

Small Water Systems Technical Committee

June 5, 2006, 9:30-12:30

Seattle–KC Public Health Eastgate

Facilitator: Tamie Kellogg, Kellogg Consulting

Meeting Summary Notes

1. Introductions—Housekeeping

- See the attached list of attendees.
- Jane Lamensdorf-Bucher (KCDNRP) reported that the Web site for the regional water supply planning effort should be ready this week. The site will host a homepage that describes the process, with links to pages for each technical committee. The Small Water Systems committee will post approved meeting summary notes, work products, and links to relevant documents produced by others.

Action Item: Jane will send the address for the Web site to members of all committees once the site is ready.

2. Summary Notes

- Notes for the May 16 meeting were approved without change.
- The committee agreed that the notes for each meeting should be called “summary notes.”

3. Identify New Issues/Questions

Members raised the following issues/questions:

- What are the legal rights for use of existing individual wells, including the rights to continual use a well for non-potable uses such as irrigation, after the property is hooked up to a public system?
- Well decommissioning: Need to provide people with incentives, such as a lower cost alternative, to insure that proper decommissioning takes place.
- The continued use of wells for irrigation after a Group B public water supply well has been replaced by connection to a Group A public water supply. PHSKC has mandatory practice for Group B conversions, but no official policy for private individual wells. For individual wells, PHSKC asks owners to file a covenant on the title of the property alerting any future purchaser that this well is for irrigation only, and not to be connected to the home or interconnected to the Group A public water source. PHSKC also notifies Ecology for concurrence with the irrigation use.
- Utilities currently are not notified when new wells are being drilled and existing wells are being converted or decommissioned in their service areas.

Action Item: Add the above issues to the issues list if they aren't already listed.

Agenda Item for June 26 meeting: Ecology and PHSKC will present their policies, practices, and regulations regarding well decommissioning.

4. Finalize Charter and Workplan

The committee approved the Charter and Workplan, with the following changes:

- The second sentence under “Purpose/Objectives” will read: The committee will focus on the primary goal of ensuring that small systems will reliably provide their customers/users with a safe and adequate domestic water supply.
- Item 4C under “Scope” will read: Identify significant areas where the current regulations, policies, and processes do not prevent and/or resolve small system problems identified in the item above.
- The “Schedule” section will read as follows: The committee will meet approximately every three weeks. The goal is to produce a final report by the currently scheduled last meeting date in October. This schedule is subject to refinement based on committee progress.
- Add a “Definitions” section that includes definitions for “domestic water supply” and “small water systems.”

Action Item for June 26 meeting: Tamie will revise the Charter/Workplan based on today’s discussion (using Track Changes).

5. Data/Information Gathering and Potential Problem/Issue Identification

- DOH discussed the January 1991 *Small Water Systems: Problems and Proposed Solutions, A report to the Legislature*—the product of a committee that was convened by DOH and that met for one year. The recommendations section of the report was distributed to Small Water Systems committee members. As a part of the discussion, PHSKC described its funding sources (customer fees, contracts with DOH, and King County general fund).

Action Item for June 26 meeting: Cathie will scan the 1991 document, post it on the new Web site, and distribute CDs to committee members.

Agenda Item for June 26 meeting: DOH, Ecology, and PHSKC will report on progress made on the recommendations in the 1991 report, including reasons for not implementing recommendations and what is needed to fully implement recommendations.

Agenda Items for future meetings:

- *Present small systems’ perspectives on operation issues, existing and any proposed regulatory framework, and other issues.*
- *Discuss funding sources and amounts available to agencies for regulating small water systems to determine whether the funding is adequate. This would include a global view of the funding available to PHSKC to complete their regulatory work scope under King County Board of Health Title 12 and Title 13, along with contract work under both DOH and Ecology (well seal and decommissioning).*

- Members discussed the Rimrock receivership case study. The Rimrock water system was outside any water utility service area. Snohomish County (receiver) is currently working with remaining households on the system to set up an association for owning and operating the system. Receivership is an option for systems that have already failed (not systems that are failing) and where customers aren't willing to get involved in making the systems work. Often customers can't afford the costs to fix failed systems or to hook up to larger systems. Examples of small systems that were assumed by larger utilities and the costs of extending service to these systems were discussed (Ravensdale in Covington and a small system in the Cedar River water district).

Utility representatives indicated that King County land use policies that limit the size of mains going through rural areas interfered with the efficiency and long-range planning in their service areas. They felt that pipe sizes should be based more on engineering criteria for ultimate service to a particular area at build out. Questions were raised regarding ways to avoid/prevent system failure and thus receivership, whether counties should have contingency plans in place for receiverships, and how prepared we are in general for receiverships.

Add to Issues List:

- *Urban/rural levels of service and land use policy limits on water main size.*
- *Avoiding/preventing system failure and thus receivership, whether counties should have contingency plans in place for receiverships, and how prepared we are in general for receiverships.*

Agenda Item for future meeting: DOH will provide information on the grant program used to help fund hookup of a small system to the Cedar River water system.

- PHSKC and Ken Johnson (KCDNRP) are in the process of identifying trends in the past five years in development of new single-family wells in King County.
- PHSKC met with DSHS regarding the number, location, and regulation of Group B systems that serve childcare centers and home daycares. Currently, home daycare centers have been allowed to be licensed without a PHSKC review of the water systems serving these homes. Standards need to be developed for this type of water use that will both protect public health while at the same time not impose financial burdens on these businesses to the extent that they do not apply for a daycare license.
- As a result of a change in the food service code, bed and breakfasts must now be regulated in King County. As part of the process, their water source must be evaluated as a Group B public water supply. A utility representative asked if it would be possible to provide a map showing the location of all of the childcare centers and home daycares.

Agenda Item for June 26 meeting: PHSKC will provide members with as much information as is available on the number and locations of childcare centers and

home daycares in King County.

- As part of a contract for services with DOH, PHSKC conducts site surveys of existing Group A systems with fewer than 100 connections. DOH is responsible for follow-up to the surveys and for all other Group A system regulation.
- KCDNRP distributed two pages regarding new irrigation wells: (1) a map that shows wells drilled and/or applied for in the Sawyer Ridge area inside the Covington service area, and (2) a list of the number of wells drilled in various service areas in King County.
- Sarah Ogier—King County Groundwater Protection Program—reported on the work of a the Groundwater Task Force that met for seven months in 2005. A report issued in December 2005 summarizes the activity and recommendations of the group. The purpose of the group was to identify services that King County should provide to protect groundwater sources. The participants tended to agree that most groundwater problems are related to Group B systems and individual wells and not to the large Group A systems. It recommended the possible reactivation of Group B fee authority and instituting fees for private or “exempt” wells to fund services. It recommended that no fees be charged to Group A systems because it was perceived that most current PHSKC services benefit only small systems. The committee could not reach agreement on recommendations for King County services. The Groundwater Protection Program is currently limited in nature and operating under subregional interlocal agreements to provide services to interested partners in subareas of the County, including Redmond, Woodinville, Issaquah, and Sammamish Plateau. Additionally, the County runs a Vashon Island local groundwater program.

Action Item for June 26 meeting: Sarah will make the 2005 report available to the committee (send them the link to KC groundwater Web site or include a link on the new regional water planning Web site).

Agenda Item for future meeting: Sarah will present more information on the work being performed under the interlocal agreements.

- Questions were raised regarding the cumulative effect of exempt wells on water supplies. Members expressed the importance of identifying the typical use of wells (gallons per day) as input to the committee’s impact analysis. Although some members said that water use may not be as high as standard estimates, others said that new multimillion dollar homes on five-acre parcels use huge amounts of water. PHSKC mentioned that based on the amendments to the King County comprehensive plan, King County does not allow use of individual wells for new platting.

Agenda Item for future meeting: King County will present development requirements under Title 13 of the KC code and under the GMA.

6. Road Map for Future Work

Tamie described the draft roadmap for completing the committee’s Charter/Workplan. The committee thought that the roadmap was a good start but that it may be somewhat ambitious.

Members mentioned two tasks in particular that may take more time than indicated (refining the questions/issues list and identifying gaps in data). Tamie assured members that data could still be gathered after gaps were identified (iterative process) and that members will decide what data to pursue (or not to pursue). The committee agreed to accept the roadmap as presented, with the caveat that it may need to be refined later.

Action Items: The planning group will prepare a draft outline of the final report and send it to the committee at least one week before the June 26 meeting. The group will also start to compile a summary of data gathered so far.

Agenda Item for the June 26 meeting: Revisit the list of questions/issues that the committee has been generating.

Agenda Item for future meeting: Kaleen will present a chart that shows coordination among the technical committees.

7. Updates: Technical Committees and Coordinating Committee

At the June 1 meeting of technical committee chairs, it was agreed that committees interested in using part of the \$250,000 from the state should refine their proposals and send them to Kaleen by the end of day June 7. Committee members discussed the placeholder proposal developed by a subcommittee of the Small Water Systems committee for purposes of the June 1 meeting. The committee decided to delete one of the four work items that were proposed at the May 16 committee meeting (Item D, develop a crosswalk between the DOH Sentry and the Ecology WRATS databases) and to add another item (report writing, production, and graphics). Dollar amounts were allocated to each of the four items for a total of \$50,000.

Action Item: KCDNRP will refine and add more detail to the proposal, including justifications for each work item, and will submit to Kaleen.

8. Next Steps

Next meeting: June 26.

Action Item: Tamie will send members an email requesting verification that the August 28 meeting can be moved to August 29.

Abbreviations: DOH—Washington State Department of Health, DNRP—King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Ecology—Washington State Department of Ecology, PHSKC—Public Health—Seattle and King County, CWSP—Coordinated Water System Plan, SPU—Seattle Public Utilities.