

Meeting #8

Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee  
Sno -Valley Senior Center, Carnation  
March 26, 2014 at 4:30 p.m.  
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Tamie Kellogg

Committee Members Present: Lawrence Carlson, Jarvis Keller, Scott Powell, David Radabaugh, Lara Thomas, Heather Trim, Daryl Williams, Josh Monaghan, Bobbi Lindemulder, Cindy Spiry, Siri Erickson-Brown, Micah Wait, Rick Bautista [Bryan Holloway, absent]

King County WLRD Staff Present: Janne Kaje, Kollin Higgins, Rick Reinlasoder, Sally King, Christie True, Alan Painter, Clint Loper, Joan Lee, John Taylor, Claire Dyckman, Perry Falcone, Jeff McMorris, Lilly Simmering,

Other Attendees: Nancy Hutto, Erick Haakenson, Michaele Blakely, Jim Haack, Cathryn Baerwald, Joe Hayes, Ward Roney

**Part 1: Welcome, Introductions, and Follow-up (Janne & Tamie)**

- a. **Welcome and introductions**
- b. **Quick review of agenda and meeting materials**

Janne asked people to take extra flyers advertising the public meeting to hand out to neighbors, etc. More can be obtained if needed. In a few meetings the committee will be weighing all the solutions and ideas to figure out what success looks like. Regarding agricultural viability, several people have started a conversation to discuss net effects, productivity, etc. Anyone who wants to be involved can contact Claire or Rick. We'll also, in the near future, be discussing fish recovery and flood risk reduction from the perspective of gauging success. Anyone interested in those conversations can contact Kollin and Sally, respectively.

Several people have signed up to be on subcommittees - thank you for your interest! - but the door is still open if anyone else is interested. The buffer group will start chatting soon, initially via emails, then phone calls. The drainage group will be led by Claire and Brian and will start a little later following some initial work by staff to identify specific early-action projects.

Janne introduced Christie True, the Director of DNRP.

- c. **Purpose for the Advisory Committee work (Christie True)**

Christie said she has a lot of passion and interest in the topic areas (fish, farms, floods) and thanked the members of the advisory committee and others participating. KC has been working on salmon recovery for many years, the agricultural program has been around for a long time as well, and in 2007 the new flood control district was formed. Recently, the county executive kicked off a new food economy initiative. One of the goals of the program is to protect rural land and make sure farming is economically viable. It's estimated that the King County food and beverage industry is worth \$6-9 billion, but only a small percentage is grown in KC. Programs are funded by different pots of money, and it can become a barrier for integration, but we're at a point of transformation and evolving to become more integrated. The goal is success for both farming and salmon recovery, while working with the challenge of flood control. She urged the committee to not let past barriers, e.g., funding silos, impact thinking. Holistic ideas are needed and she's looking forward to seeing the ideas the committee comes up with.

The committee was asked if there were any questions for Christie. Heather asked about funding for the new agriculture initiative.

Christie: We don't have a huge pot of money, but staff is working primarily on economic development. We also want more engagement of the private sector, including farmers. We don't plan on becoming farmers and distributors, but want to convene them. We have some new money, thanks to TDR, with City of Seattle. Also, we recently purchased Tall Chief golf course through conservation futures with the intent of converting a portion of the site back to agriculture.

Lilly Simmering, KC's new food economy manager, agreed with Christie and said we are aiming to make a difference.

Tamie: At the last meeting, we agreed to several more sessions, extra public engagement, etc. We did get committee approval to move forward on that. We'll bring an updated timeline to next mtg.

Some comments/questions/ideas regarding the revised schedule:

- Farmer input in summer will be more challenging for them. Need to work in small groups.
- Is the schedule compatible with the KC budget process?
- Outreach in summer and/or "tech research" into potential solutions

## **Part 2: Large Habitat Restoration and Flood Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) (Janne)**

### **a. Brief follow-up on the issues from last meeting to provide the additional background information and future projections of need for discussing the impacts of large CIP**

Janne quickly went through the last part of the SAFC presentation from the previous meeting. The Barfuse project is the biggest one and has the largest potential impact on ag acreage. It's in a very active, dynamic reach over time. The biggest bottleneck for Chinook salmon is the early rearing habitat. Janne showed a graphic depicting three river channels. One is confined with very little slow, calm water for juvenile fish. One has some sinuosity, which provides some off-channel habitat. The third example shows the most sinuosity and provides the most and best habitat for young fish (meaning that farther levee setbacks are better from a habitat restoration perspective).

The Barfuse land is owned by KC but leased to farmers. Alt 1 could mean loss of 42 ag acres. Alt 2 would not be set back as far and would have less ag impact (15 acres). Alt 3 would impact 7 ag acres and Alt 4 would impact 6 acres.

To compare with other projects, some Barfuse acres are out of flood plain, the soils tend to drain pretty well, and Fall City is near the project so there has been a lot of discussion of how to use the land.

Janne then discussed how potential future projects were identified as part of an analysis to help describe the long-term potential for large capital projects. Lists of potential project sites were pulled from salmon plan and related documents. Then, to identify potential, additional opportunities, staff they identified places with a river facility in place where there is a real potential for fish habitat recovery, made general assumptions about the potential set-back alignment, then measured the footprint, including any land in active agricultural use. Then, the potential large habitat and flood projects were listed by Salmon Plan priority reach (see chart). He said this is not “fish Nirvana.” We could generate a plan all about fish, or all about farm, or all about flood risk reduction. Instead, we take a practical approach to opportunities. If all the projects were done at their fullest potential (like Alt 1 options at SAFC projects), then 3% of the currently farmed and farmable agricultural footprint would be lost in the very long term. It’s difficult to determine how many fish we’d get back because salmon migrate and are exposed to conditions throughout their life cycle, but we can measure how much capacity we create for juvenile fish based on known habitat preferences. The graphic shows fish per square foot within specific habitat types that are highly preferred by juvenile chinook. Steelhead are listed, but there is no official recovery plan for them yet. But based on life history, no likely changes to the mainstem restoration efforts would result from a new plan for steelhead or from the potential future listing for coho. The listing of coho would put more emphasis on smaller tributaries because they use those extensively year-round.

How to address acreage losses?

- Enhance viability of existing farms (e.g., drainage, home & barn elevation)
- Expand ADP by adding land (expanding boundary)
- Increase long-term protection of existing farm land base (FPP)
- Protect other existing farms from river migration

#### **b. Q & A full group**

Daryl: Did you use the largest acreage number in estimates of acreage lost?

Janne: Yes, the equivalent of “Alternative 1” in the examples you have seen, except that the list we compiled has not undergone any feasibility studies like the one in the Fall City reach that led to the identification of alternatives.

Bobbi: How do all the factors that impact fish coming back get considered? (hatchery, harvest, habitat)

Janne: There are hatchery and harvest issues that are very much a part of the broader recovery strategy. State and tribal partners have taken significant steps to minimize impacts on wild fish from both harvest and hatchery. For Snohomish Chinook, harvest significantly reduced and hatchery practices reformed to address genetic and other concerns.

Tamie reminded everyone that issues not covered during meetings can be added to conference calls if there is interest.

Bobbi: Can we still have someone from FPP come and talk to us?

Janne: Yes, but we don't have the exact date yet.

Heather: Looking at the Ag Land Use map, I see a lot of white. There's currently and potentially farmed land. What if we buy out the non-ag land? How much land could be incentivized to return to ag?

Janne: Most of the whites are marsh, or wildlife areas.

Kollin: White is under the marsh or preserve category. A lot of areas listed as non-farmable are listed that way for good reason. But there are some other lands that used to be farms but no longer are.

Siri: There are some places that used to be farms, but had trees planted and it screwed up the neighboring farms (drainage, beaver problems, etc.).

Kollin: There's not much forest land that is flat and could be converted to ag.

David: Do we have places with good soil outside the APD?

Janne: There are two golf courses near the mouth of the Raging River that used to be farmland, about 150 acres each. Presumably the soil was good for Ag when they were farmed.

Lara: Duvall park needs to be on the list of potential "new" ag land. The lower portion stopped being maintained about 10 years ago.

Erick: Tell me the timeline for the Raging and Tolt River projects.

Janne: Projects take a lot of time. KC is the main organization doing large projects in the basin, though Wild Fish and Seattle have done some as well. Many take several years. We've been good about following salmon plan sequencing. Both rivers have had some projects done, but Tolt corridor study will set stage for next generation of projects in that basin. As the list shows, there are many potential projects in those rivers that would take a long time to implement.

Kollin: Remind everyone about flood vs. salmon projects.

Janne: Many projects benefit both fish and flood risk reduction.

Josh: If we look back at work done e.g. chinook bend, how many acres have gone from ag so far? Close to 80 acres at the nestle farm.

Perry: The majority of projects have been done on public lands. I don't know the exact acreage. Maybe 300 – 400 acres total project footprint. Not sure how much ag but almost entirely public lands. Chinook Bend donated to the county by Nestle for open space/restoration.

Kollin: Two mitigation projects took some pieces of land out but they weren't very large [e.g., the 4-acre piece the committee viewed during the tour at Siri's farm].

Scott: The increase in habitat goes way up with the 3<sup>rd</sup> channel example [referring to graphic]. Do most of the projects on the list fall under that broad scope?

Janne: If revetments on both sides were removed then yes. Most to date (such as Lower Tolt) are on one bank only, so probably more like the middle channel type. In general we try to identify relic channels (historic migration pathway). Almost every turn in the river has some kind of facility on it.

### **Part 3: Impacts on Farm Acreage Due to Large CIP (Tamie & All)**

#### **a. Give the county advice about how we can balance these competing needs and interests.**

Tamie: How would you keep things in balance, now that you know some of the numbers in terms of long term impact?

#### **b. Discuss in small groups**

### **6:00-6:15 BREAK**

#### **c. Report out from small group discussions: key guidance, solutions, and suggestions.**

Everyone on the committee was asked to share their main takeaway from the small group discussion.

Bobbi: A lot of good ideas but we haven't scratched the surface. My takeaway on it is funding, which will be astronomically huge. Drainage, infrastructure, etc.

Lara: My takeaway is that everything has to move forward as a group and all need to have buy-in. If we ask farmers to do something, they need something from the other side. It's like a 3-legged stool. We can't move one policy forward without the other groups or we won't get buy-in.

David: What's needed to have a viable agricultural economy in the valley? This needs to be looked at more.

Siri: There are some solutions that will be good for all 3 interests, and we need more time to work on those. What does ag viability mean? What do farms need? How do fish fit in? Solutions are there, but we should not rush through this.

Josh: I'm at a loss for words. I enjoyed the conversation and I look forward to more dialogue. We only scratched the surface. One thing I've been grappling with is how do we separate out work that falls under economic vs tradeoffs [i.e. some work just needs money to do, while other work will entail some kind of tradeoff, e.g., in return for lost ag land].

Micah: I came out of it with more questions. How do you address acreage loss when it's an impact to the ag community as a whole vs. individual landowners? Will adding more acres into the APD help the ag community, or would it just benefit individual owners? It's a question of community vs. individual landowners. Are the solutions benefitting the broader ag community?

Cindy: It was a great discussion. What I was thinking about was how do we replace land in the APD? How would you measure ag viability? Could there be a point system. Instead of replacing the land 1 to 1, could there be infrastructure tradeoffs? Could that act as mitigation instead of expanding the APD?

Jarvis: I'm still on measuring viability. I still believe that measuring acreage is important, but we need a better way of measuring. Some farmland is compromised by shading and clearing, so not 100% is usable.

We could increase the productivity on fields with smaller projects all over the valley. A lot of farmland is not as productive as it could be.

Rick B: Part of the reason we're here is that everything has been piecemeal. So, there are individual battles when a flood plan comes in, for example. The big bold step that needs to be taken is to admit that no particular action will fix the whole thing. Actions need to be linked on a broader scale. We need to step back and commit to taking more than 4 or 5 months. We're just scratching the surface.

Scott: The word is opportunity. There's a whole range of things that seem like opportunities that can be studied more, but look for incremental benefits. I don't sense that there's a fear factor, I sense willingness and faith that we can get there.

Lawrence: The scope is what we need to look at. We talked about some projects being small, but they need to fit into the bigger picture. It's important to look at the whole picture and other valleys who have been through this; see what works and what doesn't work.

Heather: We can get funding because there's a lot of support for ag in urban areas. I think we should come up with a price tag for everything and get funding relatively soon.

Daryl: Most of the time at previous meetings had been taken up with presentations. Today, having more discussion was very helpful. We need to do a lot more of this to come up with what we need for the county council.

**d. Discuss in large group – identify or add BIG BOLD IDEAS. (Tamie)**

Joan/Sally's group

- Consider viability more broadly (beyond acre for acre)
  - o Addressing drainage to increase growing season & number of crops
    - Everything west of Richmond (Patterson Creek)
- What has caused ag acreage reduction?
  - o Neglect of ditches
    - ADAP is making better / improvements
    - "smart phone" to make ADAP more effective
  - o Value of food relative to cost of labor (too wet to grow enough to cover labor)
- Can't just give away farm land if we want to get to the "10%" goal of food consumed in King County being of King County origin
- Explore "white" part of map – i.e., non-farmable lands being brought back to production
- Do further comparison of highest fish / highest farm potential
  - o Start with highest fish / lowest farm impact
- There may not be one "bold" idea. "Bold" may be looking at every single idea and having a commitment to see it through over the long term.
- Expand APD ("need to plan on living a long time")
- Other examples?
  - o Look at Willamette Vision effort
- Maybe we need to step back to big picture
- Take a 2-3 year process to dig in much deeper

- Flood district has new grant source that could provide source of money
  - o Would love to apply to ADAP or drainage district creation
- Potential for increasing productivity through clearing (may need redefinition)
  - o Could exchange riparian habitat for clearing other areas to improve ag
- Selective plantings of buffers that balance agriculture and habitat
- Give farmers the ability to “move stuff around” (cut trees, plant trees)
- Balance bold intensive 2-3 yr plan effort with prototype project (lots of early actions to learn from for ag and fish and see how they work)

#### Claire’s Group

- Do we need overall policy for everything?
  - o Yes, but no one goes forward without the other
- Need incentives for farmers / environmental credits for what someone has already done
- Deep injection to pull water out (successful in California)
- “Water Master” – impartial person to help with water rights
- Tertiary water system – use trucks to transport water
- Mobile slaughter unit
- Housing trust for affordable housing for farm workers
- KC voter initiative for agriculture tax (successful in urban areas of California)
- WSU annex for agricultural / educational purposes.
- Move forward on restoration projects quickly; don’t let it take 20 years. Get funding now.

Siri: Let’s not sacrifice long-term good solutions at the expense of getting things done now.

#### Rick’s group:

- Instead of increasing APD acreage, improve farming viability
- Farms better than golf course alternative
- Make sure river facilities are maintained, etc.
- Josh added whether mitigation could be banked from large projects so smaller projects don’t require it

#### Back group:

- Explore funding sources to help pay for (closer to the full amount) losses from buffer plantings.
  - o “buffer sponsor”
- Offsite buffer plantings, when a drainage project is involved
  - o “buffer bank”
- FPP modification (i.e. put it to a vote)
  - o Rule or covenant changes to better ensure farm (do we know how many acres are planted for/in buffers now?)
- Take lands out of production
  - o Trade off and put new land in
- Grants for buffers (to pay for them to be built offsite)
- Be able to drain our ditches!

- Beaver deceivers
  - o Help install / educate in order to put in good ones

Tamie acknowledged everyone's hard work. Said this is what it will look like from here on out. Our intention will be to let you discuss ideas and solutions. You can still use the templates and write them up in more detail. You're also encouraged to meet with each other to discuss these issues.

#### **Part 4: Public Input Workshop and Next Steps (Tamie & All)**

- a. How many of the committee are coming to the workshop (April 3, 5:30-8:00 Preston Community Center)?**

How many people will be attending ? All of the committee raised their hands. Majority of other attendees also plan to attend.

- b. Discuss the flow, key questions and the role of members at the public input workshop, including asking people to come.**

Our hope and desire is that committee members will volunteer to be at stations. At the beginning and then at the end. The staff folks will be at the stations as well. Tamie will send out assignments in an email, or people can let her know now.

Bobbi and Heather said they would go wherever they wanted them. Cindy wants to be at riparian buffers. Siri wants ag. David wants flood risk. Daryl wants fish / riparian buffers. If anyone else has preference, email Tamie, otherwise she will assign people as needed.

Heather brought up poll regarding mistrust of government. How about Lawrence instead of Janne present at the beginning? I think we need to take ownership of the meeting. Lara seconded the idea. Lawrence said he wouldn't be comfortable doing it, but supports the idea. Heather said she's suggesting everyone do a piece of the presentation.

Tamie offered to email a signup for people to take parts of the presentation. Lawrence said if something was written out he could do it. Tamie asked people to volunteer for different parts. Bobbi said she would help. Heather thinks everyone should have a piece. Tamie said we'll put together an outline and send it out; presentation will involve some KC staff. We want to get into good conversation with community and let them know what the process will produce. Each poster station has a key question to ask public about. At advisory committee booth, what events are going on in Snoq. Valley that will bring in a lot of people. Josh suggested to bring beautiful artwork from first meeting. Once you get assigned to a station, you can come up with a different question if you think of something better; let Tamie know.

Lara asked what kind of outreach has been done. Janne said there was an email sent out last week, to WRIA, ag commission, etc., but it will need some help from people on the committee. There was also a press release in an online paper. Tamie said let us know of any other places we need to get the word out. Janne said he's fine with committee members being involved in the presentations, but suggested people show up early since the presentation might not be finalized much in advance of meeting.

- c. Discuss language and key messages, i.e. refine committee purpose statement for the workshop.**

Tamie invited electronic comments on key messages listed on handout, e.g., the challenge and AC purpose.

Janne said Bryan Holloway will be at one more mtg, but got a new job that will prevent him from continuing after. Jason Walker (Councilmember in Duvall, Chair of Snoqualmie Watershed Forum) will be joining us in his place.

Tamie reminded people to let Sally know if anyone has ideas/questions for the next meeting which will cover flood risk reduction.

MEETING ADJOURNED