. The second method uses a protocol developed by agricultural researchers to determine acreage using LandSat images and analysis. It samples images throughout the year and provides a reproducible methodology. It is still being refined for the Hangman watershed. Mike Kuttel is Ecology’s lead on this effort.

Elaine then asked the group to brainstorm projects we’d like to secure funding for and implement. We discussed the potential stream bank restoration project located adjacent to the Latah Wastewater Treatment Plant. Ben Brattebo said he would see if the county has interest in applying for a grant to

fund efforts there. Eric suggested those interested in fish passage projects should contact Guy Gifford regarding DNR's funding. Harvey mentioned that the County will be opening Spokane Futures in 2016 so we should consider important tracks of land that might be good candidates for this program. Greg and Rick discussed meeting with the City of Fairfield to see what could be done to help Rattler Run creek which essentially flows like a ditch along the highway.

Most of the discussion on future projects and funding focused on NRCS's RCPP. Steve suggested those of us interested in partnering on an application contact Jeff Harlow (323-2971) to learn more. The Spokane CD, Ecology, the CDA Tribe, and the Benewah County Soil and Water Conservation District are the most likely lead applicants for a project that covers the whole watershed. We should put in requests for funding for direct seed contracts, riparian buffers, stream bank restoration projects such as the CD's River Mile 17 project, and forestry practices in the upper watershed. Preliminary applications are due July 14.