

WILLARD SPUR STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

AUGUST 16, 2011

Refer to meeting recording at: <http://www.willardspur.utah.gov/committee/meetings.htm>

NAME/AFFILIATION

Leah Ann Lamb*	Utah Division of Water Quality
Chris Montague*	The Nature Conservancy
Pam Kramer*	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Joan Degiorgio*	The Nature Conservancy
Rob Dubuc*	Western Resource Advocates
Theron Miller [#]	JR/FBWAC
Jeff DenBleyker	CH2M HILL
Thomas Bosteels*	Great Salt Lake Brine Shrimp
Jodi Gardberg	Utah Division of Water Quality
Jeff Ostermiller [#]	Utah Division of Water Quality
John Luft [#]	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Ryan Nesbitt*	Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands
Dick West*	Duck Clubs
Jim Hagy [#]	U.S. EPA Office of Research & Development
Karen Hamilton*	U.S. EPA Region VIII
David Tarboton [#]	Utah State University
Bruce Howard*	Perry/Willard Cities
Mayor Jerry Nelson*	Perry Willard Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant
John Isanhart*	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

* Indicates committee member or alternate

[#] Indicates Science Panel member

ROLL CALL

As Walt Baker of the DEQ Division of Water Quality and Steering Committee Chairman was not able to attend; Leah Ann Lamb, his alternate, served in his place. Leah Ann found all committee members or alternates in attendance with the exception of those from Great Salt Lake Advisory Council, Great Salt Lake Minerals, and the regulated publicly owned wastewater treatment community.

SUMMARY OF SCIENCE PANEL VISIT TO WILLARD SPUR

Jeff DenBleyker provided a brief overview of the areas visited in Willard Spur and key observations made. Key observations:

1. Some macroalgae observed near the PWRWTP outfall.
2. Water was more turbid on south side of Spur near the Willard Bay embankment.
3. Observed some small dead fish floating – primarily shad.
4. Numerous birds were observed throughout Willard Spur.
5. Submerged aquatic vegetation was observed everywhere travelled; thought to represent a nearly 100% cover. Water was very clear everywhere except as noted above.
6. The Spur is still flowing out into Bear River Bay.
7. Some patchy areas of macroalgae and duckweed were observed near the middle to west side of Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

Jeff Ostermiller was asked and noted that he did not remember seeing as much SAV coverage last year as we saw on this trip however the Spur had a much smaller surface area at the time. USFWS has noted that this is the first year when they have noticed macroalgae.

SUMMARY OF SCIENCE PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON MONDAY, AUGUST 15

See presentation slides at: <http://www.willardspur.utah.gov/documents/SC081611/Slides.pdf>

Jeff DenBleyker referred to a new memorandum summarizing the project background that was prepared for the Science Panel and asked for comments. The memorandum may be found at http://www.willardspur.utah.gov/documents/SP081611/TM_Background.pdf. Jeff summarized the Science Panel's discussion regarding ongoing sampling and data management. Jeff Ostermiller summarized early observations made from data and measurements. All agreed that this year is an unusually wet year. Mayor Nelson described higher than expected flows from the PWRWTP – likely due to groundwater infiltration to their pipelines. Jeff DenBleyker provided a summary of the dynamics in flow and water level observed this year in Willard Spur. A brief slideshow illustrating how Willard Spur has changed since 1984 can be found at <http://www.willardspur.utah.gov/documents/SP081611/WillardSpurTimeSeries.wmv>

SUMMARY OF SCIENCE PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 16 (REFER TO RECORDING AT MINUTE 34)

See presentation slides referenced above.

Jeff DenBleyker provided a summary of Science Panel discussions during the day of August 16. The Science Panel had reviewed the project objective and asked for input on final wording. The wording previously used was: "What water quality standards are appropriately protective of beneficial uses of Willard Spur waters as they relate to the proposed POTW discharge?" The Science Panel wondered if the focus was limited to nutrients or to all possible contaminants. The Steering Committee agreed that the focus is nutrients but asked that they be notified if other problems are identified. Chris Montague asked whether the word "appropriately" should even be used in the objective. Jim Hagy and Karen Hamilton pointed out that U.S. EPA would require its scientists to use the word "fully" rather than "appropriately". Scientists are typically asked to determine what would be "fully" protective and then it is up to DWQ and the Water Quality Board to determine what is appropriate given other factors and how to implement the policy. The Steering Committee agreed that the Science Panel should use the objective statement as worded: "**What water quality standards are fully protective of beneficial uses of Willard Spur waters as they related to the proposed POTW discharge?**" The Steering Committee and DWQ will address what is appropriate at a later time.

Rob Dubuc asked that the studies be completed with the idea of addressing water quality throughout the entire Willard Spur.

Jeff summarized the Science Panel's hypothesis for critical condition; being that Willard Spur does not flow out and into Bear River Bay and the PWRWTP outflow reaches the open water of Willard Spur. This hypothesis will help determine the studies to be completed. Jeff also summarized the Science Panel's discussions regarding the draft conceptual models and discussion regarding upcoming studies.

Jeff asked the Steering Committee for input on beginning bird diet studies this fall. The objective is to determine what waterfowl are eating when they stage on Willard Spur this fall. This will provide important information that will help develop studies to begin in 2012. Dr. John Cavitt may be able to add this site to an ongoing study of his. DWR may be able to collect additional birds that Dr. Cavitt can evaluate. The Steering Committee agreed to proceed. DWQ will proceed and advise the Steering Committee regarding the proposed workplan.

PATH FORWARD (REFER TO RECORDING MINUTE 1:14)

See presentation slides referenced above.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on September 22 after the Science panel meeting. The next meetings will be on November 3 and January 12, 2012. The Steering Committee agreed that DWQ will share data with the Science Panel first and distribute it to the public only after the Science Panel has validated it.