

WRIA 9 Watershed Ecosystem Forum Meeting Summary

Renton City Hall

August 10, 2017, 4:05 – 6:28 p.m.

Members/Jurisdictional Staff Alternates 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 Co.
4.	Katy Buck	King County
5.	CM Kathryn Campbell	City of SeaTac
6.	Jay Covington	City of Renton
7.	CM Bob Edgar	City of Burien
8.	Noel Gilbrough	Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (MSFEG)
9.	Matt Goehring	WA Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR)
10.	Mark Hoppen	City of Normandy Park
11.	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
12.	Kathy Minsch	City of Seattle
13.	CM Erika Morgan	City of Black Diamond
14.	Joan Nolan	WA Department of Ecology
15.	Lisa Parsons	Washington Environmental Council
16.	Tyler Patterson	Tacoma Public Utilities
17.	Mike Perfetti	City of Tukwila
18.	Chris Searcy	City of Enumclaw
Other Alternates Present		
19.	Maiya Andrews	City of Burien
20.	Jeanette Dorner	MSFEG
21.	Ron Straka	City of Renton
Other Attendees		
22.	Jeanette Dorner	MSFEG
23.	Katie Beaver	King County
24.	Chris Gregersen	King County
25.	Kollin Higgins	King County
26.	Abby Hook	WRIA 9 Interim WRIA 9 Habitat Plan Manager
27.	Janne Kaje	King County
28.	Leah Kintner	Puget Sound Partnership
29.	Jessica Olmstead	WA DNR
30.	Tracy Stanton	Urban Waters Federal Partnership
31.	Karen Bergeron	WRIA 9 Habitat Project Coordinator
32.	Linda Grob	WRIA 9 Administrative Coordinator
33.	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/Announcements

Doug Osterman, Salmon Recovery Manager, announced that Matt Goehring has accepted the WRIA 9 Stewardship and Planning Coordinator position, formerly held by Elissa Ostergaard. Matt's first day is September 5.

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Bill Pelosa reported on the passing of former WRIA 9 Forum Chair, Steve Mullet, City of Tukwila, and former Forum and WEF Chair Joan McGilton, City of Burien. Both passed away two weeks ago, and he asked for a moment of silence to honor them.

Bill Pelosa and Doug Osterman also recognized Linda Grob, WRIA 9 Administrative Coordinator, who is retiring August 25. She was presented with a delicious chocolate retirement cake and card.

Janne Kaje, King County, introduced Katie Beaver, the new Lower Green Basin Steward for King County. Kathy Minsch added that Katie came from City of Seattle, where she led the Trees for Neighborhoods Program.

Noel Gilbrough announced that on Thursday, August 28, the Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group is hosting a fund raiser at the Mt. Baker Rowing Club on Lake Washington.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the meeting summary for the May 11, 2017 meeting.

3. WRIA 9 2018 Budget, Work Plan, and Cost Shares

Doug Osterman introduced the WRIA 9 2018 budget, work plan, and cost shares, providing the highlights of each document. Overall, the budget and work plan are consistent with those provisionally approved by the WEF last year as part of the biennial budget process. The Management Committee recommends the WEF approve the 2018 budget, work plan, and cost shares as presented.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum unanimously approved the 2018 Budget, Work Plan, and Cost Shares.

4. Green/Duwamish Urban Waters Federal Partnership

Tracy Stanton, Ambassador, Green/Duwamish Urban Waters Federal Partnership (G/D UWFP), reported that WRIA 9 is one of 19 UWFPs around the county. The program focuses on urban watersheds and is funded by federal agencies to maximize funding opportunities. She said social scientists got together and decided they wanted to include the Green/Duwamish in the program. It is an unfunded mandate, and the Forest Service is the only funder to the G/D UWFP. All 19 are driven by different agendas and organizations. The message here in WRIA 9 was please don't form a new organizational group in King County because we already have a functioning group in the WEF.

Tracy listed a few of the accomplishments since the 2014 designation and where the G/D UWFP still needs funding:

- Helping to fund the Middle Green Revegetation Strategy, which was run by Elissa Ostergaard;
- Helping to organize the Duwamish River Youth Corps, thanks to a suggestion by the Green-Duwamish Watershed Alliance;
- Funding consultant support for the Duwamish Blueprint; and
- Seeking funding for the biggest UWFP goal, which is developing a working landscape research model that all researchers can use.

Tracy announced that the UWFP team in the Department of Ecology in D.C. was nominated for a Samuel J. Heyman Service to America (Sammie) Award, and thanks to the public voting component we are one of 12

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who made it to the next level. She previously emailed a note about the nomination, will resend the link, and said people can vote every day until voting closes at the end of August.

Tracy went over the next G/D UWFP efforts include:

- Working on convening state and federal regulatory groups at the Green Symposium in February so they can do a better job sharing information (hopefully announcement will be released in September);
- Waiting to work with Doug Osterman on a Yellow Bus Tour (YBT);
- Working on a meeting of the Green/Duwamish Strategy; and
- Working on a letter seeking membership on the WEF.

Discussion:

- Marlla Mhoon asked if the Reveg Strategy is being implemented. Tracy Stanton said she wasn't sure and will need to find out.
- Joan Nolan asked how long UWFP funding is for. Tracy said it runs out in 2018. This is probably not a good year to go to EPA for funding, but they would be a logical partner.
- Noel Gilbrough asked if Senator Maria Cantwell is she still interested in going on the YBT. Doug Osterman said she is, but Congress is on a short recess. Noel recommended doing the whole deal, over Snoqualmie Pass and Stampede Pass to the upper watershed. He said he feels interest in the downstream fish passage at Howard Hansen Dam (HHD) is waning, as it is in Tacoma Water's upstream passage. A lot of salmon could be using the upper watershed.
- Kathryn Campbell suggested having a videography of the watershed that we could show the senator and she could pass on to others. Doug Osterman responded that we could have a YBT and videotape it.
- Tracy Stanton remarked that when you have events, the feds are looking for opportunities to get people out in the watershed. The idea of mapping where restoration is going on in the watershed is a tool we could develop. She asked that people give her their ideas if anyone is interested.
- Mike Mactutis asked for more information on the map. He said the City of Kent has photos and locations of restoration sites. Tracy explained that we first started with the state database and used the existing map. We found that the WRIA 9 map wasn't complete, and we more information and data to add.
- Marlla Mhoon asked for clarification that Karen Bergeron, Projects and Funding Coordinator, has the information for WRIA 9's projects. Doug Osterman said she does, but the information is incomplete because it doesn't include all the state funding and matches.

5. WRIA 9 2017/2018 State Legislative Priorities & 2017 Congressional Priorities

Bill Peloza pointed out a copy of the letter from WRIA 9 to the new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Seattle District Commander, Colonel Mike Gerald, inviting him to attend one of our WEF meetings. He said we were concerned because we weren't invited to the change-in-command ceremony, which we heard was on Facebook. Noel Gilbrough said he was invited but didn't go. Marlla Mhoon said she and Councilmember (CM) Peloza were invited and went to the last four change overs.

Doug Osterman reported that there is no capital budget for the State of Washington because it was not approved during the special senate session. There were some wins on the federal side, like \$50 million for the Salmon Recovery Fund. He said none of our recommended funding at the state level was approved, so all our projects are delayed. Senator Patty Murray did get \$65 million for Pacific Coast Salmon funding, but unless we get state funding for match we won't get anything.

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Discussion:

- Noel Gilbrough inquired if the governor can call them back into session. Jay Covington said they had a brief meeting yesterday, where they agreed they all were wearing blue ties.
- Jeanette Dorner asked if the \$40 million in Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funds our projects. Doug Osterman said neither Downey Farmstead nor Lower Russell Road received funding.

6. Overview of Update to the WRIA 9 Strategic Assessment

Kollin Higgins, Environmental Scientist, King County, said the Implementation Technical Committee (ITC) is currently working on three technical assessment briefings: Fish Use Habitat and Productivity, Water Quality Data, and Climate Change Sea Level Rise. Today's presentation is centered on Habitat and Productivity, specifically Middle Green Productivity, Lower Green Retrospective, and Duwamish Project Sampling.

Kollin reported that since we did the 2005 WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan (Plan) there has been a lot more information on the importance of floodplains for juvenile Chinook. Of Green River subwatersheds, the Lower Green has been impacted the most with the loss of 82% of its floodplain area, with the remaining amount not connected well. Based on the timing of floods, juvenile fry are the most reliant on floodplain habitats. He said there was originally the idea that salmon didn't use the Lower Green, but after Chris Gregerson, King County, did sampling he discovered small juveniles are using created shallow and slow water habitats more than adjacent habitats. Kollin said for the Duwamish we learned we need to build bigger projects versus ~1 acre sized, and we found that juvenile Chinook have large amounts of contamination known to impair growth rates, general health, and survival rates. On the nearshore more armoring has gone in, and we aren't seeing a net improvement.

Kollin went over the Viable Salmon Population (VSP) parameters (abundance, spatial structure, diversity, productivity), which determine if fish should be delisted. Green River Chinook are still on a downward track for **abundance**, and over the last ten years the trend is even steeper. For **spatial structure**, we expected to have fish above HHD long before now; the upstream passage was built ten years ago, but the downstream passage was never built. We have a lot of habitat above the dam (66 to 165 miles, more than the Elwha River's 43 miles), but we have no fish in the Upper Green Watershed. He said our **diversity** target is less than 30% hatchery fish, but we have never reached that target and the co-managers will have to help us to meet it.

Kollin reported that WRIA 9 **productivity** has increased over the last ten years (to 8.70%), but it is below the target we would like (10.40%). Smolt trap data validated that productivity is not spawning habitat limited. The data verifies we are lacking in rearing habitat in the Middle Green so we aren't likely to see an increase in juveniles without increasing the amount of rearing habitat. Moderate flows in the spring, like in 2017, are good for habitat connectivity and productivity, but high flows can negatively impact overall productivity. He said we start to see the scouring of redds between 5,000-8,000 cfs. Flows above 8,800 cfs can cause channel migration/habitat creation, but can scour redds if between November and mid-January. Flow management at HHD prolongs flows above 5,900 cfs by 29% compared to historic conditions, but they keep the flows below the level that would produce positive habitat changes. Two years of otolith (ear bone) surveys show very low survival from the fry-type (<3%) which are on average 60% of outmigrants, compared to the larger parr type, which have higher survival to adulthood. He said fish that are heavily reliant early on the Duwamish are not coming back in any significant numbers. Yearling Chinook have the highest survival and are least reliant on the Duwamish.

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Kollin summarized the overarching takeaways from the updated understanding of WRIA 9 Chinook and their habitats:

- We need to evaluate goals, policies, and programs to figure out if we are going in the right direction;
- We need passage above HHD to access better habitat;
- More fry rearing habitat in the Middle and Lower Green equals more parr/fish surviving to adulthood;
- We should consider changing project prioritization and sequencing in the Duwamish;
- We need to invest more in research in the Duwamish to see why fry aren't coming back;
- We need to review our Plan funding policy that says we should spend more money in the Duwamish, in light of new information as well as how difficult it is to track and implement.

Discussion:

- Jay Covington asked why the Elwha generated more excitement than HHD. Doug Osterman replied that fish passage at HHD was in the Plan, and the Corps was responsible for constructing the downstream passage facility. We were too patient thinking the Corps was going to get it done like Tacoma Water did with their upstream passage, but the Corps didn't do it.
- Noel Gilbrough agreed with everything Doug said. He commented that he's been trying to figure out what is going on with the Corps in the Upper Green, and is not finding the action. Doug said he wished the Puget Sound Agenda would include HHD in bold.
- Tyler Patterson said the key is to look at all the municipalities around the table who have put money on the table.
- Bill Peloza proposed having Doug Osterman write a one-page letter to the Corps regarding HHD fish passage. Doug said he knows that WRIA 8 is heavily involved in writing a letter to the Corps about the aging Ballard Locks, and Mud Mountain Dam is also an issue.
- Kathy Minsch reported that the Clallam Tribe was heavily involved in the Elwha removal, and we may need tribes involved at HHD as well.
- Ron Straka asked what Tacoma Water does with the fish that go above their fish passage. Tyler Patterson explained we take some of them to the Soos Fish Hatchery one month per year otherwise we close the fish ladder.
- Mike Mactutis said the City of Kent is a partner with Tacoma Water on the biological opinion, and he said the WRIA 9 letter should be targeted to the next stage.
- Marlla Mhoon asked if we have comparative otolith studies for other rivers, like the Skagit. Kollin Higgins that in 2015 there fry type composed roughly 30% of returns in the Skagit.

7. Adaptive Management Framework for Updating Salmon Habitat Plan

Abby Hook, consultant and Interim Habitat Plan Manager, said the goal of the Plan update is to take new science and information, address gaps and barriers to implementation, and update the project list, policies, and programs. Today's presentation will go over the Goals Document and the proposed Adaptive Management Decision Framework, and is a warmup for WEF members between now and the November meeting to review materials.

Abby explained what the Goals Document is:

- Necessary Future Conditions from the 2005 Plan;
- Updated 2028 Targets;
- Current conditions (if available); and
- Information derived from existing sources.

What it isn't:

- Changes in Necessary Future Conditions; and

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- Change in monitoring priorities.

She said the ITC reflected on the first ten years of implementation to see if targets were realistic and achieved. They also scoped future potential work to see what opportunities are available in the next ten years, and if there are targets that have already been set.

Abby provided an example of a goal in the Goals Document, which is arranged by subwatershed:

- Marine riparian vegetation (Indicator);
- Marine riparian zone is functioning and buffer widths are established to provide riparian functions (Necessary Futures Conditions);
- 25 acres and/or 7,000 feet of revegetated bank; target mouths of creeks and areas without bluffs or shade on mainland (2028 Target);
- 24 acres of shoreline is dense trees; 16% patchy trees; 60% cleared/other (Current Condition); and 2005 Plan, etc. (Source).

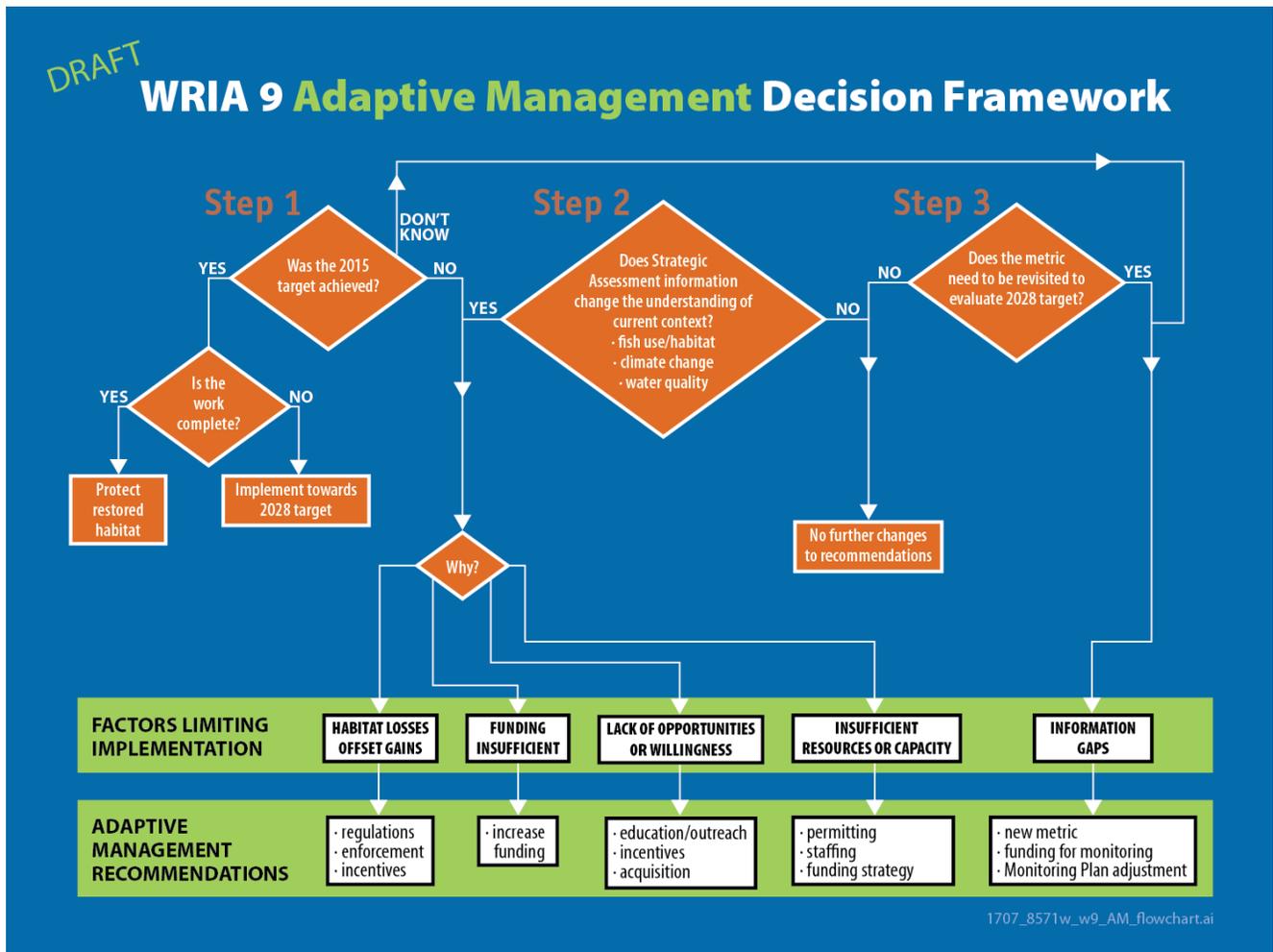
Abby said the Goals Document will be used to review progress for adaptive management recommendations, and adjust programs, policies, and projects to meeting 2028 targets. She said we would love WEF review between August and November 2017, and suggested members work with their jurisdictional staff on the ITC. Members can look at how their jurisdiction/organization contributes to the 2028 target, and the policies and programs that would affect it.

The WRIA 9 Team came up with the draft Adaptive Management Decision Framework, which Abby showed on a slide (see figure below). She said if you look at a 2015 target and don't know what was achieved, you have a monitoring problem. If the goal was not achieved, the factors limiting implementation (habitat losses offsetting gains, insufficient funding, lack of opportunities or willingness, information gaps) could lead you to adaptive management recommendations. She included the hypotheses for a shoreline armoring example: even with 1,500 feet of armoring removed there was a net gain of 70 feet. The lack of opportunities or willingness could be residents not educated on softshore techniques and feasibility of softshore not explored in permitting process. Recommendations could be specific outreach on softshore techniques and working with permitting departments to ensure feasibility is explored. Another limiting factor is there is no mainland nearshore steward; maybe a recommendation would be to adjust staffing for that position. She said climate change is going to result in higher waves and stronger surges, which will result in people wanting higher armoring. In the first ten years of the Plan, softshore armoring was not tracked. Another recommendation is to split armoring into hard and soft and monitor separately.

Abby said the Adaptive Management Decision Framework is intended to help us track how decisions are made, and she asked if this will work for the WEF as we move forward.

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Discussion:

- Jay Covington inquired about the timeline, because some of the original Plan is going to be significantly redone. He said this is going to take more than quarterly WEF meeting, and he wanted to make sure the WRIA 9 Team gets the information they need.
- Chris Searcy asked how close we are to the target. Jay Covington said we need percentages on all the targets. Kollin Higgins responded that we do have information on the target and how close we got to it.
- Kathryn Campbell noted the ideas percolating in everyone's heads, and she asked if this is the brainstorming before the brainstorming. Doug Osterman responded that the scale of the update will be determined. This is a requirement of NOAA and Adaptive management, if you think you aren't going to make a target, you need to see what can you do instead.
- Jay Covington commented that ten years ago we thought habitat, habitat, habitat, but then couldn't find enough money to get in control of some of these areas.
- Abby Hook said there might be shifts that don't change everything, but we do want to refocus our funding from the Duwamish to the Lower and Middle Green. Doug Osterman remarked that the specific Duwamish target will stay focused, but he thought the financial target could be moved.
- Jay Covington again inquired about the timeline for the Plan update. Doug Osterman said we have the next four meetings leading to November 2018, which is when we say this is the update to our Plan. Abby Hook suggested a smaller workgroup could work to crank out recommendations.
- Lisa Parsons asked what we are doing wrong that we aren't getting the funding. We should back up requests with a strategic marketing plan. Doug Osterman commented that WRIA 9 does not have a

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good reputation for where money should be placed; other parts of the state ask, “Why can’t King County do this work on its own?”

- Mike Mactutis noted that two of the four highest ranked PSAR Large Capacity Projects were in the Lower Green. Doug Osterman said legislators weren’t saying that is an important place. Mike responded that’s not what they were saying specifically.
- Jeanette Dorner said the work WRIA 9 is doing now and over the next year is really important. The more specific and strategic you can be in describing your goals and what needs to be done, and how doing those things will make this difference for fish and people is an important piece.
- Bill Peloza said in a city council atmosphere, we try not to take too big a bite of the apple. The 2005 Plan was huge, and in the City of Auburn we get a lot accomplished if we take on two to four smaller projects, get them done, and put a stamp on it. Marlla Mhoon noted that a smaller one-acre project has limited impact.
- Erika Morgan commented that the City of Black Diamond is about to do all this development on pristine land, and we are going to try and do the regulatory so some of it is left.
- Jay Covington remarked that he is not going to apologize for the goals in the 2005 Plan, but now we need to be more focused. We are going to figure out what we can do. We didn’t know then how much time we had, and maybe we have 100 years.

9. Wrap Up/Next Steps

Doug Osterman said he will be writing the letter to the Corps regarding the upstream passage at HDD, and the WEF is going to receive a draft of the Goals Document between now and the November meeting. The next WEF meeting is November 9, 2017, Renton City Hall.

Marlla Mhoon said every city hall should have one of the beautiful WRIA 9 posters. Bill Peloza said they are good for youth. Doug Osterman said another adaptive management thing will be to update the poster. He reported that the City of Tukwila did a great thing and posted the poster low for the kids.

Lisa Parsons announced that she is going to be featured for an award on KIRO 7, and if she gets the award she will receive \$10,000. It will be on TV in September 2017.