

Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership

Policy Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting Minutes

Date: April 26, 2010

Time: 3:00PM–6:00PM

Location: WWCC Water and Environmental Center, 500 Tausick Way, Walla Walla, WA

Policy Advisory Group Members Present:

Roland Schirman, Paul Wemhoener, Paul Hartwig, Gene Warren, Brian Wolcott, Kay Mead, Hedia Adelsman, Amanda Cronin, Andrea Burkhart, Roger Lizut, Mark Wachtel, Phil Brick, Nichole Curet, Stuart Durfee, Mike Bireley.

Partnership Staff Present: Cathy Schaeffer and Matt Rajnus.

Others Present: Greg Farrens, Brent Leonhard, Amber Larson and Terry Bruegman.

Introductions and Minutes: Introductions were made with the meeting opening at 3pm. The prior meeting minutes from the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting on March 24, 2010 were reviewed, with consensus that the minutes be considered approved incorporating any corrections sent to matt.rajnus@wwcc.edu by May 3, 2010.

Vision Statement: Suggestions on the vision statement were discussed, and the PAG was updated that the Partnership Board on April 6, 2010 had approved the vision statement submitted by the PAG as a “working vision statement.” The discussion focused on suggestions to improve the vision statement, which Cathy Schaeffer said could occur throughout the strategic planning process and may be informed by additional discussions on goals and objectives. Brian Wolcott offered that an important thing to include in the vision is that this is an opportunity to change water law. Kay Mead said that it can be difficult to make a list of supported activities, without leaving some important things out such as riparian habitat. Phil Brick recognized the importance of the vision statement, and said he likes the one the Tribe brought. Brent Leonhard from CTUIR offered a one-page list of suggestions for inclusion in the vision statement as well as a revised mission statement. There was some interest in the Tribe’s suggested vision statement, with others suggesting that the Partnership should focus its vision on the legal authority at first and grow into a larger vision. Cathy Schaeffer noted that Fred Bennett had also provided language for a vision/mission statement. Reflecting on the various viewpoints, Cathy suggested that perhaps the mission could focus specifically on the Partnership’s current role and authority, with the vision statement being more encompassing to allow for a more basinwide perspective. Paul Wemhoener thought the vision should be written such that the actions of both the Partnership and partners individually can be judged to be consistent with the vision. Mark Wachtel said he thought the idea has always been for the Partnership to go further than specific legislation, so the vision should reflect that; he said it would be nice to have a group that goes existing authority to serve a central role, so he suggests separating the vision from the legislation is a good idea. Hedia Adelsman said to have the vision reflect the uniqueness of the Partnership and the Walla Walla watershed. After all comments were collected, the group agreed to move forward with the agenda and revisit the discussion later in the meeting. Cathy Schaeffer suggested that a post-meeting follow-up exercise might be helpful for PAG members to organize their input on the vision statement, and later in the meeting it was agreed that Cathy would send out this ‘assignment’ for PAG member feedback by May 7th to be discussed at the next PAG meeting.

Goals and objectives: An overview of the Partnership’s goals and objectives was given by Cathy Schaeffer, with updated goals and objectives provided for advance review reflecting the previous meeting comments and suggestions. Amanda Cronin suggested modification of goal 3 to being about implementing projects instead of developing/employing procedures/policies. Hedia Adelsman suggested just saying “successfully

managing water at a basin level” and Nichole Curet mentioned education as a valuable addition. Roger Lizut said we might reconsider solely using the term ‘sustain’ because it may be better to add ‘develop and sustain’ since the Partnership is looking to build new partnering relationships. Andrea Burkhart mentioned that she agrees with adding education in some form, perhaps in an outreach/marketing context. Phil Brick said it may be useful to mention creating opportunities for people to learn what water management tools are out there. An inventory of the draft goals so far is listed below, which will be the basis of the next steps and subject to change:

- Develop and sustain collaborative partnerships to provide innovative, adaptive solutions to Walla Walla’s complex water allocation challenges.
- Manage water with consideration of all basin needs, including environmental, agricultural, economic and cultural.
- Successfully implement innovative water management actions at the basin level.
- Educate the community and water users about creative opportunities to meet the basin’s water management needs.

With good progress on the goals, a break was taken at 4:15pm and the group then reconvened.

The group then discussed the objectives, with delisting of ESA species discussed. It was stated the Partnership should aim to make decisions compatible with delisting criteria, with the general idea that the Partnership cannot be responsible (or take credit) for delisting of the species; therefore, it was suggested to soften the objectives language to reflect the Partnership is going to help advance toward delisting, or change this to a goal rather than objective. With regard to the goals and objectives, a goal of viability/sustainability was suggested to speak to long-term objectives and not just limit the objectives to the ten-year pilot period. Some said the objectives as drafted appeared to be more like goals, and the recurring discussion was “What things can the Partnership have influence over directly?” It was suggested that the Partnership could remove reference to fish altogether, since the Salmon Recovery Board is leading that effort. Some said that priority stream reaches may be hard to define, but staff reminded that the watershed plan and salmon recovery plan provide this. After some additional discussion about roles of the Partnership and its partnering implementers, it was suggested that the PAG members comment and provide feedback on goals and objectives by drafting and aligning objectives under each of the four draft goals. The group asked that staff provide the draft goals to the PAG electronically for comment by May 7th.

Cathy Schaeffer introduced discussion on parameters for Partnership focus, recognizing that this had been part of most discussions today so far. As well, the metrics of success were introduced and the group recognized the connections between objectives and outcomes. With time running out, Cathy continued in introducing the draft strategic actions element. The body of existing work, including the Watershed Plan and Salmon Recovery Plan, was briefly reviewed, with emphasis on the recent production of the Watershed Planning Unit Performance Report (2009) and the Snake River Board’s Three-Year Workplan for 2009-2011. Recognizing that additional work will need to occur on the draft strategic actions, Cathy noted that a report on this meeting will be provided to the Partnership Board and that a next meeting of the PAG will likely be followed by a meeting of the Water Resource Panel to discuss actions and objectives. Final strategic planning comments included Gene Warren offering that perhaps the Partnership could issue a progress report card to reflect success in this first year. Roland Schirman noted that he has always envisioned the Partnership as becoming a place to ensure that efforts are coordinated and not duplicated. Greg Farrens agreed, suggesting that the Partnership could be a clearinghouse once it matures. Overall, the Partnership is expected to support many partners and projects, in addition to implementing its own authorities and programs.

As the meeting closed, brief updates were provided as follows: There have been 2 water banking applications completed, 11 more have been received. The one local water plan is currently being processed. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.