

CHAPTER THREE

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders are defined as those individuals and organizations with a “stake” or interest in the outcome of the planning process. Stakeholders may include elected officials, citizens, and representatives of tribes, government agencies, nonprofit groups, and businesses. The chapter describes efforts to involve the public and other stakeholders in the process.

3.1 STAKEHOLDERS AND RELATIONSHIP TO BASIN PLAN

The White River Basin Plan relies on the involvements of citizens; the Storm Drainage and Surface Water Management Advisory Board (SWAB); federal, State of Washington, and local agencies; and Pierce County departments and programs potentially affected by implementation of recommended capital improvements projects and programmatic actions of this plan.

Citizens and landowners in the White River Basin planning area are the primary stakeholders. Other stakeholders include the City of Sumner; City of Bonney Lake, City of Buckley, Lake Tapps Task Force, Save Lake Tapps Coalition, Pierce County Planning and Land Services (PALS), Pierce County Conservation District, Puyallup Tribe, Muckleshoot Tribe, FEMA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and drainage districts.

Many stakeholders in the White River Basin are interested in the future management of Lake Tapps and the White River. Pierce County Water Programs does not have control over management of water rights and water levels in Lake Tapps and the White River. The Washington Department of Ecology is responsible for issuing and regulating water rights in Washington. Therefore, stakeholder involvement in the basin planning process is focused on addressing storm drainage, flooding, water quality, and habitat issues in the unincorporated Pierce County portions of the basin.

Water Programs incorporated considerable public information and public involvement in the development of the White River Basin Plan to respond better to the varied interest of people living and working in the basin. The following describes the core efforts undertaken in two phases.

3.2 PHASE I

Water Programs staff identified people, groups, and agencies with an interest in the outcome of the White River Basin Plan. An introduction to the basin plan and planning process was sent to the people identified. Stakeholders assisted in identifying issues and important values to consider in the plan at public meetings, through completed questionnaires and one-on-one meetings.

Dissemination of information about the basin planning process, acquisition of resident feedback on lake issues, and presentation of the draft Phase I findings for public comment were the focus of the Phase I stakeholder involvement. To implement Phase I work, a public meeting was held to describe the basin planning process and solicit information from interested parties. Meeting announcements were mailed to individuals on the Water Programs mailing list for the White River Basin and also published in the local newspaper. The meeting was held on January 12, 2005, at North Tapps Middle School, located at 20029 12th Street East in Sumner, Washington, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

At the meeting, Pierce County staff and their consultants presented a description of the planning program and its goals. Questions and comments were invited. Meeting participants were asked to provide any information they might have on past flooding or water quality problems and the use of local streams by salmonids. A questionnaire was distributed to attendees with a request that they answer the questions and return the forms to the County project manager. The questions focused on land use, septic system use, use of pesticides and fertilizers, water quality and flooding, and habitat issues.

Additional briefings were held with the Lake Tapps Task Force, Puyallup Tribe, and public officials to describe the ongoing work by Water Programs and the basin characterization report development.

3.2.1 Questionnaire Results

A tabulated summary of the White River and Lake Tapps Basin Study Questionnaire distributed at the January 12, 2005, public meeting is included in Appendix A. Thirty-two people signed in at the meeting and 24 questionnaires were completed by participants. Not every question was answered on each questionnaire; therefore, results show a different number of responses for each question. A list of public meeting attendees follows the questionnaire.

In general, the results of the questionnaire indicate the following:

- A majority of the participants own a single-family, lakefront residence with landscaping that they water and fertilize.
- Greater than 60 percent of participants believe there is no water quality problem in Lake Tapps.
- Greater than 80 percent believe there is a weed (primarily milfoil) problem in the spring, summer, or fall.
- A majority believe there are too many boats on the lake in the summer.
- A majority of the participants would be willing to accept some limitations on the use of their property if they understood those limitations, especially regarding limits on fertilizer or pesticide use.
- Most participants were not aware of flooding or habitat problems in the basin area.

A public meeting is scheduled for September 2007 to communicate the results of this characterization report to the community.

3.3 PHASE II

In Phase II of the basin planning process, decisions will need to be made about the issues identified during Phase I. Stakeholder involvement in the evaluation and selection of remedies for flooding and environmental problems will be critical to the success of the plan. If the stakeholder involvement strategy is effective, the final basin plan will have broad support among residents of the White River Basin and Lake Tapps area.

Public involvement in Phase II will begin with the County's Storm Drainage and Surface Water Management Advisory Board's review of a preliminary draft plan. The SWAB (Section 3.3.1) reviews all basin plans for consistency and compliance with County surface water management programs and policies. Following SWAB review, a series of public meetings will be held on the draft plan.

Based on all comments received, final revisions to the draft document will be made. The final White River Basin Plan will be presented to the Pierce County Planning Commission for approval and the Pierce County Council for adoption.

3.3.1 Storm Drainage and Surface Water Management Board

The SWAB is a nine-member advisory board appointed by the Pierce County Executive and confirmed by the Council to address surface water management issues in unincorporated Pierce County. Its mission is to work with Pierce County Water Programs to develop recommendations on the County's surface water management program for presentation to the Pierce County Council and Executive Office. Board members are involved in such issues as storm drainage, water quality, storm drainage plans, rate structures and capital improvement projects, financing, and annual program goals.

The current SWAB work plan and projects in review can be found at the following website: <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/services/home/environ/water/general/swabmain.htm>.

3.3.2 Public Meetings

Dissemination of information to the public will be accomplished in two ways. Stakeholders will be asked to report study progress to any groups with which they may be affiliated. In addition, three public meetings will be held. Their purposes will be as follows:

- Meeting 1: Describe Phase I findings and solicit additional information on surface water problems.
- Meetings 2 and 3: Describe alternative remedial actions and content of the draft plan and solicit comment.

Notices of the meetings will be placed in local newspapers. A press release will be prepared just before the second meeting and used to encourage placement of a story on the planning process in the local newspaper. Other avenues of suggested meeting notifications could include the Pierce County website or mailings to interested stakeholder groups.