

WRIA 9 Watershed Ecosystem Forum Meeting Summary

Tukwila Community Center

November 13, 2014, 4:02-6:33 p.m.

Members Present		
1.	Councilmember (CM) Bill Peloza, Meeting Chair	City of Auburn
2.	CM Marlla Mhoon, Co-Chair	City of Covington
3.	Brian Anderson	The Boeing Company
4.	William Appleton	City of Federal Way
5.	Al Barrie	Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (MSFEG)
6.	George Blomberg	Port of Seattle
7.	Jay Covington	City of Renton
8.	Kara Durbin	King County
9.	Dave Garland	WA Dept. of Ecology
10.	Kathy Minsch	City of Seattle
11.	CM Erika Morgan	City of Black Diamond
12.	CM Dana Ralph	City of Kent
13.	James Rasmussen	Green Duwamish Alliance
14.	Stewart Reinbold	WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
15.	CM Dennis Robertson	City of Tukwila
16.	Gordon Thomson	US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)
17.	CM Nancy Tosta	City of Burien
18.	Alex Wilford	Master Builders Association
Alternates		
19.	Chris Andersen	City of Auburn
20.	Jeff Dillon	Corps
21.	Noel Gilbrough	MSFEG
22.	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
23.	Ron Straka	City of Renton
Other Attendees		
24.	Dale Blahna	U.S. Forest Service/ Urban Waters Federal Partnership
25.	Col. John Buck	Corps
26.	Andrea Cummings	City of Tukwila
27.	Adam Cushman	Master Builders Association
28.	Ed Gallant	Citizen
29.	Kollin Higgins	King County/WRIA 9 Team
30.	Carol Lumb	City of Tukwila
31.	Sarah Ogier	King County
32.	Tyler Patterson	Tacoma Public Utilities
33.	Christie True	King County
34.	Marion Ward Darragh	Citizen
35.	Jean White	King County
36.	Bruce Wulkan	Puget Sound Partnership
37.	Karen Bergeron	WRIA 9 Habitat Project Coordinator
38.	Linda Grob	WRIA 9 Administrative Coordinator
39.	Maureen Judge	WRIA 9 Communications Coordinator
40.	Elissa Ostergaard	WRIA 9 Planning & Stewardship Coordinator
41.	Doug Osterman	WRIA 9 Watershed Coordinator

WRIA 9 Forum Meeting Summary

November 13, 2014

Meeting Chair Bill Peloza opened the meeting, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

1. Public Comment

Ed Gallant, Citizen, reported that he wrote a letter to Doug Osterman, Watershed Coordinator, and Jean White, King County, about not seeing coho in our small creek, and Jean sent out the county's Josh Kahan and Kollin Higgins, who spent three hours with us. He said the hatchery has released coho, but we haven't seen any yet. Jacobus Saperstein, King Conservation District (KCD) is working on plantings along the creek. Ed was pleased with the assistance and follow up by King County and WRIA 9.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the meeting summary for the August 14, 2014 meeting.

3. Green/Duwamish & Central Puget Sound Watershed Video: Grand Unveiling

Maureen Judge, Communications Coordinator, introduced the video, reporting that this year marks the fifteenth year of the listing of Chinook. She said we wanted to show the diversity of the watershed from snow caps to whitecaps, and the people working on recovering salmon. The video production was supported by a SRFB Lead Entity grant.

Much applause ensued after the conclusion of the video.

Discussion:

- Al Barrie asked if the video is available as a Public Service Announcement (?) (PSA) for local movie showings. Maureen Judge said it is. The video quality is high, and it will also be available as YouTube and Vimeo links.
- Doug Osterman asked if cities can use the video on their local TV stations. Maureen said yes, she will be the contact.

4. Duwamish Blueprint

Elissa Ostergaard, Planning & Stewardship Coordinator, reported that the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan called for creating a Duwamish Blueprint. The Blueprint was finalized last week, and we are asking Watershed Ecosystem Forum (Forum) members to approve it as part of the WRIA 9 Plan. The Blueprint tells where the Duwamish transition zone is, and where the best areas are for projects. Of the five WRIA 9 sub-watersheds, the transition zone portion of the Duwamish Estuary Sub-watershed is considered to be the weakest link for Chinook recovery.

Elissa explained that the Duwamish River is 11 miles long. The lower half of the river was dredged and straightened for boat traffic, a lot of the wetlands were filled in, and today there is only about 32 acres of the original 500 acres of shallow water habitat remaining. Through the Blueprint process the transition zone's specific location was identified, and it is now nine miles long, from the West Seattle Bridge to the golf course in Tukwila. It is the "nursery" where small fish eat and grow as the transition to salt water, and the most important area for intertidal shallow water habitat. Elissa called the Duwamish "the economic backbone of our area." There are few undeveloped parcels, but we think that creating habitat can be done, at the same time addressing equity and social justice issues, Native American cultural resource areas, and contamination. Unfortunately there is not that much left in terms of available habitat, and what is left is very expensive.

WRIA 9 Forum Meeting Summary

November 13, 2014

Elissa said the Duwamish Working Group (convened per approval of the Forum) started with the draft Blueprint that WRIA 9 staff and stakeholders developed in 2006 but never completed. The 2005 Salmon Habitat Plan called for 26.5 acres of shallow water habitat and three miles of shoreline bank restored in the transition zone by 2015. The new habitat recommendations set the goal of 40 acres of shallow water habitat (mudflats and marsh) by 2025, starting from the date of Blueprint approval. She explained that the Working Group looked at maps of parcels and found there are 100 acres of potential habitat, so 40 acres may be attainable. Per the Blueprint's Habitat Project Design section, large projects (>2 acres) are preferred, mudflat in the lower Duwamish and off-channel habitats in the upper Duwamish are most needed, and brackish areas where streams flow into the Duwamish are the best places to create habitat. Also important is to revegetate shoreline banks where shallow water habitat can't be built, plant trees across the sub-watershed, and vary elevations and slope banks gradually at habitat sites along the river to adapt to sea level rise.

Elissa explained that the Blueprint divides the Duwamish into five different reaches, with a detailed project map for each reach. Duwamish Gardens, the next project to be completed, is at 97% design, will add an acre of shallow water habitat, and is just downriver from the Tukwila Community Center. The next Tukwila/WRIA 9 project is Chinook Wind, which is for sale and has a hotel on it now. It is adjacent to Duwamish Gardens. She said Chinook Wind would be the largest restoration site so far (5.83 acres), will cost \$6-7 million to purchase, and we have received almost \$1.95 million Conservation Futures (CFT) grant towards purchase of the property. Another potential project is Hamm Creek/City Light North, which is 20 acres at river mile (RM) 5. Seattle Light owns it and has plans for a training facility at the site, with shallow water habitat creation, but Elissa said she thinks the future of this site should be for public discussion. The largest site in the Transition Zone is Desimone (former Boeing) Oxbow at 34 acres, but she said we don't know what the owner is planning.

Elissa reported that we don't have money to immediately buy these sites when they come up for sale, and need a way. She joked that a benefactor would be nice. The Blueprint recommends we have some sort-of reserve fund or program for acquisitions. A land trust or non-profit could help to acquire parcels, with the money paid back when grants come in. We want to move these projects forward for the neighborhoods, and by promoting stewardship, the community may support them. Other recommendations include: planting trees throughout the sub-watershed to help keep water cool; streamlining permits to build projects that now takes two years for approval; and having a part-time Duwamish Basin Steward. She said the Duwamish Working Group was a great group, with their work funded by the WRIA 9 partners and consultant money from the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP).

Discussion:

- Marlla Mhoon noted that the King County Flood Control District (FCD) has a large reserve of money for property acquisitions. She asked if we could borrow funding from them and pay it back. Elissa Ostergaard replied that we haven't explored that, but she thinks they have other big properties they are focused on.
- James Rasmussen asked about the habitat targets, and whether they take into account things like T117. Elissa said the Blueprint target is an estimate of how much habitat/completed on-the-ground projects we could do in the next ten years, including Port projects like T117.
- James Rasmussen remarked that some projects will be coming online soon. An active community is involved with the City Light North project, and we will be meeting tomorrow with Margaret Duncan, City of Seattle, about the project. He asked if Seattle will do a project on the river for a NRDA site. Kathy Minsch said she would ask.

WRIA 9 Forum Meeting Summary

November 13, 2014

- James Rasmussen inquired about the clustering of sites as we go upriver, and if there was talk on the Working Group about where the potential is for bunching sites, or if the discussion was just about where the opportunities are. Elissa explained that we need to first take advantage of big spaces and big opportunities as they come up, and we will look at clustering sites later.
- James Rasmussen said the cleanup of the river is also very important for the recovery of salmon, and he is disappointed the Working Group didn't tackle that. Elissa reported that she received James' comments addressing the cleanup, and the Blueprint does mention it, but she explained that the Blueprint scope, as written in the Salmon Habitat Plan, is to identify the transition zone and potential habitat projects. She said there will be opportunities to address the cleanup when we update the WRIA 9 Plan.
- Jay Covington asked for clarification of what we are being asked to approve. Elissa explained that the goal is 40 acres of shallow water habitat by 2025, with a potential of 100 acres. Jay asked if the parcels in the Blueprint add up to 40 acres, to which Elissa replied they equal much more than 40 acres. Jay noted concern that this vote could be obligating our city to an aspirational goal.
- Jay Covington commented that if grant funding comes along, we can say these projects are identified in the Blueprint, and therefore we're applying for grants that are consistent with them. Doug Osterman said CFT, FCD, and Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) have funding available, and would be excellent resources for going after grants.
- Kathy Minsch said that as a member of the Duwamish Working Group, there is complex ownership of many of these sites. There was a lot of thought that went into the project list, but it is not prioritized. She noted that Hamm Creek/City Light North was not prioritized, and this presentation differs from what is presented in the Blueprint.
- Ron Straka, City of Renton, asked what the nine-mile length for the transition zone was based on. Elissa said it was mostly based on fish use the area of tidal influence. She explained that early studies found baby fish near the mouth and the Turning Basin, and fish sampling was done from Kellogg Island up to RM 8.5, but we really don't know much about above that. The Working Group decided to extend the upstream end of the transition zone to the extent there is salinity (RM 10); tidal influence extends to RM 11.
- Ron Straka questioned if there is an expectation that funding for the Duwamish Basin Steward will come from Forum partners, or if it is an open option. Elissa said it is open. She noted that almost half her time is spent on Miller/Walker, paid for by another ILA.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the Duwamish Blueprint.

5. Green/Duwamish Watershed Strategy

Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources & Parks, called the Green/Duwamish the most economically diverse watershed in the state. She said despite huge investments and all the great work going on, we are still suffering. On September 8 Mayor Ed Murray and Executive Dow Constantine had a "call to action" to develop a strategy. Executive Constantine also announced \$3 million in dedicated funding for open space acquisitions as a result of CFT money for an easement in the White that was returned when the Muckleshoots bought that area. Funding will go to the Green River Natural Area, Lower Green River floodplain, and Duwamish Transition Zone, including \$1.2 million of the funding for Chinook Wind. She said she has been working with her counterpart in the Department of Community Services to come up with a creative solution for housing 100 people who currently live in the hotel at Chinook Wind.

WRIA 9 Forum Meeting Summary

November 13, 2014

Christie explained that the project goal for the watershed strategy is to engage the Green/Duwamish community to create a vision that will shape the future of the watershed for decades. The project objective is to develop a watershed strategy that geographically links existing program and projects with the desired outcomes for improved public health, cleaner air and water, and a better economy. Sarah Ogier, King County, is our project manager, and this is Phase I, our Listening phase, which runs until March 2015. She said we want to have priority areas identified for Phase 2/Strategy Development (March-October 2015), and we don't want to create what's already been done, like the WRIA 9 Plan. Source control and stormwater will be important and we will be looking at the land conservation element in this watershed. Phase 3/Implementation (November 2015-April 2016) will finalize the watershed strategy. Christie concluded by saying we also don't want duplication in seeking funding.

Discussion:

- Marlla Mhoon asked if the purpose of the watershed strategy is to bring programs together. She asked how it will come together and be integrated with SWIF and FCD. Christie True responded that the original integration goals of SWIF are really important, and she said our purpose is to make sure there is synergy and not duplication.
- James Rasmussen remarked that one of the original watershed strategy goals was social justice, but he didn't see that in the presentation and materials. Christie noted that there are a number of coalitions listed on the strategy page, and a coalition of communities is looking to fund cities that need a boost in funding. She said while social justice isn't specifically mentioned she thinks it is included here.
- Jay Covington asked how conflicts will be resolved/who will break the ties when there are inherent conflicts in projects. He said there are a lot of different agencies with a lot of different charters, and he doesn't see how this gets us anywhere closer than we are right now. Christie replied that all of us are looking to see if there is a strategy to resolve those conflicts. We need to challenge ourselves to find common ground. She acknowledged that it won't be easy, but we can't continue to ask for money and continue programs if they are not serving us well.
- Dennis Robertson asked how the watershed strategy is going to fit in with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP). Christie said it is an area where they need to do an overlay with their goals. There are a lot of economic issues and attributes that we want to look at that aren't part of PSP, like regional trails.
- Doug Osterman pointed out that the Mayor and the Executive included in the watershed strategy the coastal areas from Federal Way, Burien, West Seattle, etc., which also have a lot of social issues.

6. Ecosystem Restoration Project Executive Committee

Colonel John Buck, Seattle District Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), showed the map of the watershed with all completed, active and proposed Green/Duwamish ERP projects. He then highlighted the following projects:

- Big Spring Creek (King County sponsor): Phase 1 was completed in 2013; Phase 2 construction is ongoing, and will reconnect the creek to its historic streambed and to Newaukum Creek. Construction will be completed this month, with plantings occurring in February 2015.
- Mill Creek Wetland 5K (Auburn): 2015 construction will restore the stream to its historic channel, and install a fish-friendly culvert.
- Boeing Levee Setback (Kent): This project is a challenge because of Kent's required flood risk issues and recreation. The city is going to provide a 35% levee raise plan, with design completed in 2015 and construction in 2016, but the project is not on schedule so we have to go back to Washington D.C. and re-ask for funding.

WRIA 9 Forum Meeting Summary

November 13, 2014

- Porter Levee Setback (King County): Levee setback to Green Valley Road, with design completed in 2016 and construction in 2017.

Other highlighted Puget Sound projects:

- Seahurst Park Phase 2: Col. Buck said this was a special project for him personally, because he, Jeff Dillon, Corps, and Burien officials scoped out Phase 1 of this project. He said he thought he was going to get this done before he left one of his earlier postings at the Seattle District leave, but it turned out he was a little optimistic. Phase 2, completed earlier this year, removed 1,800 feet of seawall and restored the park to the sound.
- Horseshoe Bend-SWIF: The case study at Horseshoe Bend fed the whole SWIF process, integrating flood hazard reduction, levee safety, and ecosystem restoration objectives.
- Puget Sound Nearshore (PSN) General Investigation (GI): Currently ongoing, with 11 sites identified in the draft Feasibility Report. PSNERP is currently under public review, will cost \$1.1 billion, involve 5,000 acres of restoration, and includes Beaconsfield-on-the-Sound in WRIA 9.
- Howard Hanson Dam (HHD) Additional Water Supply Project and Fish Passage: Col. Buck announced that the dam safety plan was approved on November 6, and we are closing in on our funding limit. We are waiting for the NOAA BiOp report (estimated to arrive in March 2015), and then will come up with a federal strategy for how we're going to meet our obligation for downstream fish passage at the dam. The fish passage facility is the last major step.

Discussion:

- Doug Osterman said normally at a November ERP Executive Committee meeting our action item is to approve a list of projects for Congressional appropriation. He asked for clarification of why this year's meeting is different. Col. Buck replied that we've completed nine ERP projects, our cost estimates were from back in 2000, and we now have to recertify the project cost estimates. Jeff Dillon explained that we must go back to Washington because costs have not been kept under control, and Headquarters told ERP Corps folks to really go back and look at the costs. We've looked at projects that are close to going over budget, and went back to sponsors and said you have to really re-examine cost estimates.
- Doug Osterman asked if there is anything stopping this group from putting the ERP in our Legislative Priorities. Col. Buck said nothing is stopping you, but we want to make sure/recertify you have real cost estimates to avoid being up to the limit like on HHD. Doug noted that one problem is cities that get funding and then keep adding to the scope. He asked how WRIA 9 can keep the ERP moving forward. Jeff Dillon said it certainly is not a bad idea to let people know your interests
- Ron Straka asked how long recertification takes, and when the money tap will be turned back on. Jeff said our strategy is to push for work plan funding as soon as we can, having funding delivered at the end of calendar year 2015, and development in 2016.
- Marlla Mhoon asked about the Boeing Levee funding being 2014 money. Col Buck explained that we were supposed to obligate the funds this year, but when Flood Control District decided to raise the levee it added to the costs, and the project was stalled to accommodate the design of the levee raise.
- Stewart Reinbold said he was involved with the Horseshoe Bend SWIF, when levee vegetation was a big issue for the county, and there was a lot of misunderstanding around the issue. He asked who the point person is for questions about SWIF. Col. Buck reported that JoAnne Walls at the Corps should be able to help clarify the SWIF process and answer questions about any gray areas.
- Noel Gilbrough inquired if there is enough money to cover ERP for FY 2015. Jeff Dillon confirmed there is. Noel clarified that support from this group would be therefore important for 2016, not 2015.

WRIA 9 Forum Meeting Summary

November 13, 2014

7. WRIA 9 2015 Federal/State Legislative Priorities

Doug Osterman said the previous conversation is a good segue into the Legislative Priorities, specifically the third bullet down on the ERP. He noted we are not asking for a specific amount of funding for ERP, but we think if members go to Washington D.C. it would be helpful to mention this blip in funding, and go back and ask for a specific amount in 2016.

The 2015 Legislative Priorities are:

Federal:

- Support an appropriations request of at least \$65 million for the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund in Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and related agencies' appropriations for FY 2015 and FY 2016.
- Support Puget Sound Recovery Act (PSRA), which will designate Puget Sound as a "Great Waterbody", making it a formal Clean Water Act program.
- Support the Corps cost management issues to continue ecosystem restoration under the Green/Duwamish ERP authority.
- Support a robust authorization for the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP).
- Support more collaboration between WRIA 9 and the UWFP to improve the watershed and meet equity and social justice.
- Support a downstream Fish Passage Facility (FPF) at HDD.

State:

- Support \$140 million for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Fund.
- Support \$20 million in funding for the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP).
- Support \$50 million in funding for the Department of Ecology's Floodplains by Design proposed ranked list of projects for 2015-017 capital budget.

Operating Budget:

- Support request for \$770,000 in state general funds to support and continue the role of salmon recovery Lead Entities.

Policy Legislation:

- Support continued efforts to explore new watershed-based funding authorities to support multiple-benefit projects that address salmon habitat protection and restoration, water quality, stormwater management, and flood management.

Discussion:

- Kathy Minsch questioned the meaning of the phrase "cost management issues" in the Corps ERP bullet. Jeff Dillon recommended changing the bullet to "Support the Corps of Engineers comprehensive updates...."
- Kathy Minsch said she believed the PSRA bullet designating Puget Sound as a Great Waterbody is actually a line item action. Bruce Wulkan, Puget Sound Partnership, said he can get back to her with the answer.
- Kathy Minsch suggested adding "Capital Budget" as a subheading for the first three bullets under State Priorities. She also suggested adding a bullet/language supporting the governor's legislation to reduce toxics.
- Doug Osterman said a late recommendation came in for \$100,000 in state funds for UWFP to address and support integrating equity and social justice. Nancy Tosta proposed the following language for the bullet: "Support request for \$100,000 for integrating equity and social justice into WRIA 9 watershed restoration and the goals of the Green/Duwamish UWFP. The State funds would be used to

WRIA 9 Forum Meeting Summary

November 13, 2014

match local and federal efforts to reconnect urban communities with their waterways, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, including the Lower Green and Duwamish River areas of south King County.”

- Jay Covington made a motion to accept Kathy Minsch’s suggested subheading and new bullet on toxics, Jeff Dillon’s edit to the ERP bullet, and plus the new state UWFP bullet proposed by Nancy Tosta.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the Legislative Priorities with the proposed additions.

8. WRIA 9 ILA Renewal Update:

Doug Osterman noted that the draft ILA has not changed since May 2014. He said we now have a combined ILA and MOU schedule for all the three King County WRIAs (8, 9 and Snoqualmie), and per the schedule, WRIA 9 cities now have until January 20, 2015 to provide comments on the draft.

9. Wrap Up/Next Steps

The next Forum meeting is Thursday, February 12, 2015, 4:00 to 6:30 p.m., Renton City Hall.