

# WRIA 9 Watershed Ecosystem Forum Meeting Summary

Renton City Hall

November 10, 2016, 4:01– 6:29 p.m.

<b>Members/Jurisdictional Staff Alternates Present</b>		
1.	Councilmember (CM) Bill Peloza, Meeting Chair	City of Auburn
2.	Brian Anderson	The Boeing Co.
3.	Al Barrie	Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (MSFEG)
4.	Jay Covington	City of Renton
5.	CM Bob Edgar	City of Burien
6.	CM Lisa Herbold	City of Seattle
7.	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
8.	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	King County
9.	Joan Nolan	WA Department of Ecology
10.	James Rassmussen	Green/Duwamish Watershed Alliance
11.	Stewart Reinbold	WA Department of Fish & Wildlife
12.	CM Dennis Robertson	City of Tukwila
13.	Don Robinette	City of SeaTac
14.	Chris Searcy	City of Enumclaw
15.	Greg Volkhardt	Tacoma Water
16.	EJ Walsh	City of Federal Way
<b>Other Alternates Present</b>		
17.	Noel Gilbrough	MSFEG
18.	Ron Straka	City of Renton
<b>Other Attendees</b>		
19.	Lynn Best	Seattle City Light
20.	Margee Duncan	Seattle City Light
21.	Fred Jarrett	King County
22.	Karen Kettner	Student
23.	Leah Kintner	Puget Sound Partnership
24.	Jenna Leonard	City of Auburn
25.	Mike Perfetti	City of Tukwila
26.	Linda Grob	WRIA 9 Administrative Coordinator
27.	Elissa Ostergaard	WRIA 9 Planning & Stewardship Coordinator
28.	Doug Osterman	WRIA 9 Salmon Recovery Manager

Meeting Chair Bill Peloza opened the Watershed Ecosystem Forum (WEF) meeting, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

## 1. Public Comment

Mike Mactutis played two excellent short videos of the recently completed Mill Creek – Leber Restoration Project in Kent: the opening celebration and a time lapse video of project construction.

## 2. Approval of Meeting Summary

***The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the meeting summary for the May 12, 2016 meeting.***

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## 3. Duwamish River Shallow Water Habitat Creation

Lynn Best, PhD, Seattle City Light, reported that a new Technical Training Center is needed because 55-60% of City Light's work force are eligible for retirement, and a highly trained workforce is required for new technology. King County's Hamm Creek Restoration Project takes up a portion of the site that City Light is considering for the Technical Training Center on the Lower Duwamish at river mile 5.5. City Light did an extensive selection process and looked at other sites, but needed at least five acres and couldn't find anything else that was as economical as the Duwamish site. She said Seattle has launched a major program for equity and social justice in this underserved community, and the training site will have trails, parking, and environmental education signs that will talk about John Beal's history with Hamm Creek. Rooms will also be available for public meetings when the training center is not in use.

Lynn said the area was filled many years ago with dredge material from the Duwamish turning basin. The site includes Class 4 wetlands, and City Light figured it was a good place for wetland mitigation. She said they met with the WRIA 9 Implementation Technical Committee (ITC), and received good comments from the ITC, as well as during the SEPA process. Dr. Ed Connor, City Light, is looking at designs and ideas to see how they can optimize the site for fish, and they are also meeting with King County biologists on November 14 to work on mitigation design. A goal is to replace the low functioning wetlands, and another goal is making the mouth wider on Hamm Creek, which has lots of gradient.

### Discussion:

- Noel Gilbrough said Hamm Creek goes into a forty foot deep basin, and when the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) built the project we were very concerned about down cutting. Lynn Best said City Light is well aware of that.
- Mike Mactutis asked how City Light will deal with the new concrete at the site. Margee Duncan, City Light, said much of it is gravel, not asphalt. Lynn explained that the site will have a small building and a big gravel yard, which will be used for putting in poles and things.
- Noel Gilbrough recommended looking at porous concrete or porous asphalt where asphalt has to be used. Lynn said they are looking at that.
- Lisa Herbold asked how City Light will address equity and social justice (ESJ) issues, such as recruiting. Lynn said that is one of their goals, and Seattle City Council has provided direction to do that. They are figuring out when to reach out to people and develop more apprenticeship programs. Now the program is very small.
- James Rasmussen said this site is currently open space for South Park. What City Light is actually talking about is an open space reduction, which should not be construed as solving any open space issues for the community. People can run dogs in the field now, and the project will change a completely open field to several trails that people can use. He cautioned against using ESJ as a big part of the project. Lynn said it will be a different kind of recreation, and the community will still be able to fish on the other side of building. City Light is also trying to negotiate a project at the Georgetown steam plant which they own. James noted that he is not opposed to the project because it is an incredibly green training facility. He just wants to make sure City Light understands this does not add anything to South Park but is instead taking away open space. Margee Duncan said they also would like to work with schools, and are planning to put kiosks onsite.
- Dennis Robertson commented about potential pollution on this site, including in the seven to eight feet of fill from the 1970's and PCBs at the adjacent power station. He asked if any soil analysis has been done on this site. Lynn reported that King County did a soil analysis for the Hamm Creek project and found it clean on the perimeter. City Light never purchased PCB transformers for this site. They have a call set up with Ecology to decide how to sample the soil before construction.

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- Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz said drawings show the King County easement as a constraint for their mitigation at Hamm Creek. King County is interested in opening up the easement for this project to maximize habitat benefits. Lynn responded that they share that goal, and the creek mouth would go into the easement. Margee Duncan added that all the alternatives affect the easement.
- James Rasmussen said he hopes King County's meetings on the project include the citizens who have been working on the project.

## 4. WRIA 9 2017-2018 State Legislative Priorities and 2017 Congressional Priorities

Doug Osterman, Salmon Recovery Manager, highlighted the new federal priority of a \$1.5 million congressional request to match Washington State and WRIA 9 local governments for Re-Green the Green. He said WEF members can take these priorities with them when they go to Washington D.C., and can also incorporate them into their city priorities. On the state priorities side, we added legislative budget appropriations for some of our projects that are ready to go. He said the WRIA 9 Team is always looking for funding, and this raises the language with our legislators to show them actual list of projects and amounts. Doug reported we will prepare maps and project descriptions that members can put in their "hip pockets" when meeting with state legislators.

Discussion:

- Bob Edgar asked about changes that could occur to the priorities list with the new incoming administration. James Rasmussen said we met on the superfund site on Tuesday, and Ecology talked about taking over EPA tasks to enforce federal law if EPA goes away or gets defunded.
- Greg Volkhardt noted that the first bullet on the state priorities, "Support continued efforts to explore dedicated watershed-based funding authorities, etc.," is vague. Doug Osterman responded that we made it vague deliberately.
- Chris Searcy commented on supporting Ecology's request to replace the shortfall under the Model Toxics Control Act, and he asked where the state removing barriers falls within this bullet. Doug Osterman said it's not in here because they are required to do it. Chris suggested for the future we add fish barriers identified in WRIA 9 to this list. Doug said we really want to focus on the fish passage facility at Howard Hanson Dam, which is our biggest fish passage barrier. It is a bullet on our federal priorities list.

***The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the 2017-2018 State Legislative Priorities and 2017 Congressional Priorities.***

## 5. Restructuring the South Central Action Area Caucus Group/Local Integrating Organization

Fred Jarrett, King County Deputy Executive, said he doesn't find the South Central Action Area Local Integration Organization (LIO), which includes WRIAs 8, 9 and 10, to be as productive and effective as the WRIAs. He is proposing to restructure the LIO to consolidate the work within each existing WRIA group, and eliminate the LIO as a separate body. The restructuring must also involve a change in the existing LIO scope of work, now consisting of planning and reporting instead of implementation. Fred said the Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB) met today and agreed not to present this proposal until the first of year. He said he argued at the ECB that charts are nice, but nothing happens until you do something on the ground.

Discussion:

- Dennis Robertson reported that WRIA 9 staff created a graph for at his request with all the funding sources because the one he made didn't make much sense. Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) has little

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authority but controls the money, while WRIA 9 has the Salmon Habitat Plan (Plan) and directs projects and finds money to put projects in the ground. He said we all have to work together to do good stuff or it doesn't help. The LIO is between PSP and the WRIAs, but it's just not a benefit, and fewer and fewer people are attending the meetings. The Management Committee (MC) decided they would have a two hour workshop on Fred Jarrett's proposal and present it at a WEF meeting, because we have to figure out if the WRIA is the right group to take this on.

- Fred Jarrett said the relationship between the federal government and the state is getting tighter, as evidenced by the agreement signed yesterday designating Puget Sound as a "National Waterbody" to improve its health. There is now work going on among various national agencies to figure out how get it done. He reported that nine counties in California signed a "County Self Help" agreement to self-fund cleanup of San Francisco Bay without creating a new regional authority.
- Jay Covington said we put together a Plan, but not a manner of doing it right. We are not getting money, and are nowhere near where we thought we were going to be at this point. We need to coordinate to get the money to complete projects, and he favors getting rid of some of the boxes on Dennis' graph.
- James Rasmussen inquired about EPA's role in the Action Agenda. Fred Jarrett said we are sending EPA a letter asking them coordinate discussion of integrating all federal regulations – EPA, NOAA and the Corps. EPA and NEP is where we would get money for the additional responsibilities of taking over the LIO work.
- James Rasmussen reported that the tribes help oversee NRDA on the Duwamish, creating a lot of habitat. He said Fred Jarrett should discuss this proposal carefully with the tribes.
- Noel Gilbrough proposed adding a one-liner, "\$50 per household for the fish," an idea he always liked.
- Dennis Robertson said he talked to Tukwila Public Works staff about this proposal, and they don't care about the structure, they just want the money for projects.

## 6. Habitat Plan Update: Water Quality Conservation Hypotheses

Elissa Ostergaard, Planning and Stewardship Coordinator, reported that WRIA 9 projects and other actions are developed based on 34 conservation hypotheses in the 2005 WRIA 9 Plan. As part of the update to the Plan, the ITC is asking the WEF to consider adding a couple of changes to the conservation hypotheses based on new information:

### 1. Proposed new Tier 1 conservation hypothesis All-7:

"Protecting and improving water quality, specifically water temperature and chemical contamination conditions, will enhance habitat quality and lead to greater juvenile salmonid growth, disease resistance and survival. Improved water quality will also enhance survival of adult salmon, salmon productivity, and survival of salmon prey resources, such as forage fish."

Elissa said this proposed conservation hypothesis places a higher priority on actions that reduce contaminants (PCBs, PAHs, etc.) in water, and on actions to reduce water temperatures.

Discussion:

- Greg Volkhardt asked if we want to edit the second sentence to add, "Improved water quality will also enhance survival of adult salmon, salmon productivity, **incubating salmon eggs, food safety**, and survival of salmon prey resources, such as forage fish." He said this addition could be part of integrating equity and social justice in the Plan.
- Ron Straka commented that we could start adding a lot of things, like public safety, if we add food safety.

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- Chris Searcy asked if this conservation hypothesis is to set priority or establish a new standard. Doug Osterman responded that we are not changing the water quality standards.
- Dennis Robertson said he wasn't sure we want to add public safety to this document. It all ties together when we start to go after more money, and he suggested finding a different place to do it in the Plan.
- EJ Walsh proposed keeping the goals flexible and at a broad enough level.
- James Rasmussen said if we do not include ESJ here, we need to make sure we do it somewhere else in the Plan. He said he would like to have health and food safety discussed soon, like at the next WEF meeting. Doug Osterman said he thought we already added a conservation hypothesis to do that based on James' input.
- Bill Peloza said the team will follow up and research ESJ and where it is/should be in the Plan, and present it at the next meeting.
- Ron Straka asked for an explanation of the Tiers. Elissa Ostergaard said Tier 1 is the highest, and "All" means the conservation hypothesis pertains to the whole watershed. Others are directed at particular subwatersheds.
- Lisa Herbold asked if the new hypothesis would compete with existing ones when projects are re-ranked as part of the Plan update. Elissa Ostergaard said yes, setting back levees, allowing natural processes, adding more trees, etc., will be part of the re-ranking process. Including this conservation hypothesis as Tier 1 expands the projects we can include, and most existing projects do not address water quality.

***The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the new Tier 1 conservation hypothesis All-7: Protecting and improving water quality, specifically water temperature and chemical contamination conditions, will enhance habitat quality and lead to greater juvenile salmonid growth, disease resistance and survival. Improved water quality will also enhance survival of adult salmon, salmon productivity, and survival of salmon prey resources, such as forage fish.***

**2. Proposed changes to Tier 2 conservation hypothesis All-1 (new text bold, deleted text ~~strikethrough~~):** "Protecting and improving water quality (e.g., **beyond** temperature, ~~dissolved oxygen, turbidity,~~ and chemical contamination ~~conditions~~) ~~by addressing point and nonpoint (specifically stormwater runoff and agricultural drainage) pollution sources~~ will enhance habitat quality and lead to greater juvenile salmon growth, disease resistance, and survival. Improved water quality will also enhance survival of adult salmon, incubating salmon eggs, and salmon prey resources, such as forage fish."

Elissa said Chinook from the Duwamish are more contaminated than Chinook from other watersheds in Puget Sound, and that their contamination levels are enough to cause them to have heart and brain development problems and die. Ecology rates the Green River, Newaukum Creek, and Soos Creek as impaired for temperature under the Clean Water Act, meaning water temperatures are too high. TMDL cleanup plans for the Green and Newaukum recommend planting trees for shade.

Discussion:

- Dennis Robertson proposed amending the verbiage that follows "Protecting and improving water quality" to "in addition to temperature and chemical contamination as captured in All-7."
- Mike Mactutis proposed also keeping some other the examples in the proposed changes, "dissolved oxygen, turbidity."

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***The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved changes to existing Tier 2 conservation hypothesis All-1 regarding water quality, as amended: “Protecting and improving water quality (e.g., dissolved oxygen and turbidity, in addition to temperature and chemical contamination, which are addressed in All-7), will enhance habitat quality and lead to greater juvenile salmonid growth, disease resistance, and survival. Improved water quality will also enhance survival of adult salmon, salmon productivity, and survival of salmon prey resources, such as forage fish.”***

## 7. Habitat Plan Update: Re-Green the Green Riparian Revegetation Strategy

Elissa Ostergaard said we are seeking approval to add the Re-Green the Green Riparian Revegetation Strategy to the WRIA 9 Plan as a new project. Conservation hypothesis All-2 states, “Protecting and improving riparian conditions by adding native riparian vegetation will enhance habitat quality,” and there are several revegetation programs in the Plan. The revegetation strategy is being proposed because: high temperatures are killing Chinook in Soos Creek; we do not have a strategy for securing project funding; it will improve salmon habitat to help meet ESA, Clean Water Act, and tribal treaty rights; and we need it for clear priorities. The primary goals for planting new riparian trees are to improve water temperature and habitat for Chinook and steelhead. Objectives include: working with willing landowners; recruiting funding partners and applying for grants; and start with knotweed control, use native plants, and plant ~2,400 acres by 2025.

Elissa said priority area maps are available for the Middle Green, Lower Green, Duwamish, and Soos and Newaukum creeks. King County GIS developed a mobile app for smart phones and tablets that enable anyone with a planting project to enter project actions into an online interactive map. Total cost estimate for planting 2,384 acres by 2025 is \$28.3 million, which does not include purchasing lands. The estimated per acre cost is \$16,239.

### Discussion:

- James Rasmussen said ESJ, public safety, and stormwater benefits need to be defined in the revegetation strategy. Elissa Ostergaard explained that the actual document spells them out in more detail than the Executive Summary, and references are cited.
- Mike Mactutis reported that the work group worked on the strategy for eight months. Matt Knox, City of Kent, participated on the work group, and Kent provided a lot of comments that were incorporated into the document. He said we need to move forward on this now.
- Dennis Robertson said in jurisdictions along the river a lot of the property is commercially owned, and he thought trade-offs can be made with property owners without using the big club of the Shoreline Management Act. He asked if the strategy spells that out. Elissa said the strategy assumes that jurisdictions or nonprofits will be working with willing property owners only.
- Ron Straka commented that the strategy lists the Duwamish as priority area 3 and he thought it would rank higher. Elissa said there are no temperature TDMLs on the Duwamish.
- Ron Straka asked how acreage was calculated. Elissa replied that we used a big reach target, and have a stretch goal to raise as much money as possible.
- Jenna Leonard asked how she can find the strategy online. Elissa said it is on the WRIA 9 webpage at [www.govlink.org/regreen](http://www.govlink.org/regreen).

***The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the Re-Green the Green Riparian Revegetation Strategy for inclusion as a project in the Salmon Habitat Plan.***

## 8. Public Comment

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Doug Osterman announced that the list of ranked projects for Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) has been released, and King County's Maury Island Aquatic Reserve Armoring Removal II project ranked fifth and will probably get funded. Also, Kent has two of the top four ranked projects on the draft prioritized list for the Ecosystem Restoration Project (ERP).

## **9. Wrap Up/Next Steps**

The next WEF meeting is February 9, 2017, Renton City Hall.