

ICICLE STRATEGY
Icicle Work Group Meeting Summary
Thursday, December 14, 2023; 11:30am to 2:00pm
Confluence Technology Center, Wenatchee

Members/Alternates Present: Melissa Downes, Ecology-OCR; Theo Burgoon, TU; Shon Smith, Chelan County Commissioner; Erica Taecker, USFS (online); Nate White, WDFW (online); Carl Florea, City of Leavenworth; Cory Kamphaus, YN; David Blodgett, YN (online); Mike Kaputa, Chelan County; Levi Jantzer, IPID; Mat Maxey, USFWS; Bill Gale, USFWS; Chuck Brushwood, CTCR; Jason Breidert, CTCR; Greg McLaughlin, WWT (online); Nicole Ahlem, BOR; Brock Hoenes, WDFW; Sharon Lunz, ICWC; Shaun Seaman, ICWC;

Guests Present:; Margie Van Cleve (online); Bryan Maloney, Chelan County; John Soden, NSD;

Staff/Consultants Present: Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting; Peter Dykstra, IWG Facilitation; Cynthia Carlstad, NHC, IWG Facilitation; Dave Rice, Anchor QEA; Bryan Maloney, Chelan County, for AWS agenda item; John Soden, Natural Systems Design, for AWS agenda item; Abby Hendrickson, Chelan County; Ingrid Eckstrom, Ecology-OCR

Decisions Today

1. Expedited New Project Funding Request – For project funding requests that come in between a Steering Committee and IWG meeting and are portrayed as urgent, the IWG directed facilitators to review the request against IWG priorities and guiding principles, and if in alignment with those, then provide the request to the IWG prior to the meeting (ideally a week in advance). Sponsors should understand that the vetting process with the IWG may be more challenging using this approach rather than pre-vetting through the Steering Committee (which is the preferred process). If the proposed project does not appear to align with IWG priorities and guiding principles, the facilitators should not advance it to the IWG.
2. Letter of Support for County WaterSMART grant application – IWG supports; Co-Conveners to sign and provide letter of support on behalf of IWG.

Alluvial Water Storage (AWS) Assessment Results

Brian Maloney and John Soden presented results for the Icicle Creek Alluvial Water Storage Assessment (AWS). The AWS assessment was a collaborative effort between Natural System Designs and Chelan County, the goal being to identify suitable AWS projects for the Icicle. Suitability for an AWS project is determined primarily by wide floodplains where water can be dispersed and can have the largest impact on water storage potential, the grade of that floodplain being a key factor.

Through a site assessment, and feasibility analysis NSD was able to identify several sites that would be appropriate for AWS in the Icicle. Site 3, on river left floodplain down-stream of the Doctor Creek confluence (RM 15.5), was identified as the priority reach for a project. Next steps for this project are to progress to preliminary design.

Discussion:

- Groundwater response to stream changes is being monitored by groundwater wells.
- Ice loading/ice dams were considered in the site assessment and feasibility analysis.

- There is potential for AWS to have a benefit to temperature, though it is not expected to be significant at this reach.
- AWS projects have been used in other parts of the West for water storage to significant benefits.
- Potential for aquatic habitat benefit, but species-specific evaluation has not been done.

Project Funding Decision Process

This agenda item was a follow-up from the October IWG meeting where the IWG requested time to consider whether its current project funding decision process should be updated to include an expedited pathway for some projects.

Cynthia reviewed the current process:

1. Proposed project is vetted by Steering Committee for alignment with IWG priorities and guiding principles.
2. Steering Committee decides whether to recommend to the full IWG for funding.
3. IWG considers the funding request and makes a decision on funding. The IWG may also request revisions and/or either condition its approval or invite the project sponsor to bring a revised project back for consideration.

There have been instances where projects have bypassed this process because project sponsors portrayed funding decisions as time sensitive. Is there a need for an expedited process?

Discussion:

- The current process is an opportunity to polish the projects before they are brought to the whole work group which is a valuable process.
- There is also value in being flexible to short notice projects that are good, but do not have time to go through the formal review process.
- Bill recommends these short notice projects still be brought for funding decision, but with a disclaimer that it has not been vetted by the steering committee.
- The hope is that, due to increased meeting frequency, this won't be an issue often.
- Cynthia recommends that for short notice projects, facilitators email out the project documents for review by the work group prior to a meeting, with the understanding that these projects will likely undergo more scrutiny by the work group than if they had been vetted at the Steering Committee.
- Mike asked about the formal project form that is submitted to the work group and if it is necessary if the project is seen by the Steering Committee first? Cynthia responded that the short project funding request form was designed to provide concise information to the IWG about how the proposed project supports IWG guiding principles, so the expectation is that sponsors would provide it to the Steering Committee, and it would also then be available to the IWG.
- Mapping out budgets and contracting timelines plays a role here and is something that the County manages. It is important to batch contract amendments between Chelan County and Ecology.
- Melissa added that the work group just needs to be aware of how much these types of projects come to the table and make sure that the expedited process is not being taken advantage of.

Lake Release and Instream Flow Management

Dan presented a synthesis of 2023 lake releases and the corresponding Icicle Creek flows (see [Icicle-InstreamFlowFigures_11122023_Calibrated.pdf](#).) The lake management group met several times throughout the season to discuss lake management focused on meeting IPID and USFWS needs first, then instream flow targets. Dan showed a graph with results of the lake releases made this season. Results show responses in historic channel to lake release adjustments. Despite being in drought conditions, lake releases kept flows in the historic channel above historic low flow until mid-September when lake outlets were dry.

- Results: 35-54 cfs or 4,585 ac ft of flow benefit over the irrigation season.

These are great results achieved merely through coordination. Once automation is implemented, these results can be better, including extending water to later in the season. Based on these results, IPID and USFWS have applied for temporary trust water donations for the 2023-2026 irrigation seasons. These trust donations would be verified annually after the irrigation season and are projected to range in size because of current limitations for continuous flow measurement/lake level, and manual lake outlet valve adjustments.

- USFWS (Snow Lake) – 2,521 acre-feet instream flow benefit, 15.3 cfs average instream flow benefit; 40 cfs peak instream flow benefit
- IPID (Colchuck, Klonaqua, Square Lakes – 2,063 acre-feet instream flow benefit, 12.5 cfs average instream flow benefit, 38 cfs peak instream flow benefit.

Chelan County (Wenatchee basin at 72%) was not designated in state drought declaration (70%) even though we had drought conditions, we were just above the threshold.

Discussion:

- Several members voiced interest in moving automation along as quickly as possible. What is the expected timeframe?
 - There are 30% designs but automation remains at that point and there are permitting/access/equipment needs.
 - Another reason for slow progress is that automation ties to the 8-mile lake project, which is permit/process heavy.
- Mike asked what are the elements that need to be addressed to move automation forward? Dan summarized as follows:
 - Science- Finding adequate instrumentation has been challenging. Aspect now has a subcontractor retained to design the communication system that is essential for operation.
 - Permitting- need 8-Mile EIS to be completed before work can be done, since the lakes will be operated in coordination.
 - Political- working with and installing equipment in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness is controversial.
- Margie commented that the sooner the IWG involves the environmental community on this issue, the better. The perception is that if you're not being open, you're hiding something.
- This could be an opportunity for outreach to the greater public... should wilderness stakeholder engagement be brought to the steering committee? - all agreed, yes.

Short Updates

Domestic Water Subcommittee Status Report

The subcommittee adopted this name because, as the subcommittee continues to look at instream flow rule amendment process, there is also a need to look at alternative strategies for domestic water supply needs. There has been initial brainstorming conversation about what constitutes “flow restoration projects for habitat”- needed to discuss how people define this so a commonality can be found to work towards meeting that goal. No conclusions yet. Subcommittee will meet again next month to hopefully have some conclusions by February.

City of Leavenworth Settlement Agreement

The City and Ecology have reached a settlement agreement to address the City’s water right. Litigation had been ongoing for over 10 years and courts gave the City and Ecology 6-month in July 2023 to reach an agreement or the case would be taken to court. This settlement agreement is the result of that and both the City and Ecology are pleased that they were able to come to the table. The agreement does not have defined solution, which is where they will be leaning on the IWG to assist.

Support letter for WaterSMART grant for Water Conservation Program

County is requesting a letter of support to expand the lawn buy-back program that the IWG has funded. **IWG supported this request.**

Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery SWISP

Phase 1 of construction is complete (headworks, fish screen, roughened channel). The hatchery has now taken over operation of the intake from phase 1- fish have already been observed going up the roughened channel. Once higher flows start the hatchery will have a better understanding of what the results will be. Phase 2 (piping) is on hold indefinitely, and Phase 3 (revegetation) will be done in spring 2023.

COIC Project

Project going to bid mid-January. Most funding agreements have been secured. County has been working with COIC on project oversight. If the bids are good, the project could be awarded as early as February 1. In the process of finalizing a three-party agreement between COIC, County, and WWT. Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2024.

Outreach

Discussion deferred to Steering Committee – IWG requests that Steering Committee develop an outreach plan at its January meeting. New videos have been completed and will be added to corresponding project pages once finalized.

Eightmile Lake Dam Rebuild and Restoration EIS

Ecology is still responding to the comments from the draft EIS. Hoping to complete by the first quarter of 2024.

Public Comment

No public comment

Upcoming Meetings:

Continuing into 2024 with 2nd Thursday of every other month schedule for Steering Committee/IWG

- Steering Committee—January 11, 2024
- IWG—February 8, 2024