

WRIA 9 Watershed Ecosystem Forum Meeting Summary

Auburn City Hall

May 8, 2014, 4:02 – 6:35 p.m.

Members Present		
1.	Councilmember Bill Peloza, Meeting Chair	City of Auburn
2.	Councilmember Marlla Mhooon, Co- Chair	City of Covington
3.	Brian Anderson	The Boeing Company
4.	Al Barrie	Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (MSFEG)
5.	George Blomberg	Port of Seattle
6.	Councilmember Kathryn Campbell	City of SeaTac
7.	Jay Covington	City of Renton
8.	Deputy Mayor Bob Edgar	City of Burien
9.	Michael Garrity	American Rivers
10.	Matt Goehring	WA Dept. of Natural Resources
11.	Nancy Hutto	King County Agriculture Commission
12.	Councilmember Linda Johnson	City of Maple Valley
13.	Councilmember Shawn McEvoy	City of Normandy Park
14.	Ken Miller	City of Federal Way
15.	Kathy Minsch	City of Seattle
16.	Councilmember Erika Morgan	City of Black Diamond
17.	Joan Nolan	WA Dept. of Ecology
18.	Councilmember Dana Ralph	City of Kent
19.	Stewart Reinbold	WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
20.	Councilmember Dennis Robertson	City of Tukwila
21.	Gordon Thomson	US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)
22.	Councilmember Dave Upthegrove	King County
23.	Greg Volkhardt	Tacoma Water
24.	Alex Wilford	Master Builders Association
Alternates Present		
25.	Chris Andersen	Auburn
26.	Kara Durbin	King County
27.	Dave Garland	Ecology
28.	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
29.	Chris McMeen	Tacoma Water
30.	Ron Straka	City of Renton
31.	Councilmember Nancy Tosta	City of Burien
Other Attendees		
32.	Dave Batker	Earth Economics
33.	joan burlingame	Private Citizen
34.	Elizabeth Butler	Recreation & Conservation Office
35.	Claire Dyckman	King County
36.	Col. Bruce Estok	Corps
37.	Kollin Higgins	King County/WRIA 9
38.	Josh Kahan	King County
39.	Lisa Lantz	Washington State Parks
40.	Tara Luckie	Environmental Science Center
41.	Tyler Patterson	Tacoma Water
42.	Steve Roemer	City of Burien
43.	Tracy Stanton	Earth Economics

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44.	Pat Sumption	Friends of the Green River
45.	Jean White	King County
46.	Bruce Wulkan	Puget Sound Partnership
47.	Karen Bergeron	WRIA 9 Habitat Project Coordinator
48.	Linda Grob	WRIA 9 Administrative Coordinator
49.	Maureen Judge	WRIA 9 Communications Coordinator
50.	Elissa Ostergaard	WRIA 9 Planning & Stewardship Coordinator
51.	Doug Osterman	WRIA 9 Watershed Coordinator

Meeting Chair Bill Peloza opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the City of Auburn, and asking attendees to introduce themselves.

1. Public Comment

Steve Roemer, City of Burien, reported that Seahurst Park is well into construction, with work on the upland area and drainage now being done. The work is all supposed to be finished by July 11, 2014. He said we had a great relationship with all our partners, and he voiced appreciation especially for the neighbors and tenants, Environmental Science Center, and Highline School District, for their patience during the construction process. Beach walks will be advertised after the restoration is finished. Doug Osterman, Watershed Coordinator, added that the Seahurst Park project was awarded the 2014 Futurewise Livable Community Award, and brought the framed award for circulation around the table.

Joan Burlingame, citizen, commented that she was on the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council for a dozen years, and she said it is important to reach out and have good impact on the citizens of the WRIAs. She asserted that an action taken in WRIA 9 has set us back by ten years, and she said she hoped this group can exert pressure to correct a problem. About four years ago King County approached a farmer in Enumclaw to request an easement to flood her property for salmon recovery. Joan reported that the farmer, Crystal Carter, is the rare farmer who can support herself on the farm. Crystal said she would not be able to sustain her ability to farm, and she denied the county's request. The Big Spring Creek project went forward, her farm is now flooded four to five months per year losing \$300-\$500 a month, and she now has to rent other pasture to farm. Joan said she believes in making lemonade from lemons, and she suggested that WRIA 9 can do a land swap to give this property owner an adjacent property. She mentioned that this is a problem for WRIA 9 public outreach, because Crystal Carter is one of the most loved farmers in the community. Bill Peloza thanked her for her comments, and he recommended that she put her thoughts down in a letter, which he said we would appreciate very much.

Doug Osterman pointed out the letter in the meeting packet from the Watershed Ecosystem Forum (WEF) co-chairs to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) commenting on the proposed riparian minimum buffer widths. He reported that we commented because the proposed buffer widths were not workable, and we believe would cause problems with successful implementation of the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary

<p><i>The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the meeting summary for the February 13, 2014 meeting.</i></p>
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3. WRIA 9 2015-2016 Budget, Work and Staff Plans, and Cost Shares

Bill Pelosa presented the 2015-2016 budgets (pink handout). 2014 is the first increase to the interlocal agreement (ILA) cost shares in nine years. The Management Committee (MC) met a few weeks ago, and recommended we start doing two-year budgets, particularly as several jurisdictions like Auburn and King County are on biennial budgets. The MC recommends a 5% increase for the 2015 budget, and a 3% increase for 2016. Councilmember Pelosa pointed to the salmon-colored cost share handout that shows the increase amount for each jurisdiction by year. He said for Auburn, we are currently paying \$20,997; with the 5% increase in 2015 the total goes to \$22,026 and in 2016, it increases to \$22,687.

Doug Osterman explained that the central issue for WRIA 9 is there's no commitment by the state or federal government to fund some of our work, and he did not want to be reckless about factoring grant programs. Some of the revenue sources are guesswork. He said it is disappointing that we're asked to do what takes a significant amount of resources to do, but there's not a financial commitment for the work to get done, making it an unfunded mandate. This financial contribution by the cities makes up only a small part of the work we have to do. We're relying on the fact that we've saved money over this year, and this rainy day fund is carrying us over into the next two years.

Discussion:

- Kathy Minsch asked for clarification that the 2016 budget is a placeholder budget as is written in the meeting packet cover sheet. Dennis Robertson, MC Chair, agreed that the 2016 is a placeholder budget that will have to be voted on next year. In the meantime we want to give direction to ILA staff who are on a two-year budget.
- Dennis Robertson remarked that this is a conservative budget. WRIA 9 is doing a fantastic job, probably the best in the state, but we're losing the battle. He said we realize we can't fund everything, and we're going to have to do some hard thinking about how we're going to do salmon recovery, not only in the WRIA, but in Puget Sound and the state. Everyone is talking about how we need to change how we fund things, and this doesn't seem the time to be overly frugal about how we spend money. Councilmember Robertson called five percent a very, very small increase.
- Greg Volkhardt inquired about the KCIT (King County Information Technology) surcharge in the budgets. Doug Osterman responded that the county has a new system for the KCIT cost, and all entities in the county will now have to pay to use that service. For now, they're including it as an additional cost in the 2015 budget.
- Greg Volkhardt asked for clarification that we are voting on the 2015 budget, and then a placeholder for 2016. Bill Pelosa responded that the MC recommends approval of the 2015 budget and 2016 placeholder budget.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the 2015 budget, work and staff plans, and ILA cost shares, and the 2016 placeholder budget and ILA cost shares.

4. Draft WRIA 9 2016-2025 Interlocal Agreement

Doug Osterman reported that the current WRIA 9 ILA expires at the end of 2015, which isn't that far off. The WRIA 9 Management Committee (MC) is recommending that the process to update that agreement start this evening. In front of you is the existing ILA that has been marked up to show the recommended changes which are mostly housekeeping issues, and a lot of outdated terminology. The edited ILA shows the existing language and language that the MC recommends removing. He highlighted one nomenclature change which the existing ILA never kept up with, namely the name change for the greater group to Watershed Ecosystem Forum, which formed when the Steering Committee and Watershed

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Forum combined. He suggested the local governments around the table could be called something else, recommending that the parties to the ILA become the Governing Board of the ILA, consisting of the designated reps and alternates.

Doug highlighted one other draft change from the ILA renewal summary handout, intended to clarify “the broad spectrum of environmental management issues addressed by the WRIA 9 Plan, and integrates floodplain and regional stormwater and water quality management as mechanisms for coordinating implementation of the Plan”. He said with so many new elected officials on the WEF, there are questions about all the habitat projects in the Salmon Habitat Plan. Something that slipped through the cracks is how we can use the technical information to inform regulations in their jurisdictions. He said he added a provision to the ILA that if you’re a party to the agreement, you can use any of our information as you see fit to update regulations, code changes, Shoreline Master Plans, Critical Areas Ordinances, etc. The MC discussed whether the ILA should be changed to make this binding, but decided against it.

Doug reported that we have a renewal schedule and a template for comments. We would like you to shop it around within your jurisdiction by the August WEF meeting, when we will discuss what we heard from everybody. He encouraged members to provide comments in the template format. The Draft ILA update and the template for comments, together with more detailed instructions for commenting, will be sent out electronically to Forum members following the meeting. He said the goal is to finalize ILA update language at the November WEF meeting, and seek approval by your jurisdictions by July 2015.

5. WRIA 9 Capital Project Priorities & Budget

Karen Bergeron, Habitat Project Coordinator, said her presentation consists of three decision items, each needing approval by the Forum:

- 2014 WRIA 9 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Habitat Project Priorities and Budget;
- 2015-2017 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Large Capital Project Priorities; and
- 2014 WRIA 9 Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Habitat Capital and Program Budget.

Karen went over the factors considered in selecting projects: 40% transition zone, 30% rearing habitats, 30% spawning habitats; previous projects move forward; portfolio of projects in different phases; and coordination with other grant funding sources.

2014 SRFB Projects:

Karen explained that to qualify for SRFB funding projects must: be in the Salmon Habitat Plan; been through the WRIA 9 Prioritization Methodology; ranked by the Implementation Technical Committee (ITC); and be on the Three-Year Work Plan. The 2014 SRFB funding amount available is the 2014 allocation of \$327,353 and the prior year returned funds of \$79,665, for a total of \$407,018.

Two construction project proposals have been submitted for the whole amount, Mill Creek/Green River Confluence – Leber Construction and Porter Levee Setback.

- **Mill Creek/Green River Confluence – Leber Construction:** Mike Mactutis reported the City of Kent purchased the Mill Creek – Leber property about three years ago. The property is on the Green River at RM 23.7, with Riverview Park across the river to the north. The project is at 100% design, funded by \$135,541 in SRFB money that was received this year. He said money for next year would go to actual construction and grading. The project will create 1.5 acres floodplain wetland, install 38 large wood structures, and plant over 25,000 new trees and shrubs. Mike said we looked at the historical record on the Green, and used that to set the inlet elevation. Plants will be coming from the Kent-owned native plant nursery. Kent is also applying for 2015 CWM funding for this project.

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- **Porter Levee Setback:** Josh Kahan, King County, noted that Porter Levee, located at RM 34, is one of several levees on the Middle Green River from the middle 1960's. By moving the levee back the project will expose 50 acres of floodplain. The county will install 11 habitat jams, build a new 1,600 foot revetment, put in logs, and provide additional revegetation on the site. He said the project, still in the design phase, is part of the Army Corps of Engineers Ecosystem Restoration Project (ERP), and King County is also providing funding.

Karen Bergeron explained that Mill Creek /Green River Confluence – Leber Construction is the priority project for funding, and Porter Levee Setback is the alternate.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved Mill Creek/Green River Confluence – Leber Construction for \$407,018 in 2014 SRFB funding, and Porter Levee Setback as the alternate/backup project.

2015-2017 PSAR Large Capacity Projects:

Karen reported that state funding has been identified for Puget Sound restoration. In 2013 this amount was \$50 million. Large Capacity Projects are selected competitively. The ITC sub-committee has recommended the following three projects, which must be approved by the WEF to move forward:

- **Porter Levee Setback** (King County). The cost estimate is still under development but we expect a \$5 million request.
- **Downey Farmstead Side Channel Creation** (Kent), \$4,891,000 request. Mike Mactutis said the property at RM 21 was purchased about three years ago. The project excavates ~210,000 yards and realigns Frager Road.
- **McSorley Creek Nearshore Armoring Removal** (Washington State Parks), with the cost estimate currently under development in the project design. Lisa Lantz, WA State Parks, explained that the project removes shoreline armoring at Saltwater State Park in Des Moines.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved moving Porter Levee Setback, Downey Farmstead Side Channel Creation, and McSorley Creek Nearshore Armoring Removal forward for the 2015-2017 PSAR Large Capacity Project list.

2014 CWM Projects and Programs:

Karen said the 2014 CWM funding amount is \$1,508,846. Proposed projects and programs include:

Small Projects Fund	\$25,000
• Small Grant/Stewardship Grant Round	\$25,000
High Priority Project Implementation Fund	\$1,312,846
• Porter Levee Setback (King County)	300,000
• Mill Creek/Green River Confluence – Leber (Kent)	787,846
• Capital Implementation/Outreach & Communication Products (WRIA 9)	225,000
Education/Stewardship Fund	\$51,000
• Improving Watershed Health Environmental Education (Environmental Science Center)	30,000
• Beach Naturalist Program (Seattle Aquarium)	21,000
Monitoring Fund	\$120,000
• Green River Smolt Trap (WA Department of Fish and Wildlife)	45,000
• Monitoring Baseline Conditions – Vegetation, Shorelines, Shallow Water Habitat (WRIA 9)	40,000

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• Program Implementation Survey (WRIA 9)	25,000
• Green River Chinook Productivity Analysis	10,000
Total	\$1,508,846

Discussion:

- Elissa Ostergaard, Planning & Stewardship Coordinator, explained that the \$45,000 Green River Smolt Trap grant includes a little bit of money for smolt trap repairs; the \$10,000 is for sprucing up the data WDFW provides. The \$40,000 Monitoring Baseline Conditions grant would be done in the Duwamish to create a protocol and baseline for measuring habitat, and baseline data along shorelines.
- Ron Straka asked why the \$250,000 for Capital Projects Implementation/Outreach & Communications in the WRIA 9 2015-2016 budget is more than the amount in the CWM budget. Doug Osterman replied that in the CWM Budget it is shown as \$225,000 for Capital Implementation/Outreach & Communications Products plus \$25,000 for the Program Implementation Survey.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the 2014 WRIA 9 Cooperative Watershed Management List of Projects and Programs.

6. Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) Update

Tracy Stanton, Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) Ambassador, reported that WRIA 9 has hit the ground running with the Duwamish Blueprint and other activities. Back in the fall there was a call for proposals for funding, the funding was reconfigured for urban watersheds, and the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition was funded. The US Forest Service has continued funding for the coordinator position, Tracy’s position, and in the Middle Green a project proposal was approved for funding that addresses financial incentives in agricultural areas. Funding will be for scoping the first year, and there is the possibility of second and third year funding. Local entities will actually be implementing the work and identifying stakeholders.

7. Lower Green River Aquatic/Floodplain Habitat Goals

Monitoring and Adaptive Monitoring (M&AM):

Kollin Higgins, King County/WRIA 9, reported that for the last two years we’ve been working and spending time on different aspects of PSP’s Phase I M&AM process, which they funded. We are now waiting on EPA funding for a possible Phase II.

Lower Green River System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF):

Kollin said the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan has some gaps in the Plan’s habitat goals, particularly in the Lower Green. We recently noticed these gaps due to the all the work the ITC has been doing on Monitoring and Adaptive Management project. The gaps are focused on how much of some habitat types we think we need to restore in order to get to Chinook recovery. For instance, the plan says we need more pools in the Lower Green, but not how many more. Right now the Lower Green River System-Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) process, spearheaded by the King County Flood Control District, is setting goals about how to manage the Lower Green River area. WRIA 9 is providing technical expertise to the SWIF project about salmon recovery needs, which is an opportunity to help address the gaps in habitat goals of the Salmon Habitat Plan.

Kollin said the WRIA 9 Implementation Technical Committee (ITC) compiled the 11 x 17 handout that describes the habitat goals in the Plan for the Lower Green. These came from the Strategic Assessment and were described as ‘Necessary Future Conditions’. The Plan only describes goals as 50year goals, and

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we need to develop some shorter term goals as part of the SWIF process. Thus the ITC also created 20 year goals as the short term goal, by splitting any previously approved quantitative 50 year goals in half. When the 50 year goal was not quantitative, like we just want more pools and wood, the ITC proposed goals based the best available science. These habitat goals included:

- **Large Woody Debris (LWD)/Jams:** He said we have natural jams in the Lower Green, showing one he believed was in the City of Auburn, and he also showed a photo of over 1,000 logs in the Middle Green. The current condition is about 50 pieces of wood per mile for a pretty good sized piece of wood, and 0.9 jams. In the Plan we said we wanted “more pieces of wood” and left it at that, but we need to be more definitive about it. The 50 year goal (1,705 pieces and 10 jams per mile) and 20 year goal (852 pieces and 5 jams per mile) show more small size pieces in the mix.
- **Pools Conservation:** Kollin presented a color map produced from Muckleshoot data showing two pools in the City of Kent in about a ten mile stretch of river. The current condition is a about one pool per mile of river, while the 50 year and 20 year goals are 9 pools per mile and 4 pools per mile respectively.
- **Riparian Area:** He said we’re shooting for functioning riparian area greater than 165 feet of trees and shrubs. The current condition meets this goal for the Lower Green 2.8% of the time on the left bank, and 7.7% on the right. The 50 year goal is 75% of both banks, and the 20 year goal is 50% of both.
- **Shallow Water/Slow Water Edge:** This habitat is unknown and not currently mapped. Kollin said our place holder goals for the future are 25% increase for 50 years, and 15% increase for 20 years. We hope to do more in the future to get a better understanding of what we have, but we know we need more of this type of habitat.
- **Green River Temperature Data:** Starting at the water intake for Tacoma and coming in around the Black River, temperatures actually flirt with the lethal temperature ranges. Kollin said when we adopted the Plan we didn’t know we had a temperature problem and now we have that data. Current conditions also show that in 2012 there were 33 days above the state water quality-temperature standards. The 50 year goal is zero days above WQ standards, and the 20 year goals is 3 days above. Water quality-temperature standards can’t be done solely in the Lower Green, but we need to improve this area to get there.
- **Side Channels:** Kollin showed a photo of the recently constructed Riverview Park side channel, which added 2,200 feet of restored side channel when combined with Reddington Levee. The already adopted 50 year goal is 2.8 miles (14,784 feet) of side channel, and we need to adopt the 20 year goal of 1.4 miles (7,392 feet).
- **Floodplain Wetlands:** The Lower Green River SWIF land cover maps shows a lot of wetlands have been lost over the last 50 years. The current condition is 1,441 acres of wetlands, the adopted 50 year goal is to increase wetlands by 450 acres, and the 20 year goal that needs to be adopted increases wetlands by 225 acres.
- **Floodplain Area:** The current condition is 4,952 acres in the 100 year floodplain. The adopted 50 year goal is to increase floodplain area by 3,887 acres and set the 20 year goal of increasing by 1,944 acres for the Lower Green only.
- **Bank Armoring and Sediment Processes/Spawning Habitat:** Kollin reported that in the Plan we say we don’t want new shoreline armoring. He said we will address a specific target in the future.

Doug Osterman said we are now asking the WEF whether or not we can approve these ITC-recommended goals.

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Discussion:

- Greg Volkhardt asked about the temperature goal. In 2012, there were 33 days that exceeded the temperature goals, yet in 20 years we want to get that to less than three. He asked how we want to accomplish that and how realistic it and the goals for vegetation are. Trees only grow so fast. Kollin Higgins responded that the ITC and WEF need to look at other options other than revegetation. These goals are aspirational and not always achievable, but our hope is to reach for them, which might be a challenge.
- Jay Covington commented that he didn't know where we could find an additional 2,000 acres in the Lower Green to increase floodplain area in the next 20 years, or another 3,887 acres in 50 years. We need to have a plan for how we can achieve these goals, and where the additional acres are going to come from. Kollin responded that the floodplain increase was put in the Plan by prior planners, and he wasn't involved in the original analysis. Jay remarked that realistically if we have to do this, we may have to go to mid-channel. We may have to think how long it took us to restore 10 acres in the last 15 years. Kollin explained that through the SWIF process, which will integrate different goals across the Lower Green, we will likely get better ideas about which pieces can be achieved.
- Linda Johnson questioned why we don't take log jams out of the river, which would allow the river to flow better and lower the temperature. Kollin explained that natural rivers have log jams. We used to take logs out of the river before realizing over time that removing the wood negatively affects the habitat for juvenile and adult fish. The log jams form different habitat types, are an integral part of a healthy river, and when removed the habitat degrades. Wood in the river is only a conflict from a recreational standpoint. Councilmember Johnson clarified that she sees the benefit of leaving natural logs in the river, but not in adding more logs. She asked if we aren't shooting ourselves in the foot if we have goals like this, because placeholder goals end up being real goals. She said she was also concerned about increasing the number of wetland acres. We need to come up with something that is more realistic and has a chance of working.
- Dave Uptegrove asked for clarification about what it means to adopt a goal. It would seem that goals are something we could achieve, but maybe it's the ideal situation, not the goal. For instance, a lot of the stream banks are privately held, so it's not necessarily achievable to re-vegetate such an extent of banks. Doug Osterman replied that the process used to develop the proposed goals was similar to the approach that was used to develop the goals adopted in the Salmon Habitat Plan, based on the Strategic Assessment that NOAA guided us through. These are projections and best estimates of what it would take to attain a healthy population of salmon and a healthy watershed. He said there needs to be an integration of goals, and we have the SWIF process underway to test our goals. Kollin Higgins commented that this is what is technically necessary, not politically feasible.
- Nancy Hutto said, as the farm voice at the WEF, agriculture is the low hanging fruit here. Maybe we can't afford to sacrifice the farmland we may need to feed us in the future for additional wetlands and floodplain. The Lower Green used to be some of the best farmland, but is now preserved under concrete. Farmers want to improve habitat for fish, but this is an exercise in giving fish what they need without regard to what it would do to farmland.
- Dennis Robertson asked how soon SWIF needs these goals. Jennifer Knauer, King County, explained that SWIF is about to enter the alternates phase this summer. We are about to establish flood protection goals, work with our partners (WRIA 9 and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe) on habitat goals, and are also working with King County, the Ag Commission and participating cities to import ag and recreational sets of goals. SWIF really needs the goals by the end of June, and can structure sets of alternatives that will reflect different configurations of goals.
- Dennis Robertson said it looks like this will require future consideration. If something is needed in this timeframe, perhaps we could send this forward per the ITC. To set goals that are unachievable looks bad, and he commented that he doesn't need help looking foolish. If a goal is difficult to achieve, then

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we want substantial technical arguments for why we need to achieve it. He said he doesn't sense that this room is ready to vote positively. Doug Osterman pointed out the goals, if approved by the WEF, are going into the Strategic Assessment of the Plan, and the WEF is not establishing policy.

- Jay Covington suggested we may have to look at other ways to help salmon. We need a way to say scientists have told us we need to do this, but we don't know how we do it. We can't physically or feasibly do this.
- Dana Ralph remarked that Kent has lost a lot of farmland. Downey Farmstead is a huge project, but it only restores 20 acres, which is a drop in the bucket towards meeting this goal. She said she supports setting this as a technical recommendation, not a goal.
- Nancy Tosta said it's important for us to acknowledge that science is trying to create a goal that cannot be recreated. How do we say economically and politically, we will never get to these goals? The goal is salmon recovery, and we need to look at how we can get there in other ways. We can never afford to do this.
- Jennifer Knauer offered a friendly suggestion, and that is the concept for a technical recommendation. It would not create a lack of parity with other goals, and these goals will be used as a benchmark. The way the SWIF intends to use this is to benchmark the alternatives according to the goals. We will be able to get much further in figuring out how to advance specific goals with different objectives.
- Ron Straka commented he is trying to understand how these goals will be used in the SWIF process, because there will have to be a compromise. Jennifer Knauer explained they will be a measuring stick. Varying sets of goals will shift across habitat, ag, and flood protection.
- Kathryn Campbell remarked that if we have a 50 year goal in place that was already in place, and cut that in half for a 20 year goal, it would show it was impossible, and that we need to make improvements.
- Mike Garrity mentioned he is new to this group, but if we assume this basin isn't going as far as other basins, it may be important to go back and talk to the environmental community and the feds.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum approved table, relabeling it "Aquatic/floodplain/habitat scientific recommendations for the Lower Green River", with two WEF members voting no.

8. Colonel Bruce Estok: Perspective & Reflections

Colonel Bruce Estok, Army Corps of Engineers, began by saying this is probably the last WEF meeting he will attend. He remarked that hearing the discussion tonight from a Corps' perspective is very positive. The SWIF program, which the Corps put into place because of the challenge between flood risk management and habitat, was meant to be a participatory process to get the best decision and NOT be driven by the federal government. He then proceeded to discuss the following pre-arranged topics:

- **Corps' levee vegetation policy:** Starting back in the 1970's, every year on March 21 the Corps comes out with guidance on their levees. Enrollment in the levee program requires inspection, and then once in the program, if levees are damaged there is support to repair them. Col. Estok said this year there was interim guidance, and we ultimately got to a final policy, which is intended to be responsive to local and tribal entities. The Corps' flood risk management program will assess risk, mitigating risk, and then explain that risk to those who have to live with it. The Corps will still say that there's risk if there are trees on the levees, but eligibility in the program will not depend on having vegetation on the levees, and they will still tell us if the levees meet or don't meet their standards. He explained this allows the local sponsor to assess the condition, assess the risk and make a decision and communicate it, providing flexibility and a participatory process.
- **Better synchronization of funding strategies:** He said first, we need to have program priorities, including a Plan B. When we are figuring out multiple purposes, it's difficult to align federal funding with local funding, and we need to have clear scopes and work plans. We have a lot of funding in the

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Green/Duwamish ERP, and we're at the edge about whether we can implement the project. Let's get something done. Col. Estok reported that if the district gets federal money and doesn't execute, we lose our credibility with Congress. For all the ecosystem projects, the grants are going to expire. To keep the funding coming, we need to keep the communication open. We do integrated resource management, but we do things in stovepipes, and as an agency we're trying to get better at that. He said the Corps is trying to get to a watershed-based budget, combining the different levels (local, state, and federal). Gordon Thomson will be working with the person assigned to do the watershed-based budgeting to show them all the layers and how the federal piece fits in.

- **Howard Hanson Dam fish passage:** Col. Estok said we are waiting on NOAA Fisheries review and feedback, and the idea is that the Corps has to get through their ESA consultation.

Col. Estok concluded by announcing he is retiring from the Army after 25 years, and has a job in Boston lined up. Bill Pelosa distributed chocolate fish, made in Auburn, to the Colonel and members of the Forum.

9. Wrap Up/Next Steps

Doug Osterman announced that the next WEF meeting is August 14, 2014 in the Renton City Hall Council Chambers.

From: Durbin, Kara

Sent: Monday, May 12, 2014 4:08 PM

To: Osterman, Doug

Subject: Minority Report for CM Upthegrove, May 8th Watershed Ecosystem Forum

Hi Doug,

Below please find Dave's statement – i.e. minority report – to support his no vote on last Thursday's aquatic/floodplain habitat goals for the Lower Green Subwatershed. Please let me know if you have questions or need any more information from us.

Thanks,
Kara

At the May 8th WRIA 9 Watershed Ecosystem Forum, I voted against approving the updated Aquatic/Floodplain Habitat Goals for the Lower Green Subwatershed. I did so primarily because I believe a number of the goals are unrealistic and unobtainable. In addition, as a member of the Executive Committee of the King County Flood Control District and participant in the Green River System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) process, I anticipate making future decisions that balance ecological goals with other socioeconomic goals (such as public safety or economic) and did not want to be perceived as prioritizing these particular habitat goals— especially given the potential impacts which could occur to achieve them. That being said, I respect the work of the professional scientists who recommended these habitat goals and have no information that leads me to disagree that they would be necessary to meet the larger ecosystem health goals in the Green River system.