

WRIA 9 Watershed Ecosystem Forum Meeting Summary

Renton City Hall

May 11, 2017, 4:05 – 5:55 p.m.

Members/Jurisdictional Staff Alternates Present		
1.	Councilmember (CM) Marlla Mhoon, Meeting Chair	City of Covington
2.	CM Bill Peloza, Co-Chair	City of Auburn
3.	Brian Anderson	The Boeing Company
4.	CM Kathryn Campbell	City of SeaTac
5.	CM Jay Covington	City of Renton
6.	CM Bob Edgar	City of Burien
7.	Noel Gilbrough	Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
8.	Matt Goehring	WA Department of Natural Resources
9.	Janne Kaje	King County
10.	Jonathon Loos	American Rivers
11.	Tom Malphrus	Covington Water District
12.	Kathy Minsch	City of Seattle
13.	CM Erika Morgan	City of Black Diamond
14.	Lisa Parsons	Washington Environmental Council
15.	CM Dana Ralph	City of Kent
16.	James Rasmussen	Green/Duwamish Watershed Alliance
17.	Brandy Reed	King Conservation District
18.	Loren Reinhold	City of Des Moines
19.	CM Dennis Robertson	City of Tukwila
20.	Chris Searcy	City of Enumclaw
Other Alternates Present		
21.	Maiya Andrews	City of Burien
22.	Steve Lee	Covington Water District
23.	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
24.	Ron Straka	City of Renton
Other Attendees		
25.	Maggie Gipson	City of Auburn
26.	Kollin Higgins	King County
27.	Laurel Kanawyer	Citizen
28.	Leah Kintner	Puget Sound Partnership
29.	Mike Perfetti	City of Tukwila
30.	Karen Bergeron	WRIA 9 Habitat Project Coordinator
31.	Linda Grob	WRIA 9 Administrative Coordinator
32.	Doug Osterman	WRIA 9 Salmon Recovery Manager

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

1. Public Comment

Dana Ralph thanked Doug Osterman, Salmon Recovery Manager, and Karen Bergeron, Habitat Project Coordinator, for their assistance with trying to protect the Par 3 Golf Course property. Unfortunately we weren't successful and it is being sold to a developer.

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2. Approval of Meeting Summary

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the meeting summary for the February 9, 2017 meeting.

3. Survey Results of WEF Meeting & Agenda Options

Doug Osterman said the survey results do not support changes to the WEF meeting time, but they do support a reduction in the number of comment periods. He also noted that three uncounted surveys were found this week, but they do not change the results we previously published.

4. WRIA 9 Services Client Satisfaction Survey

Doug Osterman reported that we had 22 responses to our Client Satisfaction Survey, a higher number of returns than we've had before. Overall the responses are positive. He said he will be zeroing in on the questions that were answered "not applicable" to advise the designers of the survey of ways to improve clarity of the questions.

5. WRIA 9 2017/2018 Legislative Priorities

Governor's Capital Budget Request:

Doug Osterman reported that the \$55.3 million we supported for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Regionally Significant Projects fund was reduced to \$30 million in the 2017/2018 Governor's Capital Budget. If it is increased back to \$55.3 million two of our projects would be funded: Lower Russell Levee Setback and Downey Farmstead Restoration. He said we have a draft letter in the meeting packet from the co-chairs supporting the higher amount, and we would like approval tonight to finalize it. Linda Grob, Administrative Coordinator, will send out the letter, and email a PDF copy, Word version, and list of congressional emails to WEF members so they can use this information to make the letter their own.

Puget Sound Day-on-the-Hill:

Doug Osterman reported that he attended Puget Sound Day-on-the-Hill in Washington D.C. May 1-4. The good news is that budget reconciliation was passed. The bad news is members of Congress anticipate that federal budget and legislative provisions for Puget Sound will likely be zeroed for 2018. He said we should immediately read the budget when it hits Congress's desk and write letters.

Doug said Maria Cantwell suggested sending thank you letters to every Republican Senate and House member for supporting PCSRF, and said we should work on building a really strong relationship with Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. Senator Cantwell also wants to go on the yellow bus tour this year. The Senator identified that a weakness for Puget Sound is not having the Port of Tacoma engaged and rigorously participating. Doug said Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Day-on-the-Hill summary hasn't been released yet, and he thanked WEF and Management Committee leaders for supporting his attendance.

Discussion:

- Ron Straka proposed adding "thank you for your continued support" to the letter.
- Kathryn Campbell said she heard letters should be sent to Senate and House member's local offices. Doug Osterman agreed.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved sending the Puget Coast Salmon Recovery Fund thank you letter to Republican Senate and House members with Ron Straka's edit.

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6. WRIA 9 Purpose Statement

Dennis Robertson, Management Committee (MC) Chair, provided an overview of the South Central Area Caucus Group Lead Integrating Organization (LIO) and KC Deputy Executive Fred Jarrett’s proposal to restructure the LIO at the WRIA level. Councilmember (CM) Robertson said the MC felt that the 17 page WRIA 9 ILA was too long to use to succinctly tell what we do, so the draft WRIA 9 purpose statement was created for WEF approval:

The 17 local governments within the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed (WRIA 9) share interests in and responsibility for addressing long-term watershed planning for and conservation of the aquatic ecosystem and floodplain. Collectively, the local government partners share staffing and other operating expenses for securing capital project funding, implementing educational activities, planning, and scientific assessment that benefit Chinook salmon recovery. To that end, the partners seek to maximize improving water quality, reducing flood hazards, and, in general, increasing the function and health of the watershed and its communities.

CM Robertson said we need something we can all say, and this statement can be used as our elevator speech.

Discussion:

- Noel Gilbrough said the statement should be made broader, instead of saying “benefit Chinook” say “benefit salmon”. Dennis Robertson replied that the MC discussed that, but questioned whether it means steelhead too. Noel said no. CM Robertson emphasized that we want to say what we are doing now.
- Jay Covington agreed with the statement verbiage, and said he’s happy with it the way it is.
- Erika Morgan said she particularly like the last sentence because of its integration. She said she is an upper watershed person and appreciates a broad view of “whitecaps to whitecaps”.
- Kathy Minsch agreed with Jay Covington and said she thinks we should highlight that Chinook is the regulatory driver.
- Marlla Mhoon said when we redraft our letter it’s important to say Chinook is our regulator.
- Ron Straka proposed adding “improving habitat,” to the last sentence.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the WRIA 9 Purpose Statement with the following edited last sentence: “To that end, the partners seek to maximize improving habitat, water quality, reducing flood hazards, and, in general, increasing the function and health of the watershed and its communities.”

7. 2017 Priority Implementation of Habitat Capital Projects & Programs

Karen Bergeron said we have four different project funding programs this year:

Funding Program	Amount
Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)	\$295,895
Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM)	1,252,799
PSAR Returned Funds	600,000
King Conservation District (KCD) Returned Funds	483,780
Total	\$2,632,474

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The following proposals were recommended for funding with two exceptions:

SRFB:

Karen said the Riverton Creek Flaggate Removal project (RM 6.6, City of Tukwila) received a PSAR grant in 2016, but Tukwila staff have since realized they need additional funds. The \$295,895 SRFB funding will be used as match to complete the design, permitting, and construction.

CWM:

#	Projects	Amount
High Priority Project Implementation		
1	Downey Farmstead Construction (RM 21.4) (City of Kent)	\$882,799
2	Frager Road Utility Relocation (RM 21.5) (City of Kent)	120,000
3	Lower Green River Acquisitions (RM 20 to RM 25) (WRIA 9/King County [KC])	250,000
Alt1	Lower Green River Acquisitions (RM 20 to RM 25) (WRIA 9/KC)	
Alt2	Teufel Feasibility (RM 20.8) (KC)	
Subtotal		\$1,252,799
Education/Stewardship		
1	Education Program (Environmental Science Center)	\$30,000
2	2017 Beach Naturalist Program (Seattle Aquarium)	21,000
Subtotal		\$51,000
Monitoring and Technical Assistance		
1	Capital Projects Implementation 2018 (WRIA 9)	\$135,960
2	Otolith Microchemistry Sampling (WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife [WDFW])	50,000
3	Chinook Use of Lower Green River Tributaries & Off-Channel Habitat (KC)	30,000
4	Middle Green River Smolt Trap & Otolith Sampling (WDFW)	40,000
5	2018 Habitat Plan Technical Assistance & Outreach (WRIA 9)	89,000
6	Sediment Sampling of Duwamish Projects (\$30,000 request)	0
7	Upper Green Habitat Strategy (\$10,000)	0
Subtotal		\$344,960
10	Total	\$1,642,105

Mike Mactutis said the Downey Farmstead Restoration, which has come to the WEF before, is part of a string of three projects on the Green River. For the last several years funding for the project has been up and down, and he said he is glad money is available again. The \$120,000 CWM funding request helps defer the additional cost of utility relocation as part of relocating Frager Road away from the river's edge. In addition, Kent received \$77,000 in returned PSAR funds to fully cover the additional work. The restoration portion of the project occurs after the road's realignment.

Mike said Downey construction will create multiple side-channels at various elevations to provide juvenile Chinook rearing and refuge. It will also lower the site and reconnect the flood plain for flood control, and remove trees before planting 30,000 native trees and shrubs. The funding request is for \$882,799 in CWM grant funds, to be used as match for an anticipated \$4,835,743 PSAR Large Capacity grant, which has ranked Downey Farmstead highly on its project list.

Karen explained that if we don't get PSAR Large Cap funding for Downey Farmstead, the \$882,799 CWM funds will sit, so she is recommending alternative projects for the funding:

- A second Lower Green River Acquisition with a willing landowner for \$830,000, and
- The Teufel Feasibility Study on a recently acquired FCD site for \$52,799.

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Kollin Higgins, King County, said this year we received more funding requests for monitoring projects than we had available funding for. He went over the three Implementation Technical Committee (ITC) recommended monitoring proposals:

- \$40,000 for the Green River Smolt Trap, which operates mid-January through early July catching a portion of migrating juvenile salmon and steelhead, and using mark-recapture efficiency trials to estimate abundance (RM34);
- \$50,000 for Otolith Analysis to fund the third round of analysis for greater certainty, given the results from one year of data we need greater certainty to make sure those findings were not abnormal;
- \$30,000 for Lower Green Juvenile Chinook Use of Tributary Habitats and Off-Channel Projects: the City of Kent had done some work 10 years ago but didn't have the right permit to collect Chinook; the ITC wants to go back and do a more thorough survey.

Returned PSAR Funds:

Karen said WRIA 9 is first on the list for returned PSAR funds, and we are recommending the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve (KC) acquisition for the \$500,000 that potentially becomes available on July 1, 2017. This acquisition has willing property owners. Greg Rabourn, KC Vashon Basin Steward, has put together a list of properties and will work through the list as future funding becomes available.

Returned KCD Funds:

Karen said \$483,780 in KCD was returned from the Seahurst Park project. Recommended for the funding is the McSorley Creek Pocket Estuary (KC) at Saltwater State Park. The funding will be used to refine the preliminary 2013 design so the project could apply for additional funding to open up the pocket estuary for salmon. She reported that Brandy Reed, KCD supports the reallocation.

Discussion:

- Doug Osterman reported that the upper end of McSorley Creek is a protected wetland. Mike Mactutis said Kent has found coho almost to Pacific Highway. Karen Bergeron noted that the City of Kent purchased the headwaters, and Doug added that the City of Des Moines purchased the first chunk.
- Chris Searcy asked why the Upper Green Habitat Strategy project did not get funding. Karen said that was her project, and she was very passionate about it. Doug Osterman said Karen also applied for a forest grant for the project, but did not receive funding.
- Marlla Mhoon asked why fry are not surviving for Otolith analysis. Kollin Higgins said fish that go to salt water aren't surviving, and the numbers are really bad. We are going to have to direct more research to understanding why this is happening. CM Mhoon commented that they are too small for tagging. Noel indicated steelhead smolts are dying at the Hood Canal Bridge, and only 1% of steelhead make it back, probably due to predators.
- Marlla Mhoon asked if the Teufel Feasibility alternative project has the potential for opening up the floodplain. Karen Bergeron explained that the property has dieldrin, which is similar to DDT, and the dirt will need to be cleaned off.
- Erika Morgan commented that she is thrilled by McSorley Creek project, and said she was down there some time ago.
- Ron Straka asked what properties are included in the Lower Green River Acquisition, because he wants to make sure we are being coordinated with other needs like the FCD or the jurisdiction at the same location. Karen Bergeron explained this is one of the wrecking yard properties, which has a willing seller and is in the WRIA 9 Habitat Plan. Another property is adjacent to the Teufel project. She said available parcels on the Lower Green that don't require removal of a building are few and far

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between. Doug Osterman noted that the Green the Green project sent out a letter asking about leasing the property, and the wrecking yard owner was not interested in leasing, but in selling.

- Marlla Mhoon asked how WRIA 8 is doing updating their habitat plan with the funding provided by PSP. Janne Kaje responded that WRIA 8 is on track, will distribute the draft WRIA 8 Plan at the July Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting, for approval by the SRC in September 2017.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the recommended WRIA 9 2017 Capital Projects and Programs.

Dennis Robertson praised the staff of WRIA 9 and their longevity. He said WRIA 9 works better than some of the other WRIAs, and we need to be grateful for that.

9. Wrap Up/Next Steps

Doug Osterman said he will get the letter out to Congressional staff, and the Word version out to the WEF. He said we will have a yellow bus tour because of the interest from Senator Cantwell.

The next WEF meeting is August 10, 2017, Renton City Hall.