

**Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed (WRIA 9)
Implementation Technical Committee**

December 15, 2021 | 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Agenda and Meeting Summary

- | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------|
| 9:30 | Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions• Agenda review | Iris Kemp, WRIA 9 |
| 9:45 | Lower Green River Corridor Plan Scoping: Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Before meeting:</i> participants review 2019 comment letter and Plan website (https://www.lowergreensepa.org/).• <i>During meeting:</i> Matt will give an overview of the previous process and the current alternatives. | Matt Goehring,
WRIA 9 |
| 10:15 | Break-out: define letter scope and draft content <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Before meeting:</i> participants review activity boards. Feel free to add initial thoughts/comments on the first slide at this link: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/18LDj8qniQjviFDdpEvIF2-fknw0yNrZX-vQLRktkFN4/edit?usp=sharing.• <i>During meeting:</i> participants will break into groups to discuss the alternatives and recommend scope and content for a WRIA 9 comment letter. We hope this brainstorm session will also be useful to organizations and jurisdictions planning to submit their own letters. | All |
| 10:50 | Re-group: debrief from break-out session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>During meeting:</i> participants will summarize highlights from their small groups and identify common themes, questions, and recommendations. | All |
| 11:10 | Round Robin Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project recruitment/updates• New topic requests for future ITC meetings• Bring your update to share! If you're unable to attend, you can share updates in advance via email (ikemp@kingcounty.org). | All |
| 11:30 | Adjourn | |

WRIA 9 ITC web page: <http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/9/committees/ImpleTechCmte.aspx>

Participant list:

Alexandra Doty, Amanda Pierce, Cleo Neculae, Greg Wingard, Halley Kimball, Iris Kemp, Katherine Lynch, Katie Beaver, Kollin Higgins, Matt Goehring, Mike Mactutis, Mike Perfetti, Sherry Edquid, Suzanna Smith

Round-table Updates and Reminders

- If you have a new project for adoption into the Salmon Habitat Plan or you have a project with significant updates from original project design/footprint for re-tiering in the plan, please submit a Proposed Project Form. Visit our [“Funding Opportunities” webpage](#) and scroll down to “Updating and Adding Salmon Habitat Projects” for more information. **Submission deadline is January 28.**
- Deadline extension: please send your comments and edits on the Water Quality Benefits Evaluation draft report attached to Clark (timothy.clark@kingcounty.gov, 206-477-1306) by **January 10.**
- Re-Green the Green and Monitoring and Research grant opportunities are open! Visit our [“Funding Opportunities” webpage](#) for more information and please distribute widely throughout your network. **Proposals are due March 4.**
- Gov. Inslee announces new strategy and investments to protect and restore salmon: <https://medium.com/wagovernor/inslee-announces-new-strategy-and-investments-to-protect-and-restore-salmon-42f67a4b1616>
- Send Iris your meeting content requests for 2022! ikemp@kingcounty.gov

Lower Green River Corridor Plan Scoping: Overview

Matt reviewed the Lower Green River Corridor Plan process to date and the main themes of WRIA 9’s comment letter during initial 2019 scoping which helped inform the development of the current set of alternatives. Matt also provided an overview of the materials available at www.lowergreensepa.org and an in-depth dive into the alternatives described at this link:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b22c63afcf7fdc77370bfe9/t/61983e57626b424c74dcfa32/1637367383616/Lower+Green+River+Corridor+Flood+Hazard+Management+Plan+PEIS_Detailed+Alternatives+Chart.pdf.

The Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) scoping comment period has been extended to February 4, 2022. The Flood Control District will hold two public scoping meetings on January 6, 2022 at 2:30pm and 6pm. Meeting recordings will be posted on the www.lowergreensepa.org website. Following the end of the comment period, the FCD expects to prepare the draft PEIS for review in summer 2022.

ITC Discussions: scope and content for LGRCP comment letter

ITC members broke into small groups and discussed the alternatives through a salmon recovery lens. Groups focused on three main questions: 1) is alternative 3 sufficient to meet salmon recovery needs? If not, what is missing? 2) if your organization is planning on commenting, what themes will you include in comments? and 3) what comments, questions, or concerns should be included in a WRIA 9 letter? Groups then came back together to identify overarching themes, comments, and questions.

Themes and comments from ITC discussions

Vague scope and lack of specificity/clarity about the differences among alternatives makes it difficult to assess whether alternatives are sufficient to meet salmon recovery needs and/or how they should be improved. Given the inability to distinguish among alternatives and understand what actions would be taken under, e.g., Alternative 2 vs. Alternative 3, ITC members hesitate to support these alternatives as sufficient to meet salmon recovery needs.

- ITC members wonder whether the alternatives as described meet SEPA requirements; the legal standard is that alternatives must be distinct enough to compare benefits and downsides. ITC members connected with SEPA experts will consult them and report back on the level of specificity required for a PEIS.
- Alternatives 2 and 3 are multibenefit with a degree of spatial variation inherent between them; as written, they do not allow for a reach-by-reach analysis. The difference in impacts of these two alternatives on salmon recovery are difficult to determine. What can each alternative achieve in terms of salmon recovery? What are the tradeoffs between Alternatives 2 and 3 in terms of impacts/benefits for salmon recovery? Maps and information on what will be implemented and prioritized where under these alternatives are needed.
- ITC members recommend an increased focus on addressing and mitigating climate change impacts as a benefit in multi-benefit projects.
- ITC members recommend development and inclusion of the following:
 - Long-range floodplain acquisition strategy/plan that includes assumptions, constraints, priorities, etc.
 - Watershed-wide floodplain acquisition policy
 - Floodplain partner agreements that clarify roles and responsibilities
 - Project performance requirements (e.g., physical, biological, water quality/temperature responses)
 - Annual reporting and adaptive management
 - Documentation/assurance of actionability of each alternative
- How will habitat be enhanced, repaired, restored, etc.? The current alternatives are vague. Levee structures can limit vegetation options, and ITC members recommend striving not to preclude habitat restoration. Could FCD highlight where large habitat opportunities exist? Where will acquisitions be prioritized? Where do major deficiencies in flood protection exist?
- How are benefits prioritized when they are mutually exclusive and/or it is not possible to achieve all benefits?
- ITC members recommend that recreation should not be prioritized in the multi-benefit section; language related to “maintaining recreation elements” should be removed.
- The hierarchies of actions presented in these alternatives are vague and in some cases are not in the order that ITC members would recommend.
- There are no references to the Salmon Habitat Plan or to specific habitat/salmon recovery needs.

- What does FCD consider a “facility”? How will FCD address issues such as elevated roads and historical facilities that aren’t included in the County’s inventory? Given that the hierarchies of actions for areas where facilities exist vs. do not exist are different, how would this impact salmon habitat projects?
- Alternative 3 proposes a hierarchy of actions where facilities do not exist where the first step in the hierarchy is to “do nothing and maintain connection between river and floodplain.” Some habitat/floodplain restoration projects require adding facilities. Would those projects be impacted with the adoption of these alternatives? This comment/question mainly applies to agricultural areas.
- Many existing areas flood because flooding is and has been the existing natural condition. Are there county or government programs that provide compensation/benefit to agricultural landowners for allowing their properties to flood during the wet season for additional flood storage?
- Alternative 3 implies that condemnation could be used for environmental improvements or other multi-benefits. ITC members request clarification and note RCW 77.85.050: “(1)(a) Counties, cities, and tribal governments must jointly designate, by resolution or by letters of support, the area for which a habitat project list is to be developed and the lead entity that is to be responsible for submitting the habitat project list. No project included on a habitat project list shall be considered mandatory in nature and no private landowner may be forced or coerced into participation in any respect. The lead entity may be a county, city, conservation district, special district, tribal government, regional recovery organization, or other entity.”
- The alternatives insinuate limits to what each alternative is allowed to accomplish; this structure may limit the potential for projects and improvements. Too limiting in some ways and too vague to understand in others.

Organizations planning to comment

- King County – themes will likely include appreciation for multi-benefit approach, need for clear prioritization, analysis of benefits, further recommendations for multi-benefit approach.
- Kent – themes will likely include the importance of balancing multiple benefits.
- Renton – themes TBD; one may be sequencing of projects. Across the span of Lower Green Corridor, any work can lead to changes in the upstream and downstream environment and lack of appropriate planning and project sequencing could exacerbate existing issues.
- Tukwila, supporting multi-benefit approach.
- Ecology – coordination between WQ and SEA programs is ongoing; possible comments include recommendations to include the Sun Map in decision matrix, develop a metric to compare different benefits, provide more details on differences between alternatives to understand trade-offs.
- Seattle Public Utilities, focusing on the Duwamish.
- Puget Sound Partnership will contribute to a joint agency letter; themes TBD.
- Green River Coalition may submit a brief comment.

Comments, questions, or concerns that ITC members recommended including in WRIA 9 letter

- Recommend clear outline of next steps, inter-jurisdictional coordination, sequencing of projects and improvements, predicted downstream and upstream impacts from projects/improvements.
- Increase clarity and specificity to allow a thorough, objectives-based analysis of the alternatives. If current alternatives fall short of SEPA, improve to meet requirements at minimum. Clarify the differences between Alternatives 2 & 3. They are currently difficult to distinguish. How will alternatives lead to habitat gains and losses related to WRIA 9 goals?
- FCD is already supposed to be operating under multi-benefit objectives and already does acquisition for multi-benefit. Lower Russell Road is an example of the current project-by-project approach that includes habitat. Alternative 1 does not follow existing practices; why is it presented as a viable alternative? All alternatives do not seem to follow the recent FCD multi-objective motion.
- Scoping study should include integration of multiple benefits in the same space.
- Improve/increase support of treaty rights.
- Factor in Clure & Thorne's research and USFS experience to guide floodplain reconnection designs.
- Ensure acquisitions are truly multibenefit and in alignment with WRIA 9 salmon recovery priorities.
- Even in constrained areas, there are ways to prioritize and improve habitat. We need to do what we can. What are the trade-offs between having contiguous vegetated buffer and corridor with certain level of habitat quality versus a checkered landscape of really good and really poor habitat?
- All alternatives assume that floodwalls/levees are the only option for addressing flood issues, which ignores the benefits/approaches of projects like Downey and could preclude future projects.
- Recommend against adding new facilities in areas that don't have existing facilities.
- Recreation should be integrated with project design, not preserved. Improve versus maintain recreational opportunities like fishing access and trails.
- Work towards removing the separation of habitat restoration when calling out rationale for condemnation.