

Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee  
Snoqualmie Valley Senior Center, Great Room  
November 19, 2013 at 3:00 p.m.  
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Tamie Kellogg

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

King County WLRD Staff Present: Claire Dyckman, Kollin Higgins, Janne Kaje, Sally King, Joan Lee, Rick Reinlasoder, John Taylor, Jean White

Other Attendees: Matt Baerwalde, Christine Jensen, Ann Jess, Josh Kubo

**Part 1: Welcome, Introductions and Initial Shared Vision**

I. Welcome (John Taylor, Janne Kaje, Tamie Kellogg)

II. Team Introductions and Role in this Process

Kaje: Brief bio; his role is to manage project and staff team

*KC Core Team*

King: River and Floodplain Management Section, has worked in Snoqualmie Valley for eight years; primary contact for flood issues

Higgins: Sr. Ecologist, has worked in Snoqualmie Basin since 2004; previously supported ADAP; primary contact for fish-related issues or questions about salmon recovery

Dyckman: Liaison for Agriculture Commission, has worked for King County for 21 years; lead regarding intersection between environmental and agricultural issues

Reinlasoder: Livestock Program Specialist, grew up on a dairy in Montana; contact with questions about funding sources, livestock management or livestock ordinances

III. Discuss Participant Role in this Process

Kellogg: Participant role – crystallize the issues, so we can explore innovative solutions, help brief your organizations

Does this sound like what you signed up for?

*Brainstorm: name issues and/or challenges that brought us here today*

Carlson: drainage - lack thereof and maintenance trouble

- Lindemulder: regulations - lack of consistency among agencies and between jurisdictions
- Powell: salmon recovery - doing a lot, but not seeing the results we would like to see; difficult to measure
- Lindemulder: agricultural viability and expansion; if we can't grow food in the valleys, we can't get it where you want it
- Erickson-Brown: flooding - keeps development out, but dealing with ever-increasing threat of flood is scary for farmers
- Trim: effects of climate change and more intense precipitation
- Williams: flooding - floodgates not functioning and fish passage
- Spiry: poor habitat on fish-bearing streams
- Williams: nutrient management
- Wait: water quality
- Thomas: water temperature
- Monaghan: three natural resource areas in conflict; government perspective and business enterprises are in conflict)
- Thomas: conflicting vegetation management strategies (King County vs. federal government); the buffer issue
- Bautista: refers to Monaghan's comment re: conflict between fish and farm - is that perception or reality?
- Lindemulder: what are options for those in the valley who have already been restricted to agricultural use?
- Erickson-Brown: buffers eating up ag acreage; also, water availability for irrigation in summer

#### IV. Participant Introductions

*Exercise: Introduce yourself to one other committee member and discuss – What would be your preferred future reality for the Snoqualmie Basin if farming, fish habitat and flood risk reduction were successfully working together?*

- Trim: Director of Science and Policy, Futurewise, whose mission is the protection of all three areas (fish/farm/flood); brings a diverse background
- (1) maintaining (if not increasing) existing agriculture in the area, (2) look at the issue of whether there's a fix for the temperature outside of the basin (to promote cool water coming in), and (3) looking at management of floodwater that's more conducive to farming (collective vision w/Monaghan)
- Monaghan: King Conservation District, works with farmers and landowners to development site specific management plans, helps a lot of farmers who want to put buffers on their property
- Any work done as government employees is for the public; there have been too many moments where we've fallen short; his vision is public servants fully engaging community
- Bautista: (1) King County Council Staff Person (worked w/farmers and fish folks, so he's been drawn into battle between the conflicting sides), and (2) Executive Director of Flood Control District, new to the issue
- Goal is consistency, everyone working together in terms of what we want our regulations to achieve, current lack of flexibility in our regulations is a problem, they don't allow for out-of-the box solutions
- Spiry: Environmental and Natural Resources Department Director, Snoqualmie Tribe, oversight includes several environmental programs (including habitat restoration program), in all projects they include a component for traditional plants and animals
- Her perfect world would not have such a pushback between agriculture and restoration; look at including buffers needed for fish habitat as a potential source of native foods/plants, not as taking away agricultural production land; look at restoration in a different way, bring back native foods
- Wait: Conservation Director and Ecologist, Wild Fish Conservancy, mostly works on large floodplain projects; recently completed the Stillwater project
- His vision is structurally at eco level - working for fish and floods the mainstem needs a continually forested meander belt; where appropriate, multi-channel system; streams crossing agricultural land would have forested buffers and high quality salmon habitat (not as ditches); water withdrawals would be legally permitted and have fish screening; mainstem no longer on Clean Water Act 303(d) Impaired Waters List; measure value of farms not just by value of food, but by amount of salmon and habitat on a farm; an agricultural community that supports more than crops (e.g., salmon)

- Carlson: Family in valley since 1972 when they bought their farm; do custom farm work; his push will be more from agricultural position, as he doesn't know much about fish and habitat
- Vision centered on compromise (give and take), but what that looks like, he doesn't know; buffers are good; Carlson revetment removal is one helpful project; compatible projects
- Keller: Grown up in valley
- He sees farms disappearing, they're losing land and the buffers are taking away land; urban development is encroaching and the farms are shrinking; reclaim farmland in more appropriate areas to make up for lost land
- Radabaugh: Regional Floodplain Specialist, Washington State Department of Ecology; provides technical support on regional floodplain management issues; floodplain management and ecological management are intertwined, does a lot of grant management
- Big picture vision – take some of the conflicts and figure out how to address various concerns simultaneously (easier said than done!)
- Williams: Environmental Liaison, Tulalip Tribe (since 1977); Board President, Adopt-A-Stream Foundation; Vice President, Qualco Energy; Qualco Energy operates a farm where they are capturing methane from cow manure
- Wants to see farming stay in the valley; looking at areas to acquire additional agricultural land and areas that could be used as restoration projects; thinks there are cooperative ways to keep agriculture in business and restore salmon; vision is to move forward with both sustainable farms and fish
- Powell: Strategic Advisor, Seattle City Light Environmental Affairs Division; involved with Snohomish Watershed group, background in biological science and policy studies; here to primarily represent salmon
- Adds concept of urban connection; city has started food action program, lots of interest in farmer's markets; wants to strengthen the ties between city folks and agricultural folks (learn from, support, appreciate)
- Holloway: Council Member, City of Snoqualmie
- Thriving and recovering fish and farms, as well as flood control; future looking at projects with all three in mind, or a common framework for making tradeoffs
- Thomas: Comes from a farming family, background in agriculture, works in land use planning in Duvall as the Senior Planner.

Stormwater management must be a new reality, urban areas impact what happens in the valley and flooding caused by lack of adequate stormwater management; what works for agriculture won't work completely for fish; at some point these differences need to be acknowledged; agencies need to look at plans with an eye towards farm, fish and flood

Erickson-Brown: Representative, Ag Commission; owns and operates medium-sized (80-acre) riverfront vegetable farm

Can't have any of the other stuff about farms without protection of wetland; designate land for agriculture and habitat and make a clear line; wildlife on farms is a huge issue for crop damage and food safety regulations; vision is more identifying highest and best priorities for properties; important to protect designated agricultural land from river migration

Lindemulder: Family farm since 1930's, converted dairy farm to grass-fed beef business; can be 12-15 ft underwater during a large flood, deal with flow and debris issues

Farmers must realize what we do today may not be what it is in the future; climate issue; would love to see drainage district explored so we can assure fields will be drained and ag lands protected; stormwater, low impact development and retrofitting of developments could be enhanced to help water down in the valley; farmlands and uplands must be protected, not just floodplains, expansion in uplands should be supported (tax incentives??); education of general public of what farming means, how it affects them and what they can do to support farming; big opportunity for fish habitat and forest edibles (bring back native plants) and pollinators; agreement with tribes for access to plants; appropriate housing and infrastructure on all farming parcels to encourage profitability; hugely supportive of flood pad taskforce; incentives for farmers with buffers, buffers need to be worth it to the landowner; fish projects prioritized for lowest impact to crops; BMP that farmers are putting in, how does this affect the carbon sequestration and how that benefits the farmer? (collective vision with Erickson-Brown)

Tamie Kellogg: These people are on the precipice of big bold steps.

Other attendee introductions

Baerwalde: Water Quality Manager, Snoqualmie Tribe

Kubo: Salmon Recovery Scientist, Tulalip Tribe

White: Supervisor, Regional Partnerships Unit, King County

Lee: Section Manager, King County Rural and Regional Services Section

Jensen: Policy Director, King County Councilmember, Kathy Lambert

## **Part 2: Background and Physical Context**

Kaje: A quick primer on the Snoqualmie Watershed (presentation to be available on website)

- Janne Kaje provided an overview of the geology, geography, land use and history of the Snoqualmie watershed with an emphasis on the lower Snoqualmie valley.

### Q & A

Q: What is the quality of the fine sediment deposited by the river on farms? Is it good soil for ag?

Group Discussion: All the ag soil comes from the river; spillover isn't always the best for farming; a higher percentage of silt allows for growing the most diverse crops

Q: Are there patterns to where silt is deposited?

Group Discussion: Correlation between higher ground and more gravel. Farming is a very broad term (what's good for vegetable farmers, isn't good for dairy farmers); sand they get on dairy farm isn't helpful at all

Comment: Regarding photo of historic wetlands vs. drainage of floodplain for agriculture; farm bill is an important piece of the history

Kaje: Yes, draining of wetlands, construction of levees/revetments were often times government-supported activities

## **Part 3: Purpose, Scope and Boundaries of this Committee**

\*\* Initially skipped this section, but briefly revisited at the end of the meeting \*\*

Kaje: Why are we here?

Legislation by KC Council that got us here today R650 (Rural Chapter of KC Comprehensive Plan)

Council acknowledged we've been wrestling w/these issues and not making enough progress.

You're being asked: guide us...how do we look at all of these things on a watershed scale?

Sometimes geographic segregation of farming from restoration efforts is possible, but sometimes overlap is unavoidable

- Goals:
- Develop a variety of recommendations
  - Consider short-term or long-term recommendations (for example, regulatory fixes, propose framework for working through decisions, etc.)
  - Come to good agreements that can be moved forward in short order
  - Reach consensus at the end of the process about how areas of remaining disagreement are described

#### **Part 4: Examples of Opportunities and Challenges – Issue Snapshots**

##### **I. Snoqualmie at Fall City**

Presented by: Kollin Higgins (presentation to be made available on web site)

- Kollin Higgins gave a brief presentation covering 2 of the 4 potential Snoqualmie at Fall City projects. He discussed the expected fish and flood hazard reduction benefits associated with each project and the potential impact and benefits to Agriculture and the challenges of balancing the needs of each program.

##### **II. Floodplain Management & Farm Pads – Constrained Reach of Snoq. River**

Presented by: Sally King (presentation to be made available on web site)

- Sally King gave a brief presentation about a “constrained reach” in the Snoqualmie River floodplain between Ames Creek and the NE 124th Street. In areas like this where floodplain capacity is being reached and no more fill can be placed for farm pads, alternatives are being explored with local farmers including elevated barns and elevated platforms.

##### **III. Farms and Riparian Buffers**

Presented by: Claire Dyckman (presentation to be made available on web site)

- Claire Dyckman gave a brief presentation about stream buffers and the impacts of a range of buffer widths on farm land.

#### Q & A

Q: On Carlson projects, when looking at losing 1.5 acres of land, is that replaced somewhere else or permanently lost?

Higgins: As of right now, it is permanently lost

Comment: Add to *Parking Lot List* - Look at 124th Street and Snoqualmie Valley Trail as some kind of future action. The fill creates a bathtub flood effect.

Comment: Look at more carrot, less stick; didn't realize a buffer was required for drainage maintenance; she wants more carrots

Higgins: Yes, buffers are required following drainage maintenance under the Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program, though with flexibility and King County does pay for some of this mitigation and project costs

Comment: Doesn't do any good to clean drainages if neighbors aren't coordinated.

Q: regarding Middle Ditch in Claire's presentation, can they go down and mow down one side to access channel for future maintenance?

Higgins: Project done in 2008, previously in 1998, willows specifically chosen because they could be trimmed down to allow access by machinery without killing plants; harvest willow and use for restoration, due the dredging and the willows will pop back up; Snoqualmie backwaters in and causes sediment, beavers also cause some problems

Comment: Concerned that ADAP a one-stop deal with King County, might not be available the second time; what are the restrictions if an ag person wants to put in a larger buffer?

Q: Originally learned about "farm pads" as "critter pads", but now they're called farm pads? Why the change?

King: 1990 flood – critter pads; since 2008 – for protection from flood; purposely being built for non-livestock reasons, such as safeguarding equipment, feed, seeds, etc.

Comment: Main reason 150' buffers were recommended were for water quality, not shade, there could be narrow strips designed along edge of fields; explore option of narrow filter strips along edge of fields; small streams don't require larger buffer to create shade, only necessary to filter run-off

## **Part 5 Committee Timeline, Logistics and Next Steps.**

1. Briefly reviewed the Committee Timeline and approach to this work and the milestones (Nov 2013- April 2014).
  - a. Committee members provided input on meeting schedule and timing of meetings. It was suggestion to have a fixed schedule, same day of the week, perhaps the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday. Committee members offered varied opinions about starting early (like the 3:00 start time of this meeting) or a later start. Members were asked to provide input to Janne Kaje on preferences of day and time and he would propose a schedule back to the committee.
  - b. Confirmed that the next Advisory Committee meeting will be Dec 10, at 4:30.
  - c. A question was asked of the committee about whether there should be a broader public engagement effort along with the work of the committee?

- i. Initial thoughts and questions included:
    1. Why would we have the public meeting so late in the game? What do we hope to accomplish at a public meeting? Yes we should get more input.
    2. Facilitator noted that we would gather additional information and perspectives from a broader set of people. The public meeting could be more of a sounding board, with this committee serving as more to generate ideas. We will discuss further at our next meeting.
  - d. Committee members were asked to send Janne Kaje their interest in scheduling possible field visits. What specific days or times of the week are good and what topics/type of sites they are interested in visiting.
2. Committee members were asked to read and consider R650, the Comprehensive Plan policy that led to the establishment of this Advisory Committee
  3. Committee members were asked to review the draft committee guidelines (in their notebook) and share changes and/or additions with Tamie Kellogg or Janne Kaje before the next meetings.
  4. Phone calls or emails to any of the team is encouraged.

**Next Meeting:     December 10, 2013 at 4:30 p.m.**